

DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden

www.dailytrust.com

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2009

VOL. 21 NO. 44

RABI'UL THANI 14, 1430 AH

N100

INSIDE



Interest rate: CBN threatens to sanction banks

Chief executives of banks that hike interest rates beyond the approved maximum will henceforth be suspended, Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Charles Soludo has said.

-Page 4

Nigeria loses \$24bn to N/Delta unrest

-Page 2

N/Assembly gets asset forfeiture bill

-Page 2

FG awards N42bn fertiliser contract

-Page 4

DAILY TRUST STOCK INDEX

As at Thursday, April 8

GAINERS		
Symbol	Price(N)	Gain
am	140.02	+4.51
an	83.51	+3.89
ac	29.90	+0.89

LOSERS		
Symbol	Price(N)	Loss
gc	65.00	-3.00
re	21.76	-0.92
bg	16.44	-0.86

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATE		
Symbol	Selling	Buying
knee	212	210
have to	242	240
a re-oc	82	180



KIA MOTORS
The Power to Surprise™

www.kiamotorsnigeria.com

Pilgrims of the Atlantic Ocean

- PAGES 28&29



Halliburton:

FG traces \$150m bribe to Swiss banks

By AbdulFattah Olajide

The Federal Government has found that \$150 million of the bribe money taken by Nigerians from a subsidiary of the American energy company Halliburton was lodged in Swiss banks, Attorney-General of the Federation Mr. Michael Aondoakaa has said.

The Minister of Justice, who said this while fielding questions from

State House correspondents yesterday in Abuja, added that the names of the owners of the Swiss accounts where the bribes were lodged were yet to be ascertained.

About \$180 million was paid out as bribe to some top Nigerian government officials through a subsid-

iary of Halliburton, Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), to facilitate the award of the \$6 billion LNG contracts between 1994 and 2004.

KBR admitted at a court in Houston, US, in February to paying bribes to secure four contracts for a KBR joint venture to build and expand the Bonny Island liquefied natural gas terminal.

The charges against KBR include allegations that senior executives met with "three successive holders of a top-level office in the executive branch of the government of Nigeria" and negotiated the amount of bribes to be paid.

The period covered by the charges fall under the administra

Cont. on Pg. 5



The chaotic traffic situation at Mile 2 area of Lagos after an early morning rain yesterday.

Photo: NAN

Adesanya: Abacha's driver gets 28 years' jail term

Lagos State High Court yesterday sentenced Aminu Mohammed and Lateef Shofolahan to 28 years and 31 years in prison for the attempted murder of the late Afenifere leader, Senator Abraham Adesanya.

Mohammed (alias Katako), driver to Mohammed Abacha, and Shofolahan, a personal aide to late Kudirat Abiola, were arraigned by the Lagos State Government on a two-count

charge of conspiracy and attempted murder of Adesanya.

The State Government said that the crime took place at the Sura Market in Lagos Island in February 1997.

Delivering judgment, Justice Olusola Williams held that she found the accused persons guilty on both counts, stressing that "there was indeed an attempt to kill Adesanya."

"I find Mohammed and Shofolahan guilty. They were part and parcel of the team that shot at Adesanya. It is a pity that Mohammed, who is in the Armed Forces and is sustained with taxpayers' money will be involved in endangering the life of a citizen.

"As for Shofolahan, he eroded his conscience just like Judas Iscariot.

Cont. on Pg. 5



Intercontinental

BANK

RC: No. 125352

PRESS STATEMENT

DE-MARKETING OF INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC

For several months now, the Banking Industry has been enmeshed in unethical practices of running down the competition, which has now been popularly known as "De-marketing".

Intercontinental Bank Plc had all the while been targeted for de-marketing by a crop of misguided bankers especially from a 1st generation bank, using smear campaign to scare our customers through deceitful remarks and text messages insinuating that Intercontinental Bank Plc is unsafe, all in an attempt to mislead the general banking public to believe that only their bank is safe in Nigeria.

The Central Bank of Nigeria, three weeks ago, made an official statement on this matter. We wish to now formally make a PUBLIC STATEMENT on this issue to all our customers and the general banking public:

1. We believe that the attack on us by these bankers is their envious and desperate response to our God-assisted achievements in the last 20 years.
2. Despite the de-marketing campaign against us, we thank God that Intercontinental Bank Plc has remained one of the strongest banks in the industry. Our financial results continue to show robust growth in our Deposit and Balance Sheet size.
3. Since this de-marketing started and up till now, we have never defaulted on any of our obligations to any depositor whether foreign or local and we are not under any pressure that may warrant any such default.
4. Our customers had not only remained loyal to the bank but have taken it upon themselves to compile names of staff of competing banks that are de-marketing us or any other bank for onward submission to the Central Bank of Nigeria for appropriate sanction.
5. Intercontinental Bank Plc remains committed to ethical conduct and sound professional banking practice despite the on-going provocations, especially as our Chief Executive Officer is also the current President and Chairman of Council of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).
6. We appreciate the support of all our numerous customers, the regulatory authorities and indeed the general banking public who have continued to express utmost confidence in our bank despite the de-marketing.
7. Once again, we promise, on behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of Intercontinental Bank Plc to continue to make you all our "HAPPY CUSTOMERS" in order for us to remain your "HAPPY BANK".
8. Should you require further clarification on this and any other issue, please do not hesitate to reach our Call Centre on 01-2772000 or visit any of our 370 branches nationwide.

Signed

MANAGEMENT

Call Centre: 01-2772000

www.intercontinentalbankplc.com

NEWS

FG awards N42bn fertilisers procurement contract

As part of the measures aimed at ensuring food security in the country, the Federal Government yesterday awarded a N42 billion contract for the procurement of fertilisers for distribution to farmers throughout the country for this year's farming season.

The Minister of Information and Communication, Professor Dora Akinyili announced the measure while briefing State House correspondents after yesterday's Federal Executive Council meeting. She said the fertilisers would be distributed to farmers in all states of the federation at 25 percent subsidy.

According to her, a total of 405,000 metric tons of fertilisers would be supplied at N41,523,000,000. She said Tak Continental Limited, Golden Fertilizer, Notore Chemicals Industries Limited, and Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company were awarded contracts for the supply of 400,000 metric tons of inorganic fertilizers at N41,175,000,000, while Industrial Minerals Limited and Earthcare Nigeria limited are to supply 5,000 metric tons of organic fertilisers at N350,000,000.

The minister said the 5,000 metric tons of organic fertilizers would be used for "demonstration to promote the technology of integrated soil fertility management to farmers in the 327 special programmes on food security sites."

Also speaking during the briefing, the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Alhaji Sayyidi Aba Ruma, explained that some states also subsidise fertilizers, saying the product should be available to farmers at about N2,500 per bag.

Ruma said all the 405,000 metric tons of fertilizers are expected to be supplied not later than July 30.

Professor Akinyili also announced that the council awarded various contracts worth N24 billion for the con-

By AbdulFattah Olajide

struction and rehabilitation of eight roads in the different parts of the country.

The road projects are the Hadejia-Nguru road in Jigawa State, at a cost of \$4.9 billion, with a completion period of 24 months; the Ifon-Uzebba-Iruepken road and approach road to Ose bridge, in Edo State, at a cost of N1.9 billion, with a 24 months completion period; the Nguru-Gushua-Bayamari road in Yobe State, at a cost of N2.3 billion with a 24 months completion period and the Akungba-Ikare-Omuo-Kabba road cutting across Ekiti and Ondo State, at a cost of N1.5 billion with a 24 months completion period.

The other projects are the realignment and construction of dangerous curves between Akwanga and Lafia, in Nassarawa State, at a cost of N3.4 billion with 18 months completion period; the rehabilitation of Efon Alaaye-Erinmo-Iwaraja road between Ekiti and Osun

States, at a cost of N3.5 billion; the total strengthening of the existing River Niger Bridge, at Onitsha, Anambra State, at a cost of N740 million with two months

completion period and the rehabilitation of Enugu bound carriageway of the Onitsha-Enugu road, phase one of section one, in Anambra state, at a cost of

N5 billion, with a 30 months completion period.

She said the money for the projects "were provided for in the 2008 budget but could not be awarded before

the end of that year, but have been captured in the 2009 appropriation with due process certificate of "no objection" issued by the Bureau of Public Procurement towards the end of 2008".



Central Bank Governor Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo during a press conference on the outcome of the money Monetry Policy Committee meeting held in Abuja yesterday.

Pic: Kennedy Egbonodje

Fraud: FG invites foreign auditors to investigate

Suspecting that massive fraud is being perpetrated at Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) in the guise of subsidy to petroleum products marketers, the Federal Government has invited foreign and local auditors to investigate the agency.

The Minister of State for Petroleum, Mr. Odein Ajumogobia, SAN, dropped the hint in Abuja yesterday while speaking with newsmen at the Presidential Villa, shortly before yesterday's Federal Executive Council meeting.

Ajumogobia said the investigations would help the country eliminate the "inefficiencies" in the petroleum sector and unravel the factors contributing to high pump prices of petroleum products in the country in the face of ebbing interna-

By AbdulFattah Olajide

tional oil price. He said the auditors have two months to turn-in their reports.

The minister said "We are investigating the inefficiency of the system, the amount of money being used for subsidy looking at the PPPRA template. The

PPRA

committee headed by the Bauchi State Governor, Isa Yuguda is looking into that and we are inviting international auditors to look at the process to know whether there are inefficiencies and whether there is corruption. We have local auditors who

are capable they will work with foreign auditors to ensure absolute transparency in the process".

On the extent of the investigations, Ajumogobia said "We are looking at the entire process, essentially the templates. The price of oil has come down, therefore there is the expectation that the pump price should also reflect that reduction in the

crude oil price. Unfortunately, on the other side of the equation you have a huge subsidy made up of the template that PPPRA is producing and we are investigating those costs that involve demurrage. One of the biggest costs is demurrage which reflects on the pump price."

PDP morally bankrupt-Atiku

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has described his former party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as morally bankrupt and visionless in the continuing vile against each other engaged by the two parties.

PDP said Monday that Atiku has lost relevance in the political landscape describing him as a "hopeless, drowning and unreliable

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

politician."

Atiku said in a statement by his Media Office Tuesday that the reaction of the PDP on the criticism by the former vice president on the failures of the President Umaru Musa Yar'adua led government is sad and unfortunate.

According to Atiku, "For the PDP leadership to

have resorted to name-calling and gutter language in response to an opinion voiced by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on the electoral reform shows clearly the level of intolerance in the party."

Atiku said the PDP's stamen is display of intolerance adding "It is also an indication of the party's moral bankruptcy and its unwillingness to change its ways. We are witnessing once again in our history the heedless march of an arrogant, visionless party to self-destruction - just like the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

"Our concern stems from the fact that the PDP runs the government at the centre and in a majority of the 36 states of the federation. The PDP must account to Nigerians how and why things are the way they are in the country."

"The PDP does not own Nigeria. That is why we cannot sit back and allow this unruly collection of election riggers and anti-democratic forces to derail our hard-earned democracy or to kill our dreams with mind-boggling ineptitude.

"Atiku Abubakar is not desperate to be President. His criticism of the handling of the electoral reform is borne out of patriotic instinct. Every Nigerian ought

to be concerned about the direction in which the PDP is taking the country.

"It is a measure of how low civility has declined in the country that such an innocuous comment by the former Vice President on the need for genuine electoral reform should elicit insults and unnecessary personal attacks. It is also ironic that the author of that infantile statement claims to be a professor, one of the intellectual dwarfs who now run the party and the nation.

"The PDP offers no hope to Nigeria. It is drowning in a sea of misgovernance. It is therefore not surprising that the PDP is hostile to fundamental electoral reform. The party has now been hijacked by election riggers and do-or-die politicians. This is not the party some of us founded in 1998."

But the PDP said Atiku lacks the moral standing to castigate the present efforts at reforming electoral system in the country saying, "His (Atiku) attack on the genuine efforts and commitment of the federal government on electoral reform is clearly opportunistic as Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as vice president of Nigeria for good eight years cannot today be credited with even a single suggestion he made on how to reform the electoral system."

CBN to suspend bank CEOs on interest rates hike

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has threatened to suspend any Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) whose bank charges interest rate above 22 percent as agreed by the Bankers Committee.

CBN Governor, Professor Chukwuma Soludo said this yesterday in Abuja at a press briefing after the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) where he said the country's foreign reserve is now at \$47 billion.

After peaking at \$64 billion in August 2008, the foreign reserve shrunk to about \$50 billion in January.

Bankers Committee met last month and pegged both

*foreign reserves falls to \$47bn

By Idris Ahmed

the deposit and lending rates at 15 percent and 22 percent respectively. Before the decision, both deposit and lending rates were at 18 percent and 22 percent respectively.

Other decisions taken by the MPC yesterday include reduction in the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) from 9.75 percent to 8.0 percent, reduction in liquidity ratio from 30 percent to 25 percent and reduction of Cash Reserve Requirement (CRR) from 2 percent to 1 percent.

The above measures were aimed at monetary easing and to inject more

liquidity into the economy, the CBN Governor said.

Speaking on the seriousness of the sanctions against banks who hike interest rates, Soludo said the penalty is effective from February till December.

"Any bank and its CEO/MD that violates the decision would severely pay for it. For example, if a bank for the first time violates any of the ceilings, a fine of N50 million would be imposed on the bank and a letter of warning on the CEO/MD of the bank.

"For the second time violation, the bank's CEO/MD would be suspended from accessing the RDAS as well as the fine of N50 million.

Third violation would mean suspension of the bank's MD/CEO and the bank's officials in addition to all the fine involved."

Soludo also said that the apex bank would investigate and deal with any bank that refuses to sell foreign exchange to end users saying "we sell dollars to the banks on daily basis and banks should sell too. We would verify the claims that they are not selling and deal with the situation."

On the growth of the economy, the Governor said that figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that aggregate output is robust as it increased from 5.78 percent in the first quarter of 2008 to 6.32 percent in same in 2009.

NEWS

FG traces \$150m bribe to Swiss bank

Continued from Page 1

tions of former military rulers General Sani Abacha and General Abdulsalami Abubakar, and the civilian regime of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The Nigerians involved in the scandal were yet to be officially named.

"We have discovered that \$150million of the bribe money is in Zurich," Aondoakaa said. "That is the first shocking discovery. The entire money is \$180 million, \$150million is already trapped in Zurich."

He said the government would not spare any Nigerian found culpable in the bribery scandal.

On how the discovery was made, the minister said, "I went to the US and we had a useful information. For me, even if you are talking to me sharing ideas with me, I must have all the information authenticated by the government, and the US government has been very friendly to us."

On why it is taking the government a long time to commence prosecution of the Nigerians involved, Aondoakaa said the judgment was made under seal and it would only be made available to the government on request.

He said Nigeria has requested for the full information

Adesanya: Abacha's driver gets 28 years' jail term

Continued from Page 1

He abused the trust his employer had in him. He is a blatant liar as most of his evidence did not correspond

with his statement," she said.

Justice Williams sentenced Mohammed to 10 years for conspiracy and 18 years for attempted murder,

about the deal and has been working closely with the Justice Office of the United States to get the documents officially.

"The judgment is under seal, you are talking as if we are the people who sealed the names in the court. So you can't get the names except the US government releases it under declassified information, you are talking as if the president has the names.

"Let me make it clear to you, government does not prosecute on newspaper pages. If somebody said I voted \$40 million for you, which is his own wish, and if the money does not reach you, can I come and prosecute you because in his book he wrote \$40 million?"

"There must be evidence that must be tendered to show that that money was handed over to you. Is it through wire transfer, is it through somebody? So these are some of the things we want to establish. The main fact that somebody wrote in his book that I have voted \$40million for bribing you does not mean that you have taken the bribe. He can vote that money and pocket his money," the minister said.

while Shofolahan was sentenced to 14 years for conspiracy and 17 years for attempted murder.

She held that the sen-

tences would be with hard labour and would take effect from October 7, 1999 when they were first arraigned. (NAN)

Reps threaten to arrest new Gbom-Gbom Jos, 7 others

The House of Representatives yesterday threatened to arrest the new Gbom-Gbom Jos, Mr. Gyan Jacob Buba, three other Comptrollers General of the Nigeria Custom Service, Minister of the FCT and four companies over their refusal to make available to the Committee on Customs and Excise documents relating to the Nigeria Customs Service.

The former Comptroller General and now Gbom-Gbom Jos was invited by the Committee on Custom and Excise

By Tashikalmah Hallah & Nasidi A. Yahaya

to make submission on the proposed public hearing on the state of the Nigeria Custom Service and the poor performance of its statutory duties and functions alongside former Comptrollers, Alhaji Aliyu Mustapha, Alhaji Hamman Bello Ahmed Kojoli, and the present Comptroller, Mr Bernard -Shaw Nwadialo but that they all had failed to make submission as demanded.

Also, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Senator Adamu Aliero, and four companies, Maersk Line Shipping Service, Mobil Producing Unlimited, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Texaco Nigeria Ltd are also said to have failed to respond to the invitation are.

Rep Yakubu Dogara (PDP, Bauchi State) Chairman of the Committee at a press conference said the Committee regretted the failure of the former Comptrol-

lers General to make submissions as demanded despite the extension of time adding that the Comptrollers General and other stakeholders have up until Thursday next week to comply or face arrest.

According to him, "It is worrisome that some key stakeholders who have taken the lead in surreptitious but desperate campaign to frustrate the public hearing and the work of parliament refused to make submissions to the Committee."

Renaissance Capital says Intercontinental Bank is healthy

Intercontinental Bank Plc has enough capital to absorb its asset risks and there is no threat to its solvency, analysts from Renaissance Capital said on Wednesday.

After analysing the bank's balance sheet, the group said even though the bank suffered from the falling in the Nigeria's capital market, it is still strong enough to right-off any toxic assets.

The group said that fall in

By Idris Ahmed

the stock of all the quoted banks have depreciated between 40- 70 percent over the past three months in high-volume trading amid speculation that their capital base is at risk from margin loan exposure and other non-performing loans.

"They are now being traded as distressed institutions", and "Intercontinental Bank Plc was not speared as

its stock fell by 46 per cent within the period."

It said that weak disclosure requirements in Nigeria have fuelled concern about the health of its banks, particularly their exposure to falling capital markets after explosive balance sheet growth in recent years saw them take on higher levels of unsecured risk.

Renaissance: "The market is currently pricing the stock as a distressed asset and not

as a going concern," Renaissance Capital said in a research note, maintaining a "hold" rating but lowering its target share price to 10 naira from 13.

"By publishing the bank's asset risks and stress-testing them, we hope to close the chapter on the de-marketing of this name and provide investors with the means to assess these risks," said Renaissance Capital report on the bank."

Halliburton, a test case for Yar'adua — CNPP

By Abbas Jimoh

The Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) has said the Halliburton Scam is the last opportunity for President Umaru Yar'Adua to assure Nigerians that his anti-corruption probe is not mere lip service.

Secretary General of the organisation, Willy Ezugwu, said yesterday in a statement that the Halliburton Scam has now become the test case for "an administration that Nigerians no longer trust" and that the only way out for the administration is to name those indicted in the case.

He said that Nigeria is witnessing another Siemens scandal in the making, as the German firm is now back in business in the country, while those named in the graft are still walking free.

"It can only happen in Nigeria; even companies black-listed by the immediate past

corrupt administration are also presently enjoying government patronage. These are clear indication that the Yar'Adua government has no plans to tackle corruption," Ezugwu said.

He said that the administration no longer has any hiding place since the trial of the Halliburton case in the United States has indicted highly placed Nigerians, whom government is now trying to protect.

He said, "It is obvious that government's plan is to treat the Halliburton case as another Siemens, power probe report or Electoral reform report, by setting up series of committees that will eventually sweep the case under the carpet.

They however forgot that the game is up for them as the US has already named them."

Vaswanis plan multi-billion naira vehicle plant

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

Stallion Group owned by the billionaire Vaswani brothers, Sunil, Haresh and Mahesh yesterday unveiled plans to set up a multi billion naira state of art vehicle assembly facility in the country to begin operation within the next nine months.

This is coming on the heels of recent investment of N162 billion into the agriculture sector especially rice production in collaboration with the federal government.

The group said in a statement that it intended to assemble Completely Knocked Down (CKD) vehicles "To address the regional demand for buses, trucks and other commercial vehicles in order to meet the imminent demand for farm equipment like tractors."

The vehicles would be assembled in association with several global brands and not restricted to a single brand or origin adding that it had already signed an agreement with Leyland for their bus, truck and tractor models.

The project is the latest in the series of large scale investments made by the Vaswani brothers in the past few months in Nigeria and they have pledged substantial investments into the country.

It said its latest drive is expected to result in reduced market prices of vehicles of mass transportation of people and essential goods in Nigeria and eventually in ECOWAS countries given the savings on freight and valuable foreign exchange.

The group said it would market the finished products through its extensive nation-wide distribution and after-sales network and is working with various State governments to meet their needs on a timely basis.

Yar'adua appoints Chinade as adviser on foreign affairs

President Musa Yar'adua has approved the appointment of Ambassador Jibrin Chinade as Special Adviser on Foreign Affairs. A statement signed by the deputy director (information) in the

By Francis Okeke

office of the secretary to the government of the federation (SGF) Salisu Na'inna Danbatta said the appointment takes effect from the day he assumes duty.

Ambassador Chinade is a retired career diplomat and former permanent secretary of the ministry of foreign affairs.

He served in many Nigerians Foreign missions in Africa and elsewhere in the

world including as Ambassador to the defunct Soviet Union with concerned accreditation to the 16-member commonwealth of independent states which replaced the Soviet Union.

Similarly, the president

has approved the reconstitution of the honorary presidential advisory council on international relations.

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former secretary-general of the commonwealth is chairman of the six-member coun-

cil. Other members of the council are Ambassador Jibrin Chinade, Ambassador Hamza Ahmadu and Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf. The rest are Ambassador B. A. Clark and Ambassador Jide Oshuntokun.

NEWS

Don't gag senators, AC tells PDP

The Action Congress (AC) yesterday called on the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) not to gag members of the party in the Senate from expressing their displeasure with performance of the present administration.

A statement issued yesterday in Lagos by AC National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed criticised the PDP for seeking to gag its Senators who are critical of what the party called slow pace of Umaru Musa Yar'adua-led government.

The party was reacting against the backdrop of the comments credited to PDP National Chairman, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, that the so-called 'anti-Yar'adua Senators' are on their own.

AC said the remark has shown that the PDP cannot tolerate enlightened discourse and opinions that do not conform to what it called PDP's 'jaundiced' stand on issues.

"When PDP outsiders

By Muideen Olaniyi

criticise the party, either on electoral reforms or any other issue, the party attacks such critics in a ferocious and vicious manner, calling them names and describing the opposition as being in 'tatters' or lacking internal democracy.

"Now, the critics are from within the PDP, and the party has moved fast to crush and disown them, simply for even seeking to goad the snail-riding administration into action. Which party is in tatters now? Which party lacks internal democracy now? Which party is so disdainful of freedom of speech and democracy than the PDP?" AC queried.

The party said the Senators, who have used a civilised means to convey to President Yar'adua that they are not happy with his administration's poor performance after almost two years in the saddle, are indeed the real friends of the President.

It said those Senators want Mr President to buckle up and make the impact of his administration felt by the long-suffering people of Nigeria adding, "They are the true representatives of the people who sent them to the National Assembly.

They visit their constituencies regularly and can feel the pulse of their people, who are simply not happy with the non-performance of this administration. They should be proud to be representing their people well, and should not succumb to a few

PDP hawks whose interests lie simply in feathering their own nest."

AC hailed the Senators for their courage and forthrightness in calling the attention of the President to the worsening conditions of living across the land.

It therefore urged them to resist being labelled anti-Yar'adua or being gagged by a 'starry-eyed' party chair, who is more interested in having his party rule for 100 years than seeing it make a positive impact on the lives of Nigerians.



From left: Project engineer Mathias Aduyi, Minister of Works, Housing and Urban Development Dr. Hassan Lawal and Managing Director, Dantata and Sawoe, Mr. Udo Heidschuster, during the inspection of Abuja Abaji-Lokoja road dualisation project in Abuja on Tuesday

Nigeria will soon be out of the woods - Mark

Despite problems facing Nigeria as a nation it will soon overcome them and stand on its feet as a strong and vibrant country, Senate President Senator David Mark has said. He was speaking yesterday during a prayer session to mark his 61st birthday at his residence in Abuja.

Senator Mark said that, whatever can be done today to make Nigeria a better place to live would not be compromised no matter the odds saying, "The Senate is mindful of the plight of the ordinary man and will continue to lay the needed legislative framework for the executive to deliver."

While restating his unwavering commitment to the ideals of nationhood and service

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Turaki A. Hassan

to humanity for the common goal of all, the Senate President called for collaborative efforts by all in the task of nation building saying, "if all of us contribute our respective talents positively, there will be no problem that will be insurmountable."

"The plight of other people always spurred me to serve. I have an unflinching desire to uplift the people especially the less privileged. As long as I live I will give back to the society in a positive way. I am conscious about the yearnings and aspirations of our people. I will do only those things that will uplift mankind." Mark explained.

Ad-hoc staff to conduct 2011 elections - INEC

By Abbas Jimoh

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said it will engage only ad-hoc staff for upcoming elections in the country as there are no funds to employ permanent staff.

Secretary of the commission, Alhaji Abdulahi Kaugama, said yesterday in Abuja that the commission would rely more on the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members for elections including the upcoming re-run

governorship election in Ekiti State.

He was speaking at the INEC Press Corps (IPC) monthly interactive forum tagged 'hot seat'. Irregularities in past elections have been blamed on incompetence and compromise by ad-hoc electoral officials.

Kaugama said some of the problems noticed in the usage of the corps members would be addressed saying, "For the 2011 elections and for the permanent staff, as at now we are operating within what has been provided for us, we were given the same amount for the budget of this year the same with what we operated with last year for our personnel cost, so we cannot hire permanent staff for now, but the ad-hoc staff, we can, if necessary. But for 2011, we would wait and see what would happen in 2010 for our personnel cost, really we need it but we have to get the money to hire them."

On the engagement with the corps members, he said, "The corps members behaves like they are still in the universities, when we went to Adamawa during the re-run election they took us hostage, they said they were not going to the field until they were given their allowances, but you know the transaction, the

government money is not just here is it you carry it.

"We have to follow the due process, know the numbers and pass the money through their coordinators; that is why the delay sometimes, we coordinate with their directorate who identifies who is who. But as the corps members may something like part of us as announced by the chairman, we are going to involve them

more in our programmes, like registration, elections and so on. We are going to improve by paying them just as we get their lists and we send it to their directorates to give them the allowances."

On the Ekiti re-run elections slated for April 25, Kaugama said the commission is ready with logistics for the election and that ad-hoc staff that engaged are currently undergoing training.

Custom boss tasks maritime service providers on quality

By Yunus Abdulhamid

The comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs (CGC), Dr Benard-Shaw Nwadiallo has called on service providers in maritime industry especially those involved in training of officers on scanning, image analysis and risk management to up the quality of their services in order to meet president Yar'adua's 48 hours clearance at the nation's ports.

Inspection and scanning are usually done at the country's boarders by the customs.

The CGC made the call while receiving a delegation from Messr Cotecna Destination Inspection Limited in his office in Abuja, a statement issued by Customs spokes-

man, Joseph Attah said.

It said Nwadiallo however commended Cotecna for its support to in ensuring that servers and other equipment were in place to facilitate the recent ports decongestion exercise.

The statement said, the managing Director of Cotecna, Mr Tayo Rabi who led the delegation had told the CGC they were in his office to congratulate him on his recent appointment.

Rabi assured the leadership of customs of his company's preparedness to meet or surpass the targets of their contract before its expiration in 2012.

The company's boss called all stake holders in the maritime industry to lend a helping hand towards the realisation of the 48 hours clearance time at the port, especially the Lagos sea port.

He said Cotecna presently has seven scanners as against four required by the contract to provide back up and ensure uninterrupted services in the nation's ports.

The Cotecna provides training services for officers in the customs in the areas of image analysis and values added services like privileged report interconnectivity, intelligence reports, and back rolling 50% cost of collective services rendered to the Nigerian Customs.

Police vow to stamp out election malpractice

By Misbahu Bashir

The Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro said officers and men of the force will henceforth safeguard election officials and materials in future elections with a view to stopping electoral malpractices.

Okiro told senior police officers at a meeting in Maiduguri, Borno State that policemen have learnt a lot in the previous elections to enable them make future elections free and fair beginning from the 2011 general elections.

He said he had been directed to plan well for the 2011 elections and avoid mistakes that could mar the elections from being free and fair.

The IGP said the role of

police in elections will determine its success and that the police will keep away from all acts capable of denting their image in the public.

Officers and men of the Nigerian Police have been blamed for irregularities and failure of past elections in the country as they were accused of aiding rigging by some party and electoral officials.

The Governor of Borno State Ali Modu Sheriff had said they have to intensify border patrol so as to halt trans-border crimes. He said the State shares border with three countries and is vulnerable to smuggling of small arms.

NEWS

21 suspected JAMB cheats prosecuted in Ogun

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

Twenty-one candidates arrested over various alleged examination malpractices in last Saturday's Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMB) in Ogun State have been prosecuted by the Police. The Police Commissioner, Mr. Hashimu Argungu disclosed this in a chat with Daily Trust in Abeokuta yesterday. He said the arrested candidates were charged to court on Monday 6th April, 2009, saying his Command's action was meant to serve as deterrent to others. According to Argungu, "one Ibrahim Shehu Shabil with three others were arrested at Orolu High School, Ilaro. Also, at the same venue, a group of four candidates led by one Jide Olukolu were also arrested for various examination malpractices. "At Baptist Boys High School (BBHS) Abeokuta, 16 candidates, including a female candidate, one Miss Onyenika Lilian leading seven others were arrested while another group led by one Bakare Adeyinka with eight boys were arrested. He said all the suspects had been granted bail. The Commissioner of Police called on parents to always educate their children on the need to prepare for examinations rather than cheating which would tarnish their family names and create problems for their children in future.

Imo Speaker pays WAEC fees for students

From John Kennedy Uzoma, Owerri

The Speaker, Imo State House of Assembly, Chief Good luck Opiah has fulfilled his promise to pay N2 million for more than 500 final year students of Ohaji/Egbema LGA for their West African Examination Council (WAEC) fees. Handing over the cheque for the money to the principals of nine secondary schools at the council headquarters in Egbema Monday, Opiah said the gesture was in fulfillment of his earlier pledge to make the payment. The Speaker who represented at the occasion by the Director General, Devin Mandate Organization, Chief Bonny Umah said the gesture was part of his resolve not only to give the people of his constituency effective representation but to also engage in humanitarian services for the less privileged in the society. Opiah said the payment was to enable all secondary school final year students enroll in the 2009 WAEC examination. He expressed regret over the poor turnout of students for registration in the previous years which he said was due to the students' inability to pay for the examination, adding that the fees were paid based on information from the principals of the schools.

Jigawa to launch 590 tricycles

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

Jigawa State government is to launch 590 tricycles as it has trained about 200 operators of the cycles. Speaking at the launch of the training at Maigatari EPZ, the state commissioner for works, Alhaji Baba Santali Aliyu said the trainees include members of Nigerian Union of Road Transportation Workers and commercial motorcyclists. Alhaji Baba said NURTW brought to the ministry 65 members, while commercial motorcycle associations presented 30 members. He noted that the operators were drawn from all 27 local governments of the state. The commissioner explained further that the tricycles would be distributed to all five emirates of Jigawa, adding that spare-parts shops would be established in each of the five emirates for easy access to operators. He further stated the ministry had trained about 50 artisans on mechanics and other related work to ensure adequate maintenance of the tricycles. The trained mechanics and other artisans are expected to train more youth in the future, as according to him the exercise would be a continuous one.

ASUU leader warns FG on Halliburton scandal

An academic union leader, Dr. Ayo Olowe yesterday in Lagos warned the Federal Government against selective prosecution of Nigerian officials culpable in the Halliburton bribe saga.

"Let us watch and see whether all the people involved would not be selectively prosecuted," Olowe, who is the University of Lagos Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) told newsmen.

While expressing con-

cern that the government was yet to be in possession of the names of "the high ranking" Nigerian officials involved in the scam, Olowe cautioned against any attempt to play politics with the matter.

"If the prosecution will be holistic, it will aide the fight against corruption," Olowe noted.

The union leader described the statement by the

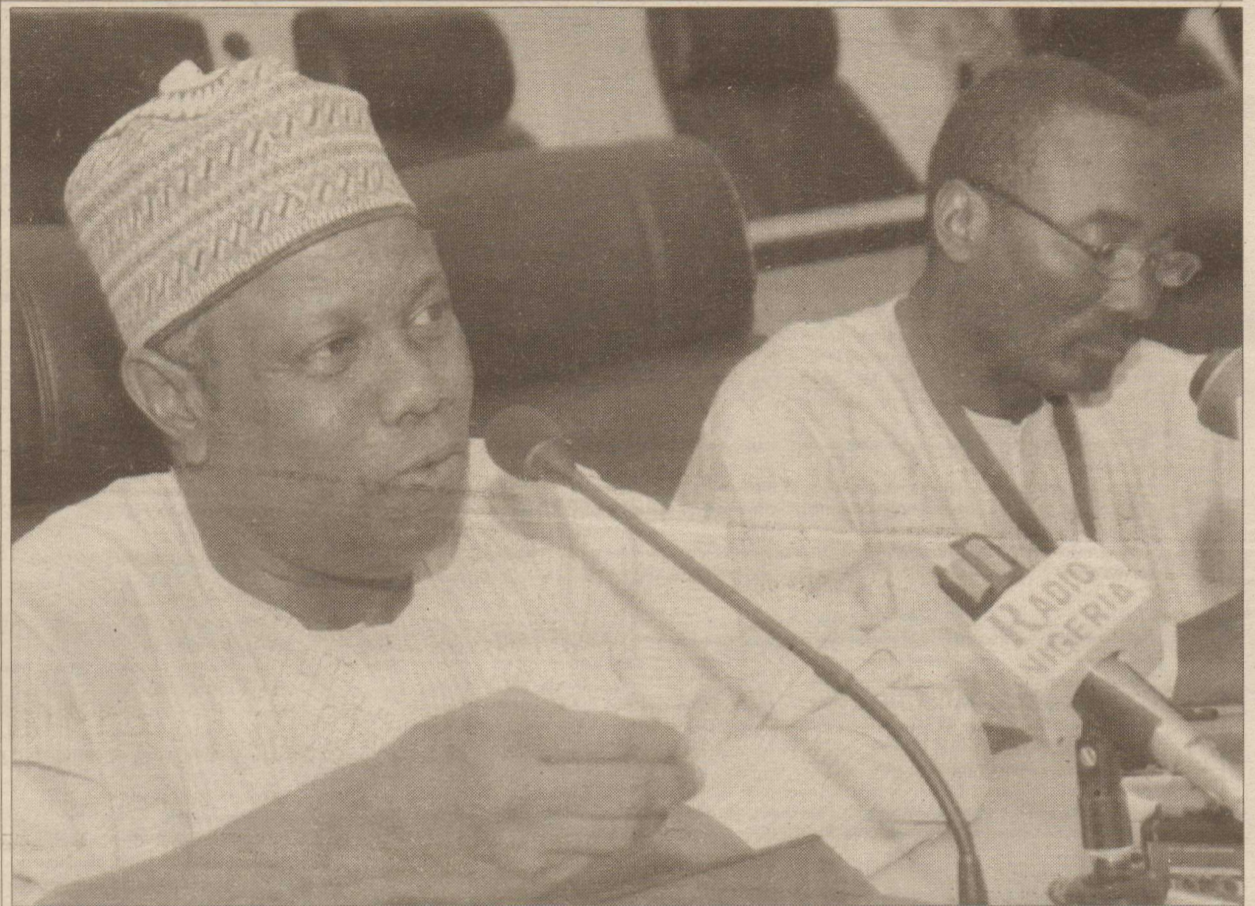
government to expose the bribe takers, as a good step that would strengthen the fight against corruption.

On the inability of the federal government to quickly secure the release of the names of the affected Nigerian officials from the U.S. government, the ASUU leader observed that it might be as a result of security implications.

Nevertheless, he urged

the government to follow whatever due process the U.S. might lay down in getting the names of the indicted persons, to serve as deterrent to others.

The Federal Government had on Tuesday vowed to prosecute and make public the names of Nigerians culpable in the \$180 million Halliburton scam, after obtaining it from the U.S. government. (NAN)



INEC Secretary Alhaji Abdullahi Kaugama (left) speaking to newsmen in Abuja on the activities of INEC and the preparations for April 25th re-run election in Ekiti State yesterday. With him is INEC acting Director of Public Affairs, Emmanuel Umenger. Pic: NAN.

Carter Center treats 6,500 guinea worm cases in Nigeria

The Jimmy Carter Centre in Jos yesterday said it had treated 6,500 cases of guinea worm since it commenced operation in Nigeria in 1988. The Resident Technical Adviser of the Centre, Dr Emmanuel Miri, disclosed this in Jos in an interview with newsmen, shortly after receiving an award from the North Central Students Forum (NCSF). Miri disclosed that the centre would distribute six million doses of Mectizan drugs this year to help in the treatment of guinea worm, as against the five million doses distributed in 2008.

To ensure effective control of the disease, Miri disclosed that the Centre usually offer a reward of N10,000 to any person who offered information on a confirmed case of the disease.

He said that the Centre would round up its intervention in guinea worm control this year after which it would

be handed over to the Federal Ministry of Health to run for another three years. Miri listed some challenges faced by the Centre as low patronage by governments at all levels and irregular payment of counterpart funds. He said that since the Centre was donor-driven,

counterpart funding should be consistent to ensure its effectiveness in the control and total eradication of the disease.

Speaking further, the technical adviser urged government to pay more attention to primary health care services. Guinea worm is acquired from

bad water. It begins to manifest a year after a person must have taken such contaminated water. The Centre also works on other diseases like malaria, filariasis, river blindness, schistosoma and trachoma in eight other states in Nigeria. (NAN)

NCWS to mobilise women against vote buying

The National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) has pledged to mobilise Nigerian women to reject advances from money bag politicians who lure voters with money ahead of the 2011 general elections in the country.

The national President of the council, Hajiya Ramatu Bala Usman who disclosed this to newsmen in Katsina said experience had shown that their vote purchasing

antics negate the people's desire to have credible leadership and render them incapable of performing and respecting the yearnings and aspirations of the electorate.

Mrs. Bala Usman was speaking to Daily Trust in Katsina while leading a

sensitisation rally at Barkiya village of Kurfi Local Government against maternal and child mortality and girl child education organised in conjunction with IPAS Nigeria.

She said the women were strategising ahead of 2011 and not only would they not respect the vote purchasers but would equally press for affirmative action to allow them participate and bring changes in 2011.

Job Vacancies



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

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

Associate Director, Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Job responsibilities

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

Minimum requirements

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

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

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

Job responsibilities

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

Minimum requirements

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

Clinical Service Officer (LAMIS)

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

Job responsibilities

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

Minimum requirements

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

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

Note: The officer may be required to live at the site location if specific site is too far from the zonal office.

Clinical Services Officer

With the Senior Medical Services Officer, the Clinical Services Officer will provide technical and programmatic support to implement high quality care and support activities with primary focus on clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT at the zonal and state levels.

Job responsibilities

- Coordinate the implementation of components related to clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT at the facility level
- Contribute to the development of lessons learnt from programs and projects related to clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT and apply these lessons to modify existing programs and improve the design of new programs
- Assist in strengthening reporting systems on program progress against stated objectives
- Contribute to the development of program strategies, subproject documents, work plans and budgets

Minimum requirements

- MBBS/MD with 1-3 years experience in clinical care with sound understanding of HIV/AIDS
- 2-3 years experience in the provision of ART in resource-constrained settings
- Postgraduate degree in public health is desirable
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is an advantage

Senior Program Officer

Under the supervision of the Zonal Manager, provide support to and coordination in program planning, design, review and the monitoring of project activities to the country and field offices.

Job responsibilities

- Work with the zonal manager to provide support to and coordinate the FHI Nigeria activities in accordance with USAID and PEPFAR guidelines and regulations
- Assist in strengthening a system of reporting on program progress against stated objectives and monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Assist the zonal manager in developing program strategies, subproject documents, work plans and budgets
- Supervise the work of the program officer and state M&E officer
- Assist the zonal manager in providing programmatic assistance to local FHI partners in HIV/AIDS/STI programming
- Work with the zonal manager to oversee technical capacity building activities at the national, state and local government levels and for local implementing agencies
- Remain informed on current programs and research in STI/HIV/AIDS and work closely with international prevention specialists
- Perform other duties as may be assigned by the zonal manager

Minimum requirements

- Masters degree in public health or the behavioral sciences with 5-7 years experience (B.Sc. with 7-9 years experience)
- At least 5 years in HIV/AIDS programming
- Experience working with NGOs and CBOs
- Strong knowledge of HIV/AIDS programming and of project monitoring

Laboratory Quality Officer

Job responsibilities

- Provide technical support, assistance and advice on issues relating to quality within the laboratories
- Contribute to implementation, development and co-ordination of quality processes, including adherence to relevant professional standards and guidelines, and involvement with laboratory clinical governance issues
- Provide technical support in updating and developing quality policy, tools, SOPs and other procedures related to the implementation of laboratory services for HIV/AIDS, opportunistic infections (OI) and malaria care and treatment in collaboration with technical staff within FHI and implementing agencies, state and local agencies in Nigeria
- Work closely with M&E and other laboratory staff to ensure that laboratory quality related data, e.g. proficiency testing and retention of samples, are adequately captured in the DHIS and LAMIS
- Prepare reports on the progress of laboratory quality assurance (QA), quality control (QC) and proficiency testing activities
- Monitor QA and QC activities of the laboratory in order to determine conformance with established policies, national regulations, or accreditation requirements
- Coordinate the distribution of PT samples to respective facilities and timely collection and submission of results to PT providers

Minimum requirements

- Bachelor's degree in the physical sciences, medical laboratory sciences, microbiology, molecular biology or related field with 5 years post-NYSC experience in laboratory quality management
- Working knowledge of clinical laboratory equipment
- Proven skills in clinical laboratory assessment and creative problem-solving will be an advantage
- Certification/license to practice as a medical laboratory scientist is a plus
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is highly desirable

Laboratory Officer

Job responsibilities

- Liaise with the Senior Laboratory Advisor and the country office laboratory technical officers to provide technical support to implement high quality laboratory services in the GHAIN project within the state
- Coordinate the day-to-day operations of all laboratory services at the state level
- Coordinate laboratory support services for counseling and testing, HIV clinical care including OI management, ART, and PMTCT at the state level
- Coordinate the setting up of ART laboratory services at the state facility level
- Coordinate inventory management and stocktaking systems of GHAIN laboratory services at the state level
- Represent FHI/GHAIN on issues of HIV/AIDS laboratory management at the state level

Minimum requirements

- B.Sc. and AMLSCN, B.MLS or AMLSCN and FMLSCN
- Minimum of 5 years post-NYSC experience with a minimum of 3 years experience in the provision of laboratory support for HIV/AIDS
- Sound understanding of HIV/AIDS technical issues
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is highly desirable

Associate Director Human Resources

Job responsibilities

- Lead the human resources team at the country office in functional areas including developing job specifications, staff recruitment, employee relations, benefits administration, compensation, HRIS, and staff development
- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of FHI Nigeria's human resource strategy
- Provide technical direction and oversight on compliance to zonal offices on human resource matters

NEWS

FCT minister risks jail over contempt

FCT Minister Senator Adamu Aliero and the Director of Parks and Recreation Isa Shaibu risk being sent to jail for violating court orders as they refused to desist from sealing Parks and Gardens in the Federal Capital Territory.

A notice of Consequence of Disobedience to orders of court served on the Minister and Director stated that "Unless you obey the directions in this order you will be guilty of contempt of court and will be liable to be committed to prison."

The Association of Parks and Garden owners had through their Counsel, Samson Ameh (SAN), and Orji Nwafor-Orizu sought and obtained an order of an FCT High Court restraining the Minister and his agents from closing down parks and gardens in the FCT and demolishing any structure therein pending the hearing and determination of their suit.

The plaintiffs had dragged President Umaru Yar'adua and Senator Aleiro to an Abuja High Court challenging the powers of the President to make the

By Atika Balal

law regulating the operation of parks and gardens in the Territory.

In the suit filed through their Counsel the plaintiffs averred that the powers to issue regulations as it relates to the operation and closure of parks and gardens in the FCT lies with the Area Councils.

They asked the Court to

order the defendants to pay each of them the sum of N500, 000 daily as cost for money they lose on a daily basis as a result of the parks being shut down.

Justice Abubakar Talba had in his ruling granted the plaintiffs' application for an interim order restraining the Minister and his agents from closing the parks and gardens but the Minister and Director did not heed.

An 11 point affidavit deposed to by Secretary of the Association, Jimmy Ineke averred that the plaintiffs were allocated various open spaces by the Abuja Metropolitan Management Agency (AMMA) for the sum of N500, 000 each and huge sums of money was spent to develop the parks. He stated that his counsel had disclosed to him that the President of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria lacks the power to make such regulations as the aforesaid powers are vested in the Area Councils; and the aforementioned 2nd (Aliero) and 3rd defendants (AMMA) also lack the powers to seal, demolish and issue contravention notices to the plaintiffs.

He said the actions of the

2nd and 3rd defendants were carried out without recourse to the Magistrate Court as none of the plaintiffs was ever brought before a Magistrate Court for violation of the Abuja Parks and Gardens Regulation 2005 nor given an opportunity to defend themselves before being issued a contravention notice or shutting down their parks.

NBC opposes bill to amend law

The National Boundary Commission (NBC) has opposed a proposed bill seeking to amend its act, to give commissioners permanent status.

Speaking at a public hearing on the amendment bill, Director-General of the NBC, Sadiq Marafa Diggi told members of House of Representatives Joint Committee on Special Duties and Justice that the move is unnecessary and bound to be counterproductive.

The Office of vice president of the federal

By Tashikalmah Hallah & Nasidi A. Yahaya

republic had also opposed the proposed amendment saying that the proposed amendment bill would run contrary to the constitutional provision which makes the vice president part time chairman of NBC with while the Director General serves as secretary.

Diggi submitted that national boundary was a sensitive matter that touches on national security adding, "The

passage of the bill that seeks to give commissioners permanent status would make supervisory, control and regulatory role of the chairman (Vice President) impossible, the position of the chairman was part time which limits him from having powers over full time commissioners."

According to him, the six part time commissioners from the six geopolitical zones represent the entire nation and not the sub-region of their origin saying, "In matters of dispute between states, governors

of the affected state were usually co-opted into the committee to discuss the matter."

"If commissioners are permanent as proposed who they would report to, would they report to the DG or the vice president whose appointment is temporal", Diggi asked

The DG said any amendment to the existing act must make provision for appointment of 37 commissioners to represent each of the 36 states of the federation and the FCT.

While supporting the position of the NBC boss, representative of the Vice president, Ojayeifa Soyinka reminded the committee on the consequence of contradictions to sections of the constitution contained in the bill.

Earlier, the sponsor of the bill, David Idoko and the chairman of the special duties committee, Samson Osagie told the gathering that the bill if passed would turn around the fortunes of the NBC and ease out the various boundary disputes across the country.



Job Vacancies cont'd.

- Ensure timely, efficient, and proactive conduct of the day-to-day operations of the human resources department
- Oversee both the internal and external recruitment processes for all FHI Nigeria appointments to ensure effectiveness, transparency and accountability
- Ensure compliance with FHI standards by all recruiting managers and interviewers
- Work with country office directors and zonal managers in planning and implementing staff recruitment, orientation, benefits, etc to the required standards
- Initiate, develop, and implement organizational human resource programs and strategies
- Contribute to the development and editing of policies and procedures
- Review and recommend updates to the personnel policy manual as required
- Stay abreast with developments in labor laws and legislations and advise management accordingly

Minimum requirements

- MS/MA in business administration, social sciences or related field with at least 6 years relevant experience in a business setting, or BS/BA with at least 8 years relevant experience
- Excellent analytical, interpersonal and computer (Excel and spreadsheet) skills
- Experience in managing human resource functions in multicultural non-profit environments
- Good working knowledge of USAID and Global Fund contracts and grants regulations is an advantage
- A higher degree or professional qualification in human resource management is an advantage

Senior IT Officer

Job responsibilities

- Provide support for the maintenance of FHI Nigeria's computer and network infrastructure to ensure acceptable and stable operations
- Be responsible for all IT related equipment and software that are part of FHI Nigeria's inventory, including local area network, servers, PCs, printers, etc
- Provide technical IT support to FHI zonal offices in Nigeria
- Troubleshoot network and server software problems, including e-mail/internet systems.
- Assist in performing software installations and upgrades as required
- Ensure virus prevention and perform updates as required on all computers
- Perform "housekeeping" functions such as server and user management
- Provide periodic IT training to FHI Nigeria staff and to partner organizations
- Assist in planning and implementation of IT related projects introduced by FHI USA
- Perform daily and monthly backup of all data on the servers to a tape drive
- Ensure timely update of Microsoft Windows 2000/2003/XP security patches and other updates or service packs as required

Minimum requirements

- B.Sc. in computer science or equivalent with at least 2 years professional experience in the information technology industry OR
- At least five years of demonstrated work experience in computer maintenance and network management
- Adequate knowledge and ability in Windows 2000/2003 server and Windows 2000/XP workstation management support
- Ability to troubleshoot software problems, including e-mail/internet systems
- Ability to assist and perform software installations and upgrades as required
- Ability to perform "housekeeping" functions such as server user management

Administrative Officer

The Administrative Officer will be based in a state field office.

Job responsibilities

- Provide administrative and secretarial support to the zonal office
- Serve as point of contact for logistic and administrative needs in the office

- Coordinate all administrative and secretarial support services for the zonal office (as relevant)
- Keep proper office records/filings as appropriate
- Record minutes of staff meetings and circulate same amongst staff of the zonal office.
- Coordinate all travel details/logistics for staff, consultants and TDyers' including travel bookings, hotel accommodation and arrangement for airport and hotel pick-ups
- Supervise administrative assistants
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in the provision of logistic support for workshops and trainings
- Coordinate all records/storage of supplies for the country office

Minimum requirements

- Degree in secretarial studies or related subjects
- Minimum of three years experience in a non-profit or international development organization

Accountant

Under the direction of the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer, the Accountant shall assume responsibility for accounting in the zonal office and ensure compliance with project contractual financial requirements.

Job responsibilities

- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in ensuring accurate keeping of all project books of account, including checking account, equipment and supply registers, etc
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to lead the preparation of monthly and annual financial reports, including financial status of subprojects account activities with accompanying bank documentation and receipts
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in monitoring NGO subproject budgets in accordance with approved work plan activities
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to analyze, develop, and monitor accounting/fiscal control procedures and program budgets including monitoring cash flows and requesting for fund transfers from FHI headquarters
- Prepare financial reports for country office staff to monitor and track obligations and expenditures
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to provide training and backstopping on the MTX double entry accounting system
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to provide technical assistance to NGOs on accounting and financial matters
- Identify areas needing improvement and provide necessary staff development and training
- Prepare written and verbal responses to inquiries and requests for budgetary information

Minimum requirements

- University degree in accounting, finance and business administration or its recognized equivalent
- CPA, ACA, ICAN or recognized equivalent
- Minimum of 5 years experience in accounting related to NGOs and community level programs
- Familiarity with USAID-funded programs and non-governmental organizations in Nigeria

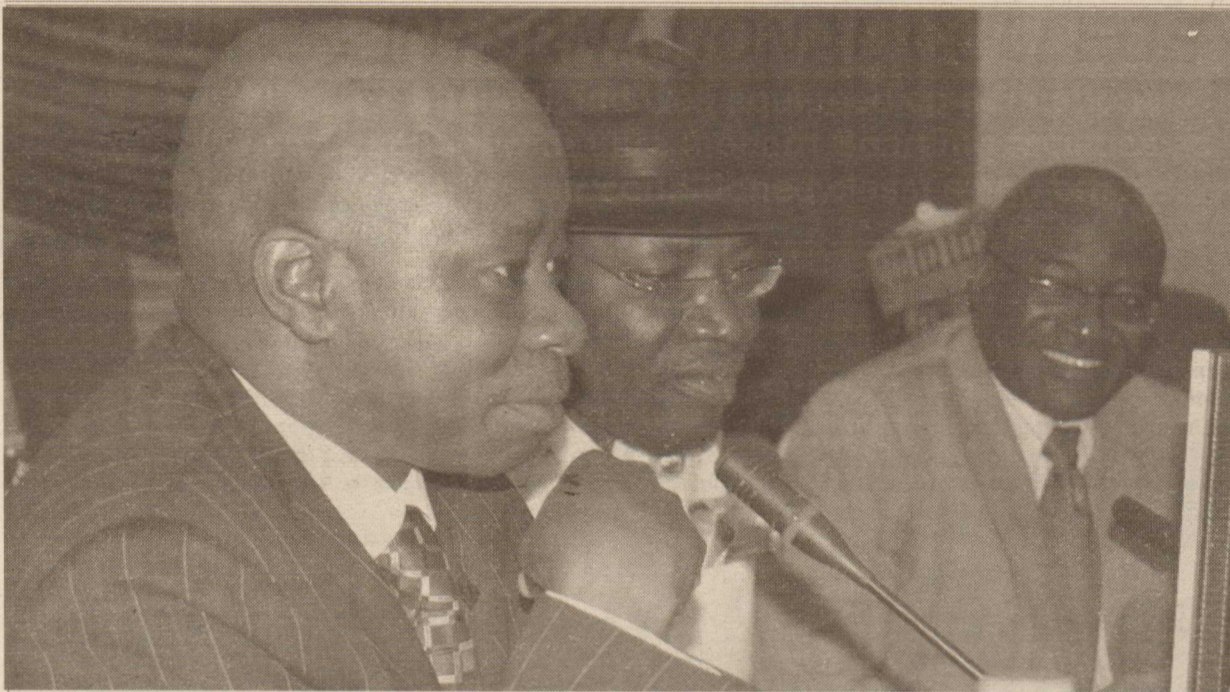
Method of application

Interested candidates should forward their suitability statement (application) and resume (CV) as a single MS Word document within 10 days from the date of this publication to:

- Medservicesjobs@ghain.org for Medical Services Department vacancies
- MonEvals@ghain.org for Monitoring and Evaluation Department vacancies
- PMJobs@ghain.org for Program Management Department vacancies
- LabServicesjobs@ghain.org for Laboratory Services Department vacancies
- SharedServicesjobs@ghain.org for Shared Services Department vacancies

Only applications sent electronically (i.e. by e-mail) with the job title and location clearly indicated as the subject of the mail will be considered, and only short listed candidates will be contacted.

NEWS



From left: Chairman, House Committee on Special Duties, Samson Osage; Chairman, House Committee on Justice, Henry Dickson; and Chairman, House Committee on State and Local Government David Idoko during the public hearing to amend the National Boundary Commission Act, held at the National Assembly, Abuja, on Tuesday. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Benue CNPP flays suspension of LG chairmen

Barely five days after Governor Gabriel Suswam of Benue State suspended the Ogbadibo Local Government chairman, Mr. Clement Agada to pave way for investigations into alleged maladministration, chairman of the Conference of All Nigerian Parties (CNPP) in the state, Mr. Baba Agan has challenged the governor to produce the result of the suspension also served on the first two chairmen.

The first two chairmen namely Terlumun Akputu of Kwande and Simon Abua of Gboko served suspensions and have all returned to their beats

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

for months now, but there is no statement on the said investigation which their suspension was to pave way for. Yet the governor rose last week to put another chairman on suspension. The CNPP chairman described the move as "playing politics with the people", saying the suspensions were meant to serve political and personal interests of the godfathers, and not initiated to correct the suspended chairmen.

Besides, he alleged that the offences fetching suspension for

some chairmen are the same offences being committed by council chairmen in Katsina-Ala, Otukpo, Vandeikya, Ohimini, Agatu, Gwer West and Konshisha, respectively.

Baba Agan alleged that the suspensions were initiated to arm-twist chairmen to compromise so that godfathers would continue to drain council funds into their private pockets.

He challenged Governor Suswam to come out with the findings of the investigations on the first two chairmen or reverse their suspensions with apologies.

Deputy Speaker of the

Benue State House of Assembly, Williams Edoh while ruling on the suspension of Agada, regretted that the two past suspensions recommended by the Assembly had not yielded any fruits as council chairmen in the state continued with the same financial impropriety. It was reported last week that crisis has engulfed 13 councils in the state as the chairmen are facing threats of suspension from their respective legislative councils for alleged misappropriation of funds and non performance in the last 15 months they have been in office.

Rep alleges plan to derail Yar' adua's govt

A clique of Northern leaders comprising retired army generals and high ranking politicians are making moves to thwart President Umaru Musa Yar' adua's administration, a member of the House of Representatives, Dr Shehu

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

Garba Matazu has revealed. Speaking with newsmen in Kaduna, Matazu who represents Musawa/Matazu federal constituency at the National Assembly alleged that the former Speaker of the

House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'abba and the former Minister of Defence, Alhaji Lawal Batagarawa are being used by the clique to advance their cause.

"These people are unpatriotic Northern leaders,

they don't have the interest of the North in their hearts, they don't have the interest of the country at heart and they don't believe in God, all what they are doing are for their own selfish interests and not for anybody. We have their list and very soon we are going to make all their names known to the public," he said. Matazu who is a three term member of the House of Representatives advised the Northern leaders to turn over a new leaf and support the administration of President Yar' adua, adding that he and like minds were ready to face the master minds of the plot.

He promised the clique; "it will be fire for fire for them because we are willing to defend our president to any level even if it is to lose our lives but before we take our decision on them we are advising them to desist from their bad act so that we can collectively move our country forward."

saying "Other patients should be transferred to Dutse General Hospital.

Conducting the governor round the hospital, the state Commissioner for Health, Dr. Ibrahim Muhammad Nashabaru told the governor that the cause of the fire was yet to be known, as according to him there was no electricity at the time of the incident.

He said the inferno razed the administrative building and several other blocks that housed the x-ray department, scanning section and consultancy among others.

Fire razes Ringim General Hospital

A midnight fire engulfed Ringim Local Government General Hospital leading to the destruction of five departments and hospital equipments worth billions of naira. The fire, Daily Trust learnt, erupted at about 12 midnight Wednesday from one of the departments and later escalated to other buildings. The affected departments are X-ray, administrative block, scanning section, records office and pharmacy department.

Daily Trust learnt that although source of the fire could not be ascertain at the time of filing this report, sources within the hospital said it might not be an electrical fault.

The state governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido, who visited the scene directed the setting up of an adhoc committee under the leadership of the Chief of Staff, Alhaji Aminu Ringim to ascertain the extent of

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

damage and to effect immediate supply of all relevant drugs to the hospital within 24 hours. Governor Lamido also ordered other general hospitals in neighboring local governments to assist the affected local government with needed drugs and other relevant equipment to enable it continue with its normal services pending the renovation of the destroyed hospital.

He further directed the state Ministry of Health to decongest the hospital,

Jigawa to train 3,000 birth attendants

To tackle infant and maternal mortality, the Jigawa government says it would train 3,000 traditional birth attendants. Governor Sule Lamido said this yesterday in Dutse when he received a team from Unity Bank Plc. led by its Managing Director, Alhaji Fallalu Bello.

Lamido said plans had been concluded to select 3,000 women for training on basic hygiene and modern skills to ensure safe delivery. He said the training itself was in response to the call made by traditional birth attendants in the state. He added that the Talakawa Summit held in

Dutse recently was conceived to address the problems of the people and not a political jamboree. Earlier in his address, Bello said he was in Dutse to discuss how the bank would partner with the state government on the establishment of a regional or state-wide bank.

NSCDC arrests oil thieves in Ondo

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Ondo State has seized two trucks loaded with jerry cans of crude oil along Ondo/Ore road. The State Commandant of the Corps, Mr. Christopher Olu while briefing newsmen in Akure pointed out that the vehicles were intercepted when the suspects were trying to escape. He said the vandals jumped into the bush when they saw his men on duty at about 3:00 am on Monday. Olu said one of the vehicles intercepted with the crude oil was a Hiace bus with registration number Ondo XB 521 REE while the other lorry has no registration number.

According to him, the command is still investigating the case in order to arrest members of the gang who fled to the forest. The NSCDC boss who warned members of the public to be security conscious and report any suspect to the appropriate quarter, said his men acted on a tip off. He stressed that his men had positioned themselves in the forest before the vehicles were intercepted saying that he had ordered his men to mount 24 hour surveillance in the area to prevent further damages to the pipelines.

He also disclosed that one of the handsets of the vandals was found inside the bus and would assist the command.

Yobe Assembly confirms 20 commissioners

From Hamza Idris, Damaturu

Alhaji Muhammed Lamin, the Yobe State coordinator of Yar' adua/Goodluck 2007 presidential campaign organisation yesterday formally left the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and picked appointment as commissioner under the platform of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). When asked by Waya Dagari representing Jakusko State Constituency under which platform he was accepting his appointment as commissioner, Muhammed Lamin said "Of course under the platform of the ANPP because I collected my party membership the same time the offer of commissionership was made to me...I want to join my family and serve my people."

Another chieftain of the Action Congress (AC) Hajiji Asma'u Kabeer was equally confirmed as commissioner by the Yobe State House of Assembly. She had served as commissioner under former Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim before dumping the ANPP for the AC shortly before the 2007 elections. Others confirmed by the House for commissionership positions include Bukar Dauda, Ya'u Usman Dachia, Barrister Bala Haladu and Mohammed Dakasko. They were among the 21 people submitted to the House by Governor Ibrahim Gaidam last week for confirmation after he dissolved the commissioners he inherited from late Governor Mamman Ali. Sixteen of the former commissioners staged a comeback and were cleared by the House yesterday while five others were replaced with new ones. The commissioners dropped included Mohammed Hassan (Finance), Ibrahim Bakabe (water), Garba Maidugu (sports), Fati Halilu (women affairs) and Dodo Ka kawo Ka Rage (land). Deputy Speaker Adamu Dala Dogo who presided over the screening of the new commissioners said those dropped by Gaidam had problems with people of their constituencies. "There were wide consultations before they were dropped and replaced by new ones. We hope the new commissioners and the old ones coming back would live up to the expectations of their people" Dala said. Old commissioners that were cleared by the House for reappointment include Barau Sughum, Musa Maina Dumburi, Sama'ila Gadaka, Alkali Abdulkadir Jajere, Bukar Dauda, Barrister Mustapha Goneri, Habu Dauda Gulani, Sidi Yakubu Karasuwa, Idris Machinama, Sani Musa Lawal, Yusuf Yahaya, Zanna Laisu, Kaigama Umar, Wakil Sarki, Barrister Aliyu Shehu and Architect Shettima Saleh. Meanwhile, Barrister Mustapha Goneri who served as commissioner for justice before their recent dissolution told members of the House not to commit crime because they were not covered by the immunity clause.

He was responding to a question by a member of the House during the screening on what he would do if a legislator commits a crime. "Definitely you would be prosecuted because you are not among those covered by the immunity clause in the Nigerian Constitution", he advised.

Rc: 173339.

KADUNA STATE DEVELOPMENT & PROPERTY COMPANY LTD.
Head Office: No. 5, Lafia Road, G.R.A., P.M.B. 2183, Kaduna-Nigeria.
Tel: 062-244378, 247451.

PUBLIC NOTICE
"CAVEAT EMPTOR"

The attention of the Management of the Kaduna State Development and Property Company Limited has been drawn to the illegal and unauthorized lease and sale of plots of land within the Company's land holdings in the following locations:

- i. Land around KSDPC Kudenda Housing Estate near PVC pipes Nasarawa Kaduna, covered by C of O No. KD 16119
- ii. Land around Ung. Muazu Housing Estate near ITF office covered by C of O No. KD 16123

2. The general public is hereby warned that anyone who takes part in any kind of transaction in the aforesaid locations does so at his or her own risk.

3. BE WARNED ACCORDINGLY

Signed ► **MANAGEMENT**

NEWS

Association campaigns for Shinkafi

An association known as 'PDP Vision for MAS 2011 and Beyond,' has embarked on a campaign to garner support for Zamfara State governor, Alhaji Mahmuda Aliyu Shinkafi to get a second term as governor of the state in 2011.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, the Director General of the forum, Alhaji Mohammed Bello Auta said the formation of the association was informed by the "leadership qualities and selfless service" of Governor Mahmuda Aliyu Shinkafi to people of Zamfara.

He said the group felt

From Sadeeq Aliyu,
Gusau

the need to invite other Zamfara indigenes and establish the forum to support the governor in achieving his objectives and if possible, encourage him to do more for the benefit of the people of the state. He said the main objective of the forum was to explore more potentials of good governance they saw in the governor and try to see how they could sell such to people of the state and let them know that he is a God chosen leader. According to Alhaji Auta, the forum aims to move Governor Shinkafi beyond

2011, and not only to remain as governor of Zamfara, but for the future role he could play in Nigerian politics for the good of Zamfara State. He said part of the activities embarked upon by the forum was the enlightenment campaign

for promotion of peace to educate people on achievements of the administration within the period of its existence, to counter negative propaganda in the most peaceful way and provide employment for unemployed youths in the

state. He also said members of the forum would tour all 14 local governments in the state and open branches to educate people on why the governor decamped to PDP as majority of the people did not understand the content of

the governor's speech when he left ANPP.

Alhaji Bello Auta noted that the speech had been translated into Hausa and Arabic *ajami* so that people could see the vision the governor has and why he left ANPP to avoid misinterpretation.

FRSC flays abuse of traffic rules

The Federal Road Safety Commission in Sokoto says it is disturbed by the breach of traffic regulations on highways in the zone. The Acting Zonal Commanding Officer, Mr. Yakubu Attah made the disclosure yesterday

From Abdulfatai
Abdulsalami, Sokoto

while speaking with newsmen in his office. He said the zone comprising Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States had been noted for the abuse of traffic regulations.

He said political party vehicles within the zone do not carry vehicle registration numbers and official papers, adding that in most cases the drivers do not have licenses. Attah advised defaulters to register their vehicles. He disclosed that about eight vehicles belonging to different political parties in the zone were presently being held by his men on special patrol. He urged traditional rulers and titles holders to ensure proper registration of their vehicles, stressing that as traditional rulers, they should assist in the

endeavour to ensure compliance and also show leadership by example. In a related development, the Acting Zonal Commanding Officer has warned starlet and compact vehicle

operators to desist from conveying excess luggage and advised passengers not to patronize such overloaded vehicles as they stand the risk of being dislodged at the point of arrest.

Kwara varsity gets interim chairman

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

The Kwara State Executive Council (SEC) yesterday appointed the Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau, Prof. Shuaib Oba AbdurRaheem as the Interim Chairman Governing Council of the state university. With the appointment, the Oba will be working with other members who are to be put in place by the state ministry of Education, Science and Technology. This was disclosed yesterday at a briefing by the state Commissioner for Information and Home Affairs, Mr. Ben Dutoye after the council meeting in Ilorin. Responding to questions from newsmen, the State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Alhaji Bolaji Abdullah affirmed that with the appointment of Prof. Shuaib Oba AbdurRaheem, the technical committee of the institution stands dissolved, adding that the approval of other members was for the chairman and the parent ministry.

Police kill robbery suspect in Lagos

The police in Lagos yesterday said it killed one robbery suspect in a gun battle with some bandits at Ojo road in Ajegunle area of the state. The command Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Frank Mba told newsmen that a team of anti-robbery policemen from the Apapa police station had the encounter with the bandits on Tuesday. He said one locally made gun and one live cartridge were recovered from the dead robber.

According to the PRO, the Police team responded to a distress call at a shop located at N0. 77, Ojo road



IGP Mike Okiro

where the bandits engaged the police. He added that the case had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation

Department (SCID) Panti, Yaba for further investigation.

Mba also disclosed that the stabbing to death of a middle aged man during a free-for-all fight along the Ipaja road near Agege.

The police spokesman who identified the deceased simply as Kassy, said a suspect was arrested when some policemen from the Agege police station visited the scene.

Mba said that the corpse had been taken to the public mortuary for autopsy while investigation continues. (NAN)

NANS enlists support for Apa State

Nigerian students under the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) say they want Apa State created out of Benue State because the Idoma speaking people of the state would be better off if the agitation materializes. According to the students, their position is premised on their observation of the deprivation of the Idomas in the present political setting in the state.

The student union which threw its weight behind the agitation for the creation of Apa State noted that there was nothing political or ill motivated about the agitation, adding that the call for the creation of the state is appropriate.

The Secretary General of

By Sunday Ejike
Benjamin

NANS, Comrade Martin Igwe who spoke in Abuja at a ceremony in honour of an illustrious son of Benue from Apa-Agatu Federal constituency, Chief Adamu Etono urged members of the National Assembly to give the agitation a solid backing.

According to the NANS scribe, the people of Apa would have the dividends of democracy and the trickling down effect of pragmatic leadership and representation if credible people are voted into power. Igwe described the conferment of 'Icon of hope' award on Chief Etono by the association as a burden that would spur him to better performance.

NANS said Chief Etono had performed well in his constituency where he constructed two bridges and procured 11 transformers for communities in the area.

Comrade Igwe also used the opportunity to state the readiness of NANS to assist government in achieving its agenda. Responding, Chief Etono said he was overwhelmed by the mammoth crowd of Nigerian students that came to honor him, adding "It is the first time I am receiving an award in my life. It is a sign that the future holds so many good things for me". He promised to contribute more to the development of his constituency and the nation.

Happy Easter

MONAN

JUST 4 MEN

Shoes Sandals Slippers

Sizes 38 To 50

Buy @ Half Price

On April 10th, 11th & 13th 2009 (3days Only)

Lagos: 13, Opebi Rd, Ikeja Lagos (Opposite GTBank)
Tel: 01-2551033, 08033046338

ABUJA: AUA PLAZA, Plot 734, Kade St, (Behind Tantalizers)
off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 11, Abuja
Tel: 09-2909318, 08033211756

OPINION

Soludo's successor: A case for Mailafia

It is clear that when the tenure of the current Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Chukwuma Soludo, expires at the end of next month; it is not likely to be renewed. The current strategizing and politicking for his successor makes that point pretty clear. If there has been any indication that the presidency is interested in renewing Mr. Soludo's tenure, no one would be angling to replace him.

So far, some names have been mentioned as possible successors. Some have taken it upon themselves to actively sell their candidacy which explains why some clearly sponsored write-ups have appeared in the newspapers in recent days, championing the candidacy of one person or another. This is a fair game because the position of the governor of the apex bank of any country is a very responsible, enviable and also, prestigious one. Any holder of that office has a chance to contribute to the growth and development of the fatherland. He also has an opportunity to earn enormous name recognition within and outside the shores of the nation thereby achieving great self esteem which is one of the needs of every human being. It would have been very surprising therefore if no one was angling for such a high profile job.

While several names have been banded about, there is however one name that I consider has been conspicuously not mentioned as a fitting replacement for Soludo. That man is Dr. Obadiah Mailafia, a former Deputy Governor of the CBN, among other qualifications.

I guess that three possible reasons account for why Mailafia's name has not been featuring prominently as one of those suitable for the job. One, ignorance of who Mailafia is. Dispassionate and fair-minded analysts who are not in the pay of any of the other contenders have not been mentioning him because they simply do not know him. A self-effacing and highly cultured gentleman who is nevertheless supremely confident of his abilities, Mailafia will consider it gross to seek to sell himself in any way as if he desires that office so that he can help himself and not his nation. To the likes of Mailafia, a good product does not need much marketing; it sells itself.

Two, not being a politician but a well honed

Idang Alibi on Thursday

(idangalibi@dailytrust.com); 08036938729

technocrat, Mailafia has not adopted the ways of politicians, sponsoring people to project him as a suitable man to be at the helm of the CBN. Three, there is this belief that President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has already made up his mind as to who he will give the post to so it will be a waste of time to mention other capable persons to him such as Dr. Obadiah Mailafia. Some specifically say that the President is inclined to give it to an Hausa-Fulani Muslim from the North West geo-political zone. And so, according to that thinking, Mailafia, who is a Christian from the minority Ninzam ethnic group in Southern Kaduna, can not simply be in the reckoning on account of his faith and where he comes from!

We live in extraordinarily difficult times. The economies of the world are in turmoil. No country appears immune against the world-wide difficulties. Times such as these call for extraordinary action on the part of not only the leadership but also of the people. Our leaders need to do be more innovative. We need to do things differently from the ways we have always done them in the past. Factors such as religion and ethnicity have no doubt always played significant roles in who gets what position in our country. But in the light of what is happening in the world today, we need new thinking. Recruiting a person for a position such as that of the CBN governor requires that we jettison religious and geo-political considerations and focus squarely on merit. This is the time we need to call on the brightest and the best among us to bail us out of these terrible times.

If that is the thinking, Dr. Mailafia will not have any rival for the CBN governorship position. He is certainly one of the brightest and best we have around who can help us navigate our way out of our economic depression. Dr. Mailafia's learning, experience and suitability for the particular position of CBN Governor at this particular

point in time are simply intimidating.

Mailafia is one you will call a polyvalent intellectual or a renaissance gentleman—a man who is a jack of many disciplines and an accomplished master of them all. He is an international economist, a sociologist, a political scientist, an excellent writer and commentator on public affairs, a philosopher, a humanist and a much traveled man of the world who is at home in most capitals of the world. He is also a polyglot who is completely at home in both written and spoken English, French, Hausa and his native Nimzam. He has a working knowledge of two other world languages Arabic and Spanish.

Dr. Mailafia took a B. Sc Social Sciences (Honours) in Economics, Sociology and Political Science from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with a Second Class Upper, emerging top of his graduating year. Earlier in his academic career, he had taken a Grade One Distinction in the West African School Certificate Examinations at the Mada Hills Secondary School, Akwanga in Nasarawa State. He later earned the Diplome (M.Phil) in International Economics from the prestigious *Ecole nationale d'administration (ENA-IIAP)*, Paris. He took his doctorate at another famous university—Oriel College, Oxford University, England, specializing on International Economic Development.

For his work experience, he has lectured at various times at ABU, Oxford and London universities and was sometime a Fellow of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru.

After his stint in the academia, Mailafia took up a job as Chief Economist in the Strategic and Budgeting Department, African Development Bank Group in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and later Tunis, Tunisia. Here, he supervised the execution of several development projects.

For two years, Mailafia also worked as the Deputy Governor (Economic Policy), Central

Bank of Nigeria, just a breath away from the governorship of the bank before politics took him away from that institution. He later worked at a cabinet-rank position as Special Adviser to the President on Political Economy to former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Mailafia is at present a Member of the National Economic Management Team charged with the responsibility of formulating and suggesting policy for the Federal Government of Nigeria.

For a man who is versed in monetary economics, public finance, central banking, international finance, regional integration, trade and investments, public policy, climate change and sustainable development, youth, poverty and development, planning and budgeting and strategic management, Fate seems to have prepared Mailafia well for the job of CBN Governor. If some one like this is not seen to be competent and suitable enough for the position of CBN Governor, then what type of person can they possibly be looking for? In the next few days or weeks, the government of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua will answer that question.

But for me, if we need any one whose appointment will command the respect of the international financial community, one who will be at home in the G8, G20 or G—anything meetings, Mailafia is it. He has name recognition among members of the international finance community and can feel at home with experts, laymen, kings, queens and prime ministers. His appointment will surely inspire confidence in investors who are interested in investing in our economy. Above all, from my knowledge of him, Mailafia is a patriot who has conquered his greed and will not champion policies and programmes to benefit self, region or religion but to further the best interests of the fatherland. This is the type of man our situation calls for now and for all times.

Having related closely with Dr. Mailafia in the past two years since he joined us as a member of the *Daily Trust* Editorial Board, I confidently give the above testimony to his natural endowment, his self-improvement or cultivation, his ability and versatility and his character. Let no one say that my praise of him is rather incestuous. I am speaking here as a patriot who wants the best for his country.

Scepter of solace

Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher once said "A pigeon in its flight considers the air to be the only hindrance in its way; it imagines that had there been no air it would have flown faster and with greater ease. Yet without the air it would have been unable to fly in a vacuum and would fall to the ground. Hence, the same element that poses resistance to the pigeon in its flight is basically that which makes flight at all possible."

This statement reminds me of the typical Nigerian man, who most at time shares the same view with the pigeon of Kant's mental picture.

As a matter of fact no life is trouble free. Challenges; problems, fear, worry, depressions and anxiety – if utilized intelligently are an escalator than can whisk us to success.

It is true that most Nigerians are faced with one psychological affliction or the other, not to talk of numerous political, social, cultural and religious disorders that ravage our very foundation of life.

Take for instance, the rate of marital-crisis which, like a wild fire, escalates the number of broken homes, and deviants in particular. Our socio-cultural matrix tend to be rated the worst in the world due to lack of good conscience and mental balance.

By Abubakar Sadiq Yusuf

And we all know that a good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body, it always preserves constant ease and serenity to us.

Think of the mischievous acts amongst us, father versus son, wives against husbands, and leaders versus subjects. Political instability had become a philosophy of power retention by few. Think of the massive rigging that also becomes a political wisdom. Not to say of the disheartening corruption that has been exposed much more in the last couple of years, in billions and billions of naira and the constant decaying of our social infrastructure. This is however to mention but few.

There is no doubt that this is enough to launch a psychological Armageddon on the mental-space of Nigerian people, capable of traumatizing the entire populace.

My aim in this article is to provide a guide on what we can do to help make everyday a happier one. We each have the power to ensure a happier life by making life a day-tight compartment and ensuring that each is a happy one.

So it is well within our power to make the next twelve months the happiest in our experience. One good way of doing this is by characterizing the whole life by the following:

Creativity: This is in our blood. We don't need any special training to acquire it. To ensure happy days for ourselves, let's see that we make every day a creative one.

We can approach our work imaginatively, trying to introduce new and better methods. We can think creatively and make good suggestions to other people. Our leisure time should also be devoted to creative pursuits.

Organizing events, participating in community volunteer works are all forms of creativity. The obviously creative hobbies like, reading and listening to the holy Qur'an, paintings, designing calligraphies, writing, should also be carefully considered.

We have little excuse for neglecting to meet this great universal need to be creative.

Another way to be happy apart from being creative is through "positive thinking." This is possible to concentrate on the worrisome and unsatisfactory aspects of human circumstances.

But it is far better to spend that time and emotional energy in rejoicing on the positive and happier aspects of life.

Let's reshape our habits of thinking, change our thought patterns.

Wherever we find ourselves thinking and speaking negatively, stop it. Tune in to a new wave length of hope, optimism, cheerfulness

and success. Such habits will, by transforming each day, transform your life.

Harmonious relationship is another very important aspect that will make our life happier. We should establish good relationship with all the people we meet, show greater friendliness, understanding and concern. Be freer with encouragement, greetings and offers of help.

Remember to be generous with praise and appreciation. People thrive on all such expressions and are hungry to receive them.

Another well tried way of being happy in spite of all odds of life is by maintaining a purposeful living. Having a purpose and facing each day in the light and spirit of that purpose, makes it difficult for boredom, worry and despair to find a foothold in the mind.

You may ask, "What should my purposes be? The answer depends upon our underlying philosophy of life. If we are religious, here is a best chance for us. Worship Allah to the best of our ability. Do His will, resolve to serve Him, abide by these doctrines to the limit of our power. If we apply these principles to our lives, we will produce a large measure of happiness.

Yusuf is a 400L student in the Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University, Kano (BUK).

EDITORIAL

Suspending
constitution review

Recently, the Senate announced that it was suspending the constitution amendment exercise due to irreconcilable differences between it and the House of Representatives over the leadership of the review committee. In its stead, the committee settled for aspects of the Justice Muhammadu Lawal Uwais committee report on Electoral Reform that may need piecemeal Constitutional amendment. At about the same time, the House of Representative, announced that it is going ahead on a solo effort to do the wholesale amendment, a move that is futile from the onset. The decision is regrettable, it demonstrates a shameless inability by lawmakers to reach accommodation on salient national issues, underscoring a breakdown of conflict resolution procedures even at the level of the nation's apex law making body.

Unlike other major decisions of national interests, the suspension of the constitution review has not elicited any public reaction. This may be a demonstration that even while it was being worked upon, the people of Nigeria refused to see it as a priority among the projects that it could buy into or support. It may be a barometer for measuring whether or not the decision of the National Assembly to embark on constitution review is a priority project among others that the citizenry are clamouring for. This is so, especially coming at a time when a similar exercise had been dumped on the altar of selfishness and aggrandizement by the former government. The silence that greeted this project, which no doubt would have impacted on the nation's fledgling constitution making process is in itself the people's own way of saying that they did not buy into it in the first instance.

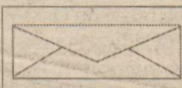
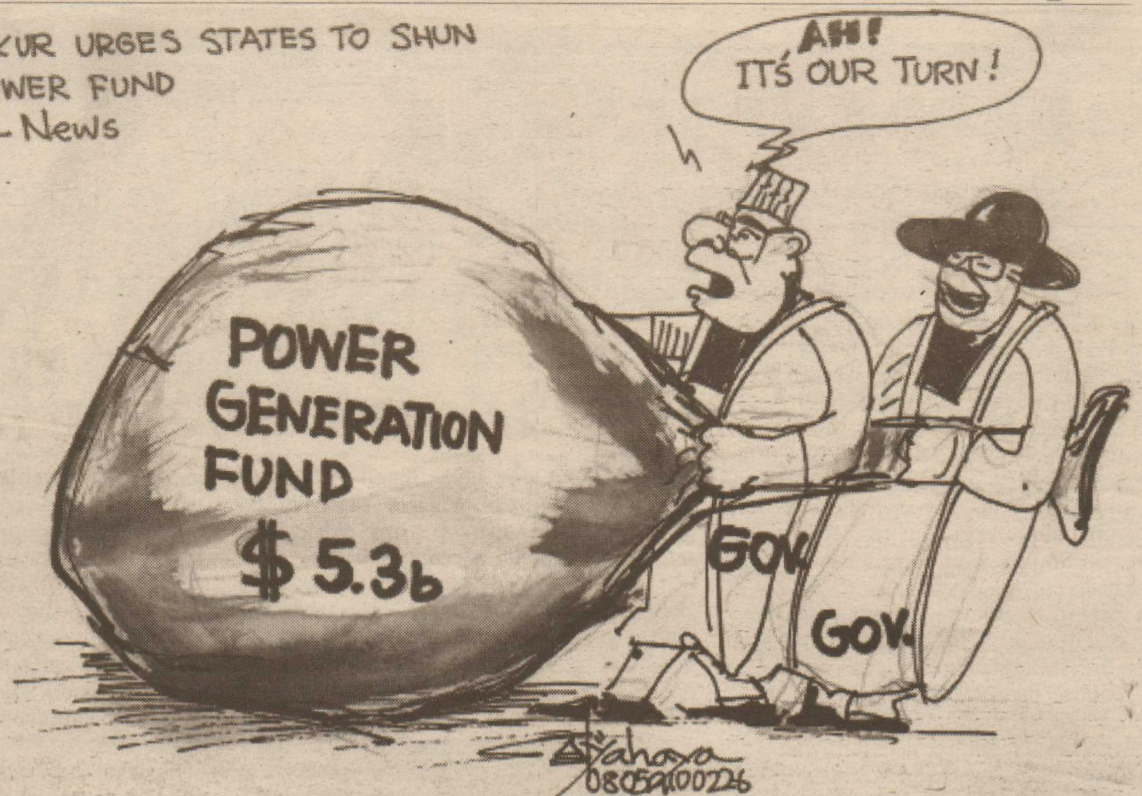
We have said in the past that the top down approach to governance, including law making is not the best approach to any issue of national importance. People would support even with the last drop of their blood, any issue, project or programme that emanates from them. On the other hand, they will greet with snigger or indifference any project that has no direct or immediate impact on their living standard. The constitution amendment process was dead on arrival as a result of the fact that the people did not see in it something that could move them ahead above other pressing issues of national importance. This is a lesson on how important it is to make laws that would impact positively on the lives of the people instead of their presumed needs.

History has taught us that a constitution is never a sacrosanct document but simply an outline detailing how a people would like to be governed. Indeed in established democracies of the developing world, no constitution bears the total input of the people. Rather, a group of elites sit down and codify what they think should be the yearnings and aspirations of the people and then present it for adoption. As it is implemented, it is adjusted to meet exigencies brought forth by demands of new situation. Without their inputs, the process might amount to a colossal waste of time and an exercise in futility.

We will always support the piecemeal amendment of any legal document, especially if its wholesale improvement has serious social, political and economic implications. This is the approach in established democracies like Britain and the United States of America from where framers of present and past constitutions borrowed many ideas. There is, for now, no reason why the Nigerian experiment should be different from what obtained in those countries especially after the suspicion and rancor that a similar exercise bred not too long ago.

Now that the amendment exercise has been suspended, we ask the committee to account for the budgetary allocation for the exercise so as to know how much has already been spent and for what purpose. Holding our lawmakers accountable in this penny pinching times is necessary in order to enable tax payers to monitor how prudent their money is being managed, even for the legislative process. It would also help the legislature itself to adapt itself to prudent management of scarce resources. Finally, we advise that in future, all amendment proposals should emanate from the people whom the legislators claim to represent. Only when a law or an amendment has the imprint of the people does it become their own. This, we believe is the lesson from this botched assignment and the true test of participatory democracy.

TUKUR URGES STATES TO SHUN
POWER FUND
— News



Your Letters

Re: The pitfalls of opposition politics

I read the above titled piece by Ishaq Modibbo Kawu which centred on national politics and I cannot agree with the columnist more than all he has written. It was a master stroke and typical. The simplicity of language and the various hyperbolic tints in the article made it interesting to read.

But more seriously, I hope and pray that the people who boast that they are born politicians or the so called thorough bred politicians will understand and appreciate all the imports in the article. But the writer knows, as I know, that reading culture in Nigeria is dying along with the dying country and so the purport of the article may be lost by

those who need it.

Politics in Nigeria is not the politics the writer demonstrated in his commentary. As you will appreciate, politics in Nigeria follow the norm of "rent-seeking" attitude in our national economic and social psyche. Almost everyone runs after easy money that they do not work for.

Therefore, politics in Nigeria is politics of crookery, money, and number. Kawu has precisely noted and very rightly so that we have not really engaged in politics of ideas since the death of the First Republic, in the hey days of the three musketeers – Sir Ahmadu Bello, Chief Awolowo and Great Zik of

Africa.

Because we are not really people or students of history, it is difficult for us to reflect on our past with a view to applying them to the present and subsequently shape our future, we cannot see the "PITFALLS OF OPPOSITION POLITICS".

The writer has forgotten that we have all been cowed to calamitous submission and complacency, by the machinations of those charlatans in Nigerian politics. How then can we develop a virile, positive and idea-oriented opposition in Nigeria? I think the writer needs to further reflect on this.

It is this same predicament that has led even the voices of the voiceless among us

to close shop and watch things unfold negatively in Nigeria without squeaking or screeching at some of the developments in today's governance.

As things are, who will bell the cat? We hope that with the turn of events that are currently unfolding through infrastructural failure, bastardization of Chapter two of the 1999 Constitution and the continuation of impunity, something drastic has to happen to recreate or generate opposition politics.

I thank Modibbo Kawu for waking us up from the usual slumber. More grease to your elbow.

Yomi Oyelola, mni,
yomi_oyelola@yahoo.com

Text us on 08059100257

Leaders should take note

An appropriation bill passed by the legislature and signed by the executive has become a law. Lack of full implementation is violation of the law and a gross misconduct, which is an impeachable offence. Executives beware and legislators watch out.

Ali Ibrahim, Maiduguri, 08058225163

Attention, Nigerians

Only the Supreme Being knows exactly what is between former President Obasanjo and Atiku Abubakar, his estranged deputy. What Nigerians should be after is who can move the country forward.

Sarki, 08037000384

Re-Branding Nigeria

During a discourse with a friend on rebranding Nigeria, he said he thought it meant changing the attitude of Nigerians' criminal tendencies of mass looting of public funds by those entrusted to keep it. Should we not think it that way?

B. J. Shaba, Minna, 08038120101

Provision of basic amenities (electricity, water, roads, healthcare etc.), eradication of hunger and poverty, creation of more job opportunities are all Nigeria needs to change its image abroad. Dora, please take note.

John B, Maiduguri, 08073856853

SOS to FCT authorities

Phonographic DVDs are everywhere especially in Wuse Market. Senator Aliero should fear Allah and do something because this is an immoral business in public places.

Shehu Usman Abdullahi, Maitama, Abuja, 07038287436

Zamfara indigenes

The people of Zamfara State should beware of politicians

who hide under the cover of religion to achieve their selfish interests. This caution is necessary as we continue to approach another election year.

Abubakar Danjuma Ibrahim, 08059502722

For credible elections

If Mr. President is truly committed about electoral reforms, he should appoint a man with a proven track record, with impeccable character, discipline and integrity. Senator Ken Nnamani is trustworthy and can deliver.

Ali, Abuja, 08035607366

On the electoral reform

The electoral reform by the present government is just another circus show. The move to prune the number of election tribunal judges smack of executive treachery and can only perfect rigging instead of efficient electoral process. Why are those in high places afflicted with the phobia for transparent election?

Lawal Lere, N.B.P, Zaria, 08034422601

6,000 MW? Forget it

The call by PHCN chief Ikeja Distribution Zone for prayers to achieve 6,000 megawatts should be ignored. Let's face the reality: those indicted by the House Committee on Power should be prosecuted. Only then should Nigerians pray.

Abdullahi Abubakar, Kano, 08055917132

Yar'adua's visit to Keffi

Before President Yar'adua visited Keffi, Nasarawa State, we were living in darkness, but the city wore a new look with constant electricity supply. But it seems the president went away with the light to Abuja. Please visit Keffi again so that we can have another chance.

A. S. Y. Egya Esq, Keffi, 08058683676

Opinion

Electoral reform: Holding government accountable

Last week this column reported on the two day national dialogue held at Rockview Hotel Abuja on March 31 and April 1 2009 which was supported by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), The International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) with funding from the Government of the United States of America. The dialogue was to assist stakeholders highlight some key issues for better understanding as well as to enhance their capacity to engage the process effectively. It drew participants from partner groups that have benefitted from IFES, IRI and NDI's assistance during the electoral reform process such as the ERC, political parties, Legislature, civil society organizations, women groups, youth groups, under-represented groups, People Living with Disabilities, Election Management Bodies and media. The Dialogue was attended by distinguished personalities. Among them were, Ms Robin Renee Sanders the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas (President, ECOWAS Commission), Dr Christiana Thorpe, Chief Electoral Commissioner/Chairperson of Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission, Senator Ken Nnamani, GCON, General Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, Justice Mohammed Uwais and Hon. Aminu Bello Masari. General Muhammadu Buhari's paper took us down the memory lane, underscoring the fact that the massively rigged election that brought this government into power is the cause of our problems. He also expressed his reservations about the spirit behind the government setting up the Electoral Reform Committee and concluded that the rejection of the important recommendations of the ERC it set up confirmed this. The former Senate President, Ken Nnamani also stressed the need to engage with the legislators and recalled what happened during his tenure as the Senate leader. He said 'the legislator is a trustee and agent of the people' and urged them to become 'political entrepreneurs who pander after personal gains, but rather delegates and trustees of the people who will preserve democratic governance'. The participants in their communiqué at the end of the dialogue observed as follows:

* There is now a universal consensus around the idea that elected governments are the basis of any emerging democratic process and that regular, credible, competitive elections are the method *par excellence* of ensuring the accountability of the leaders of any given country.

* A stable political environment, sound political will and solid electoral legal framework based on internationally recognized standards that are contained in the human rights instruments ratified and recognized by a country, are prerequisites for credible elections and democratic governance in any country.

* The recommendations of the ERC reflected the views expressed by the majority of Nigerians and being supported by them.

* The attempt to retain the same structures

Civil Society Watch

By

HAJIYA BILKISU (mni)

and processes that necessitated the current effort at electoral reform and the rising anxiety about future elections is unhealthy and unnecessarily overheats the polity.

* The ERC Report and the White Paper have been kept out of the reach of Nigerians by the Executive thus making informed commentary and communication on the electoral reform difficult and speculative. They therefore made a 10 point recommended as follows:

i. The Federal Government should foster better communication and information processes to enable Nigerians participate meaningfully in the debates and decision-making processes that are critical to the future of the country such as are required on the electoral system reform.

ii. That in the conflict between the expressed will of the people and the wishes of the Executive or Legislators, the will of the people should be allowed to prevail. The Federal Government should give in to the will of Nigerians as expressed through the ERC recommendations.

iii. The full recommendations by the ERC and the Executive White Paper should be published and mass distributed to the public for the purpose of popular audit, informed commentary and appreciation of the positions canvassed in both documents rather than allowing the current speculations to prevail.

iv. The Federal Government should forward the complete ERC Report to the National and State Assemblies along with whatever documents or Bills it will present for its consideration in this regard.

v. Civil Society Organizations should immediately commence strategic and structured advocacy and popular mobilization on the ERC recommendations ahead of the submission of the amendment bills to the National Assembly or the gazetting of the Executive White Paper.

vi. Media organizations should be involved in popular mobilization and advocacy on the ERC recommendations

vii. Political parties should strengthen their advocacy and policy platforms in order to set the tone for the country's democratic practices and facilitate meaningful political party-civil society partnership. Both should embark on a structured Constituency Accountability Program on the ERC Report at which elected representatives will gauge the mood of their constituents.

viii. Nigeria must take a lead in Africa on issues like affirmative action and proportional representation rather than trail behind 'smaller' African Countries which have advanced in this regard.

ix. That the electoral reform process must be concluded in good time before the 2011 elections

in order to avert the imminent chaos and distrust that could mar the elections.

x. Participants resolve to continue the struggle for electoral reform in Nigeria using the platform of Civil Society Coordinating Committee (CSCC).

The struggle has indeed continued with two additional civil society groups speaking out on the issue. On April 6, the Gender and Constitution Reform Network GECORN which is a coalition of non governmental and community based organisations working on the gender perspective of electoral and constitution reform organised a one day multi stakeholder's dialogue on key issues in the ongoing electoral reform process. The event which was held at Rockview Hotel Abuja was supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa OSIWA. In his welcome address, the Chairman of the occasion, Dr Otive Igbuzor, the Country Director of Action Aid underscored the importance of mainstreaming gender into development. He noted that the countries that come top in the UN initiated Human Development Index are gender friendly. In her welcome address, the National Coordinator of GECORN Abiola Akiyode Afolabi said the outright rejection of the ERC recommendations, particularly on composition of INEC and other electoral bodies sends a bad signal to citizens. She said the rejection of affirmative action for women in politics and proportional representation was unacceptable. She said a credible electoral process that allows equal opportunities for women and men begins with the formulation of an enabling environment such as the electoral laws. Papers were presented by three resource persons, Abiola Afolabi **Gender and Constitution Review: A Global Comparative Analysis and the Nigerian Context.** Her paper presented case studies of countries that have undertaken electoral and constitution review from a gender perspective. The countries that she featured in her presentation as success stories in this sector were South Africa, Uganda and Rwanda. Joy Ezeilo, the Executive Director of Women's Aid Collective WACOL presented a paper titled **Gender and Electoral Reform in Nigeria** while Jide Ojo of IFES presented a paper titled **Gender, Constitution and Electoral Laws: Recommendations and Election Management.** On gender balance, Jide Ojo observed that only one member of the INEC is a woman and her tenure had expired. The challenge is for the government to correct the gender imbalance. He also said there was no need for a white paper on the ERC report because the Committee was not an inquiry so the report should have been sent straight to the National Assembly. On the appointment of the INEC Chairman, he told the participants that in Botswana, the Judicial Council

NJ appoints the INEC Chairman so Nigeria could borrow a leaf from such a transparent process. After the presentation there was an interactive session where people made comments and aired their views on the papers presented. This was followed by a strategy Session which was facilitated by Dr Lydia Umar, the Executive Director of Gender Action Team GAT. She divided the participants into working groups to explore the way forward. Group members were asked to identify action points for future advocacy. After group work, the participants shared their contributions among which were advocacy to policy makers, particularly legislators. Various strategies and activities were outlined such as using information, education and communication IEC, media engagement, rallies, sit in and mass mobilization of community groups to undertake advocacy.

The struggle did not stop with the dialogue group and GECORN members. From Jos, a group of youth under an organisation Youth Action Initiative Africa YAIA responded to the ERC report with specific demands. First, the youths are unhappy that no youth was appointed to the 22-member Electoral Reform Committee. Their spokesperson for the group Sammy Itodo said 'as a society, we are not good at encouraging young people to get active in political life. Our civil life cannot be complete if the ideas and opinions of young people are missing from campaigns and grassroots effort to change policy. Young people have been ignored so much on matter concerning the electoral reform. We demand full implementation of the Electoral Reform Committee recommendations. We have come to a crossroads where we must determine our destiny as a nation and the youths must be carried along.' Sammy also complained that the youth have been exploited by politicians. 'Nigerian elections are a perversion of democracy and youths have always been on the receiving end because we yield ourselves as tool and instruments used by the politicians to subvert electoral processes.' He believes that as leaders of tomorrow, the youths must be encouraged and given adequate space to engage the electoral reform process thereby encouraging them to fulfill civil responsibilities now, we are directly building a strong foundation for civic engagement in the future. 'As young people, we possess ingenious ideas and energy needed to advocate for the full implementation of the electoral reform committee recommendations.' The Nigerian youth are also demanding participation in government. Sammy said Nigeria must give her young people 'the opportunity to be seen, to be heard, and to take part in the Government so that they will begin to take responsibility and play their part in moving the nation forward. We must get to the point where "when we speak the government must shake". It is time for us to take a stand! We have power in our numbers! With the powerful group of stakeholders speaking for citizens and women the youth amplifying the voices the pace is set for CSO engagement with government on electoral reform.

FCT: The challenges before Aliero

The appointment of the former governor of Kebbi State as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) must've taken millions of Nigerians by surprise. At the time of his appointment, Alhaji Adamu Aliero was already a member of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In the Senate, he was a member of a very influential group of senators most of whom had been governors for eight years.

When the president gave Aliero what is easily the most influential ministry after that of oil and gas many Nigerians were surprised. In fact, many Nigerians had expected President Yar'adua to appoint a technocrat as the minister of the FCT; that would have been more in keeping with his personal disposition on matters that have to do with professionalism.

Thirdly, Senator Aliero was not among those ex-governors that were openly jostling for ministerial slot; he was in fact more prominent as a potential powerbroker in the Senate than a ministerial candidate. But somehow, against all likely assumptions, he emerged as one of the most influential politicians in the present

By Mohammed Danlami Yusuf

dispensation. Politicians of all shades and colours from various political parties; Nigerians from all walks of life: the rich and the poor; Muslims and Christians and even foreigners besiege his office and sometimes even his home. Perhaps, there is some sense in appointing a politician as the minister of the FCT. It is the best way to ensure that everybody feels a sense of belonging in the capital city of unity.

But his politics apart, what is of greater concern to most Nigerians is how Aliero intends to administer the most complex city in the country. What kind of legacy does he intend to leave behind? As governor of Kebbi State, which is arguably the most literate in the North-West after Katsina, Aliero gave a very good account of himself particularly in the areas of infrastructure such as road network and education.

Now at the FCT, he has pledged to accomplish the following objectives if he stays long enough - the expansion of the airport road from the city to the airport itself; and similar expansion of the

notorious Abuja-Kubwa-Zuba road. According to the Minister, both these major roads would be expanded from the present two-lane on either side to five-lane on either side, making them the first ten-lane motorway in the country; while the Kubwa highway would also be given two additional flyovers.

Secondly, he has promised to give premium to district infrastructure in Wuye and Maitama extension; while giving equal emphasis to the provision of potable water, health and education. But by far Aliero's most ambitious promise is the Abuja Light Rail project which is expected to cost about \$800m (eight hundred million dollars).

If Aliero can succeed in achieving these objectives, he would earn for himself and for the government that he's serving the gratitude and appreciation of Nigerians for generations to come. Funding, which may pose a problem, does not seem to bother Aliero as he appears to have solved that problem *ab initio*. When some journalists he hosted recently asked him how all these projects would be funded since the FCT budget stands at about N70bn, he said

the road projects are to be financed 40 percent by the Federal Government and 60 percent by the private sector (this suggests the possible return of toll gates at least on those highways). As for the light rail, it is to be funded 100 percent by the government.

For Aliero to have made these declarations publicly knowing that he would definitely be held accountable for them must mean that he has the consent of the president. This is not surprising since in recent times he seems to be getting even closer to the president.

Nigerians would definitely be watching to see how far Aliero would go in fulfilling these very attractive promises. On their part, I think Nigerians should collaborate with the minister by giving him the benefit of the doubt. As a consummate politician, Aliero is gradually emerging as a politician eager to make a name for himself as a pan Nigerian; Abuja might well be the ultimate beneficiary if he succeeds in making that name.

Yusuf wrote from No. 38, Parakou Crescent, Wise II, Abuja.

In Tomorrow's

**Linfen: Yalwataccen
Birin Da Aka Rasa
Wanda Zai Mulke Shi**
Shafi na 10



**Gwamna Yuguda
Zai Koma PDP
Ranar Talata**
Shafi na 29

**Matar Gwamnan Borno
Ta Kwace Wa Mataimakin
Gwamnan Ofis**
Shafi na 25



AMINIYA

Juma'a 10 zuwa 16 ga Afrilu, 2009

Kundi Na 3 Ta 32 15 zuwa 21 ga Rabi'ul Sani, 1430 Bayan Hijira

Kudinta N80

Aminiya Mujallar Rayuwa
Dandano

Abba M. Yusuf
Mawaiki ko furodusa?

Supreme Radio
96.1 FM

Lamba 7, Yakubu Gowon Way, Kaduna
Tarho: 062-218628

09-6708681, 6728921 & 6716556

Ision FM 92.1
Dream on... Abuja

A division Of
VISION MEDIA SERVICES LTD



**Mun Janye Karar Da Muka
Kai Shugaban Kasa, Amma...
-Kakakin Gwamnan Filato**

Shafi na 27

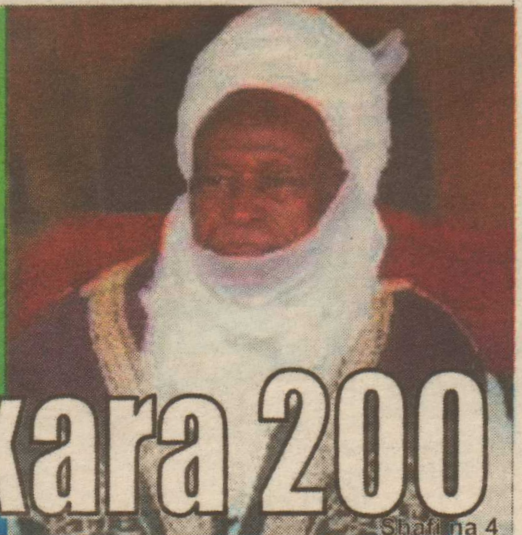
**Kotu Ta Yanke Wa
Mutum Hudu
'Yan Gida Daya
Hukuncin Kisa**

Shafi na 2

Matsafa Sun Addabi Garin Mpape, Abuja

Shafi na 2

Mahaya Dawaki 400 Ne Za Su Yi Dabar Cikar Adamawa Shekara 200



Shafi na 4



5th Annual International Business Conference Dubai 2009



INVESTING IN AFRICA INFRASTRUCTURE



Platinum:




Gold:







Workshops:

- Oil & Gas
- Project Financing
- ICT/Telecom
- Real Estate
- Construction
- Insurance
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Energy
- Transportation
- Maritime

Speakers:

- Dr. Rilwanu Lukman, Minister of Petroleum, Nigeria
- HE. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda
- HE. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rasheed Al Maktoum, Min of Finance UAE
- Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Managing Director, World Bank
- HE. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al Qasimi Min. of Economy
- Mr. Kemal Unakitan, Finance Minister, Turkey
- HE Dr. Omar Bin Sulaiman, Governor Dubai International Finance Centre

Speakers:

- Alhaji Adamu Aliero, Hon. Minister of the Federal Capital Nigeria
- Dr. (Mrs) Nike Akande, Nigeria's former Minister of Industry
- Alhaji Ibrahim Bio, Hon. Min of Transport Nigeria
- Dr. Achike Udenwa, Hon. Min of Commerce Nigeria
- Dr. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, Managing Director First Bank Nigeria PLC

How to Attend:

For more information on how to attend this event, please contact www.foreigninvestmentnetworks.com to register, visit:

Lagos Office: 3, Bayo Ajayi Str. Agidingbi, Ikeja Lagos.
USA Office: 31 North Oakland Avenue, Pontiac Michigan.
London Office: 78 York Street, London W1H 1DP.

Hot Lines: Tunde 07031965916, Moji 07040448020, 07063062721
Email: tunde.mag@finmagazine.com

For Exhibition & Sponsorship email: joe.preston@finmagazine.com

IBC 2009 Count Down

Venue: Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre

Date: April 26-28, 2009

Side Attraction - There will be Tour of:

- Burj Arab Tower
- Dubai International Finance Centre
- Sand Dune
- Palm Beach etc

■ For Visa purposes, registration will close on Friday, 10th April, 2009

www.foreigninvestmentnetworks.com





















Congratulations Mr. Governor!



The Management and Staff of
QUMECs NIG. LTD.,
Congratulate His Excellency,
Alh. Ibrahim Idris, the Executive
Governor of Kogi State on your

**FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE AFTER
THE RE-RUN ELECTIONS.**

Your administration has indeed
recorded heroic achievements
in meeting the yearnings
and aspirations of the
people of Kogi State.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

RC 386057
QUMECs
Nigeria Limited

5A Gwani Mukhtar,
Malali GRA, Kaduna
Tel: 062-212572



His Highness
Alhaji Najib Hussaini Adamu, CON
Emir of Kazaure

Cordially invites the General Public to the

TURBANNING CEREMONY

of

Nu'uman Barau Danbatta, OON, mni

PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

as

AJIYAN KAZAURE

DATE:

Saturday, 11th April, 2009

TIME:

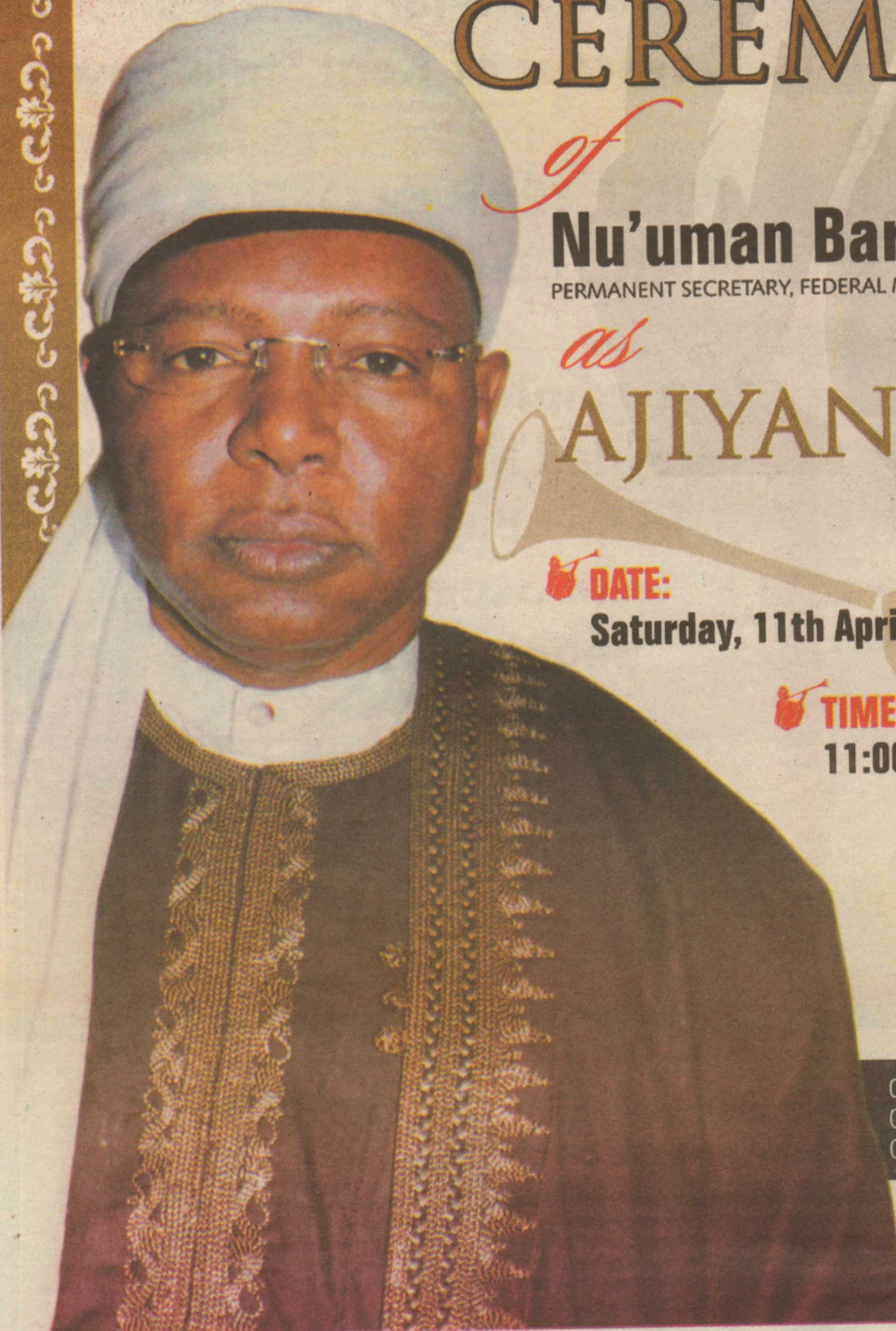
11:00am

VENUE:

**Emir's Palace, Kazaure,
Jigawa State.**

R . S . V . P

08033144134	08036290253	08033012614
08037868734	08034529934	08077333550
08033064828	08037009052	08037873332



TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA REPORT



An elderly resident walks in front of posters showing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika as part of the election campaign yesterday in Algiers, on the eve of the presidential election.

Algerians go to polls, president seeks third term

Algerians are looking largely with frustration or in difference toward a presidential election today set to hand Abdelaziz Bouteflika another five years at the helm of this U.S. ally with vast gas reserves, soaring youth unemployment and an active al-Qaida offshoot.

The left-wing opposition, many Islamist leaders, and the chief of al-Qaida in Islamic North Africa have called for a boycott of the vote and predicted fraud. Bouteflika, who was first elected with the army's backing in 1999 and again in 2004, enjoys support of all key government players.

He faces five low-profile opponents, but none has successfully challenged Bouteflika's message of continuity and reconciliation after an insurgency that ravaged this North African country in the 1990s.

The president, 72, had the constitution changed last

year so he could run again. There is so little suspense about the outcome that voter turnout is viewed as the key test of the election. Bouteflika's program hinges on continuity. Though wary of his prolonged stay at the helm of the country, most people credit the president with bringing relative calm after 10 years of insurgency, and for building new infrastructure. His National Reconciliation charter, passed by referendum in 2005, has offered to pardon insurgents in exchange for peace. During his campaign, he repeatedly hinted that he could offer a new, blanket amnesty if the last militants from al-Qaida in Islamic North Africa renounce their near-daily ambushes or bombings and turn themselves in.

Bouteflika's tenure has also seen a large investments in roads, dams, and housing, part of a \$200 billion program funded through Algeria's large oil and natural gas exports.

Rwandan genocide suspects win extradition appeal

Four men wanted in Rwanda for alleged involvement in the central African nation's 1994 genocide won an appeal yesterday against extradition from Britain. The High Court ruled there was "a real risk" they would suffer "a flagrant denial of justice" if sent back to Rwanda, where they face charges over the killing of around 800,000 mainly ethnic Tutsis 15 years ago.

Vincent Bajinya, Charles

Munyaneza, Celestin Ugirashabuja and Emmanuel Nteziryayo are accused of genocide, complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity, conspiracy to murder, forming a criminal gang and inciting disorder.

They also face claims they were involved in "acts of devastation, massacres and looting" in the chaos that ensued after Tutsis were blamed for shooting down an aircraft in April 1994, killing Hutu presi-

dent Juvenal Habyarimana.

But High Court judges John Laws and Jeremy Sullivan overturned an extradition order from Home Secretary Jacqui Smith that was approved by a lower court in June 2008. "We conclude that if (the four) were extradited to face trial in the High Court of Rwanda, the appellants would suffer a real risk of a flagrant denial of justice by reason of their likely inability to adduce the evidence of supporting

witnesses," they said.

The four men, who were arrested in different parts of England in December 2006, deny charges that they orchestrated killings by Hutus between April and July 1994.

Munyaneza, Ugirashabuja and Nteziryayo were said to be mayors of local communes who organised killings in their areas while Bajinya — also known as Doctor Vincent Brown — was allegedly a militia organiser in Kigali.

African polio outbreak worries Red Cross

A polio outbreak that now affects 15 African countries threatens efforts to eradicate the disease, the international Red Cross said yesterday, as it sought funding for immunisation.

The \$2.1 million the agency needs would go towards mobilisation for immunisation programmes in the region, said the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

"We have clear indications that polio is spreading again, including in countries such as Uganda which had been polio-free for more than a decade," said Tammam Aloudat, IFRC senior officer for health in emergencies.

"We need to act now by reinforcing emergency vaccination campaigns before efforts made over the last 20 years to eradicate polio are severely set back by this series of outbreaks." Uganda recently launched an emergency drive

to immunise children against polio following the first confirmed case of the virus to strike the country in 12 years, in the northwest, near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Cases of polio surged in Nigeria again last year and spread to surrounding countries in West Africa and further afield. Persistent outbreaks have also hit Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to international agencies. An outbreak of polio earlier restricted to southern Sudan and western Ethiopia has now also spread to Kenya, Uganda and northern Sudan, including the coastal city of Port Sudan, the Red Cross said.

Polio cases in Port Sudan were of "particular concern" after an outbreak there spread in 2004 and 2006 to countries including Saudi Arabia, Yemen and as far afield as south-east Asia's Indonesia.

Hijacked US crew retake vessel

The US crew of a ship hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia has retaken control of the vessel, according to Pentagon sources.

Unnamed US defence officials said one pirate had been captured by the crew of the Danish-owned Maersk Alabama, which was seized earlier in the Indian Ocean.

The status of the other pirates was unknown, but officials said they were "in the water". It was the sixth hijack in recent days, including a British and Taiwanese ship.

The Associated Press quoted a defence official as saying: "It's reported that one pirate is on board under crew control - the other three were trying to flee."

Reports suggest the other three pirates jumped overboard. The ship's owners, Maersk, have not confirmed that the ship has been retaken.

But the firm's chief executive, John Reinhart, told AFP news agency that the crew was safe.

The ship was attacked by several small boats in the early hours of yesterday in an incident apparently lasting for about five hours.

Maritime officials said the vessel took all possible evasive action before it reported that the pirates had boarded.

More than 130 pirates attacks, including close to 50 successful hijackings, were reported in 2008, threatening one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

S/Africa: Poll violence fears haunt Zulu heartland

Like many supporters of South Africa's ruling ANC in the volatile Zulu heartland, Jotham Myaka fears what the night often brings — gunshots and death threats shouted outside his home.

Myaka is an African National Congress official who heads a rural development organisation in Muden, a stronghold of the rival Inkatha Freedom Party, about 100 km (60 miles) north of the eastern port city of Durban.

The impoverished rural area of about 50,000 people has become a flashpoint ahead of the April 22 election with the ANC accusing its Inkatha rivals of trying to ban electioneering, intimidation of party workers and assaults. "The IFP people have been saying they don't want the ANC in the area and that they will destabilise Muden," Myaka said.

There are 26,000 registered voters in Muden, where about 70 percent of people are unemployed. Many men work in Durban or Johan-nesburg while others have seasonal work on farms.

Conflict in KwaZulu-Natal, home to South Africa's nine million Zulus is not new. The ANC and Inkatha fought a bloody turf war before the end of apartheid which killed thousands.

But since the mid-1990s,

there has been relative peace in the province after ANC leader Jacob Zuma — a Zulu — helped bring an end to the violence. The ANC is widely expected to win the election and choose Zuma as South Africa's president.

Some analysts who have been monitoring violence in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa's most populous province and the centre of the sugar and shipping industries are concerned over signs of looming conflict before the poll.

"Several political party members have been murdered, or attempts have been made on their lives. Intimidation and threats are rife in a number of areas," said Mary de Haas, an academic who has been documenting the conflict for decades.

The latest killings are not confined to the ANC. De Haas says a number of Inkatha officials have been killed since the start of the year.

Leaders of both parties have condemned the violence and agreed to exercise tolerance in the election period.

Muden is a staunch Inkatha-supporting area. Telephone poles along the pot-holed roads carry IFP flags bearing the image of Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthe-elezi. ANC campaign posters are often defaced, even in front of the ANC office.

Trust International

MIDDLE EAST

Israel tests system to shoot down Iranian missiles

Israel successfully tested an anti-missile system designed to protect the country against Iranian attack, the Defense Ministry said, perfecting technology developed in response to failures of similar systems during the 1991 Gulf War.

The intercept of a dummy missile was the 17th test of the Arrow system, a U.S.-Israeli joint venture. Israeli defense officials said the interceptor was an upgraded Arrow II, designed to counter Iran's Shahab ballistic missile.

Israel has identified Iran as its biggest threat, citing the country's nuclear program and its development of long-range ballistic missiles. Those fears have been compounded by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's repeated calls for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Israel believes Iran is developing nuclear weapons that could pose a threat to its existence. Iran denies that and says its nuclear work is for peaceful purposes such as energy production. Israel has threatened military action, and Iran has said it would strike back, warning last month that Israel's own nuclear facilities were within missile range.

Iran's Shahab-3 missiles have a range of up to 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometers), putting Israel well within striking distance. Iranian officials were not available for comment on the Israeli test.

In a statement, the Defense Ministry

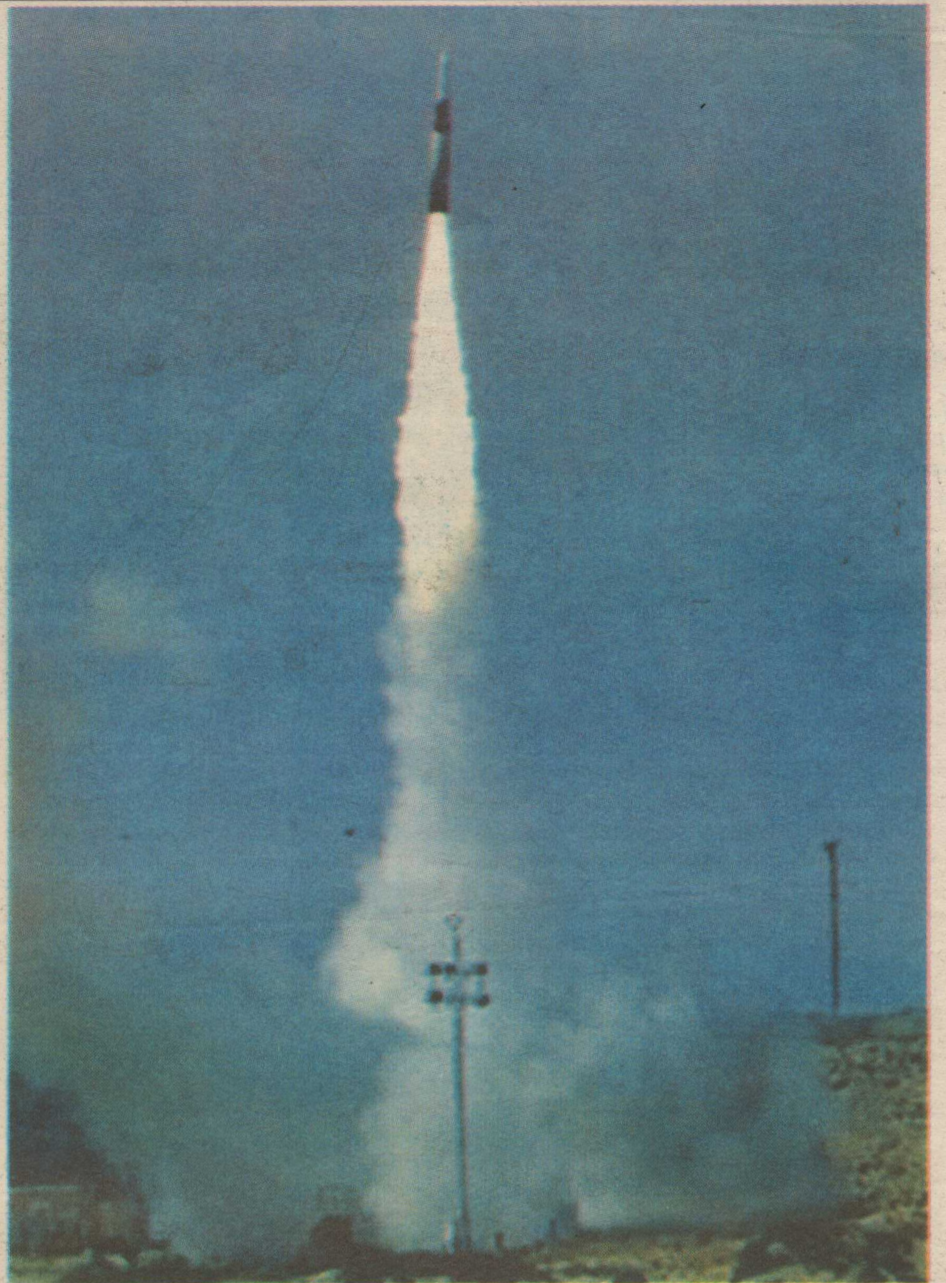
said the interceptor shot down "a missile simulating a ballistic threat in especially challenging conditions." It called the test "an important step in the development program and the development of operational abilities to counter the growing threat of ballistic missiles in the region."

Defense Minister Ehud Barak watched Tuesday's intercept from a military helicopter, the ministry said. According to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, Pentagon representatives also were present.

The Arrow project is being developed by Israel Aerospace Industries Ltd. and Chicago-based Boeing Co. at a cost of more than \$1 billion. It was spurred largely by the failure of the U.S. military's Patriot missiles to intercept Iraqi Scud rockets that struck Israel in the 1991 Gulf War.

Several batteries of Arrow missiles are already operational. But Israel has been working to perfect the system to deal with increasingly complicated threats, such as missiles that strike at extremely high speeds from high altitudes and could split apart as they approach their targets.

Iran has worked hard to increase the accuracy of its missiles. In November, it successfully test-fired the Sajjil, a solid fuel high-speed missile with a range 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometers). Solid fuel is considered a significant breakthrough because it increases accuracy.



This photo made available by Israel Aerospace Industries Tuesday, shows an Arrow missile, part of an anti-missile system, launched in a test off Israel's Mediterranean coast in central Israel.

Jewish settlers rampage through W/Bank village

Dozens of Israelis from a Jewish settlement where a Palestinian killed a youth last week rampaged yesterday through a West Bank Arab village, smashing car windows and damaging homes, residents and medics said.

At least five Palestinians were injured in violence that included confrontations between stone-throwing villagers and Israeli soldiers who arrived at the scene after the settlers, from Bat Ayin, entered neighboring Safa.

An Israeli military source

said the violence started when Palestinians threw stones at Bat Ayin settlers praying on a nearby hill before the Jewish Passover holiday. Safa residents said about 200 settlers, some of them carrying weapons, entered the village.

Soldiers fired rubber-coated metal bullets and also used tear gas during the clashes with Palestinian stone-throwers, villagers said. There were no reports of any injuries or arrests among the settlers.

Last Thursday, a Palestinian wielding an axe killed a 13-

year-old youngster and wounded a boy, aged seven, in Bat Ayin. The attacker, who was not identified, fled. Some 1,000 Israelis live in Bat Ayin, near the Palestinian towns of Hebron and Bethlehem.

In 2002, three settlers from Bat Ayin were sentenced by an Israeli court to prison terms ranging from 12 to 15 years for trying to set off a bomb near a Palestinian girls' school in Arab East Jerusalem.

The injured seven-year-old boy is a son of one of the three jailed settlers.

Bomb kills 7 near Baghdad Shi'ite shrine

A roadside bomb in the Shi'ite Kadhimiya district in northwest Baghdad killed seven people and wounded 23 yesterday, police said, a day after another bomb in the area killed nine.

Kadhimiya is home to one of Shi'ite Islam's holiest shrines, and the blast bore the hallmarks of Sunni Islamist al Qaeda, which considers Iraq's majority Shi'ites heretics and frequently attacks the sect's mosques and religious festivals.

"What are the targets of these explosions? What do they want? They just target innocent people," said Adnan Raheem, lying in a stretcher

at Kadhimiya hospital after being wounded in the blast. Unconscious children were lying nearby. "Children, young people, the elderly — do these savages ask what they gain from these awful acts?" Al Qaeda and other insurgents are still capable of frequent large-scale attacks despite a sharp drop in violence in Iraq in the past year.

U.S. President Barack Obama hailed the increase in security during a visit to Baghdad on Tuesday.

A day before he arrived, an apparently coordinated series of seven car bombs killed 37 people in the capital.

Iran charges American journalist

The lawyer for an Iranian-American journalist detained in Iran says she has been charged with espionage. The lawyer, Abdolsamad Khorramshahi,

says Roxana Saberi has been informed of the charges against her.

The 31-year-old American born journalist has reported for the BBC, NPR and

other media. She was arrested in late January. Iranian officials said at the time that she was working in the Islamic Republic with expired press credentials.

New nuclear talks offer for Iran

The six powers co-ordinating policy with Iran over its nuclear ambitions have moved to invite the Iranians for fresh talks on a diplomatic solution, the BBC reported yesterday.

The US, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain announced they would ask EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana to approach Iran with the offer.

In a joint statement, they appealed to Iran to "engage seriously... in a spirit of mutual respect".

Iran denies it is seeking to build a nuclear weapon.

"We strongly urge Iran to take advantage of this opportunity to engage seriously with all of us in a spirit of mutual respect," the group said in a statement.

They said they would ask Mr Solana to "extend an invitation to the Iranian government" to meet their representatives, "so that together we may find a diplomatic solution to this critical issue".

...Ahmadinejad welcomes talks with US

Iran's hard-line president said yesterday that his country welcomes talks with the United States should the American president prove to be "honest" in extending its hand toward Iran, one of the strongest signals yet that Tehran welcomes Barack Obama's calls for dialogue.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's comments come after Obama said his administration is looking for opportunities to engage Iran and pledged to rethink Washington's relationship with Tehran.

At his inauguration in January, Obama said his administration would reach out to rival states, saying "we will

extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

Last month, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, rebuffed Obama's video message on the occasion of Nowruz, the Persian new year, in which the president reached out to the Iranian people. Khamenei said Tehran was still waiting to see concrete changes in U.S. policy.

But Ahmadinejad offered a more conciliatory tone yesterday. "The Iranian nation welcomes a hand extended to it should it really and truly be based on honesty, justice and respect," he said in a speech broadcast live on

state television. Ahmadinejad, however, said Obama will meet the fate of former President George W. Bush if he is proved not to be honest.

"But if, God forbid, the extended hand has an honest appearance but contains no honesty in content, it will meet the same response the Iranian nation gave to Mr. Bush," Ahmadinejad said.

Diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Iran were cut after the U.S. Embassy hostage-taking that followed the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The revolution toppled the pro-U.S. shah and brought to power a government of Islamic clerics.

Trust International

WORLD REPORT

Suspected US strike kills three in Pakistan

A suspected US missile strike killed three militants and wounded four other people in a Pakistan tribal area bordering Afghanistan yesterday, security officials said.

"Drones initially flew over mountains around Gangi Khel, where the Taliban have some positions. There was some ground fire towards one of the drones and they left the area," said one security official, on condition of anonymity. Gangi Khel is a village around five kilometres west of Wana, the main town in the semi-autonomous South Waziristan district.

"Drones returned after some time and targeted a vehicle, which was parked near some shops. Three people were killed in the attack. Four others were wounded — they were either shopkeepers or local residents," the official said.

Two security officials described the three dead as militants, revising an initial death toll of two.

It was not immediately clear whether any high-value targets were killed.

Another security official had earlier said it was not known whether the target was a vehicle or a house.

Wednesday's strike comes the day after Pakistan told visiting US envoys that drone attacks fuelled extremism in the nuclear-armed nation and flagged up "red lines" in Pakistan's cooperation with Washington's war against extremists.

More than 35 missile strikes have killed over 350 people since August 2008, fanning hostility against the United States and the government in Pakistan, where more than 1,700 people have died in extremist bombings in two years.

The US military does not, as a rule, confirm drone attacks, but its armed forces and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operating in Afghanistan are the only forces that deploy drones in the region.



Anti-government demonstrators in devil costumes join a rally outside the home of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's top adviser, Prem Tinsulanonda in Bangkok, yesterday. Photo: AP

More than 100,000 rally against Thai PM

More than 100,000 anti-government protesters rallied in Bangkok yesterday in their biggest bid yet to topple premier Abhisit Vejjajiva, deepening Thailand's political crisis ahead of a key Asian summit.

Demonstrators dressed in signature red shirts massed outside the house of a top royal aide whom they accuse of masterminding the 2006 coup that ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and eventually led to Abhisit's rise.

They also gathered outside the offices of the British-born Abhisit, where protesters have staged a sit-in for the past two weeks, chanting "Bring Thaksin back, Abhisit get out!" Thousands of security forces guarded key sites across the capital, but there was no immediate sign of violence despite the prime minister's warnings that a core group of protesters would try to provoke bloodshed.

"We came here to expel the government," protest leader

Nattawut Saikuar told the cheering crowd of so-called "Red Shirts," adding that they planned to stay in place until Friday.

Abhisit rejected the protesters' demands to dissolve his four-month-old administration and hold fresh elections, warning of strong action if there was any violence.

"The government will act decisively with any provocateurs," he told reporters. "I will not dissolve the house because of violence."

He said some protesters wanted to trigger "chaos on the streets," adding that an attack on his car on Tuesday showed there were deliberate efforts to provoke the government.

Abhisit insisted there was no threat to a summit of Asian leaders, including the Chinese and Japanese premiers, due to start Friday in the resort of Pattaya — the place where his car came under attack. "All of the leaders still confirm that they will attend the meeting," he said.

Castro seeks better ties with Obama's US

A "very healthy, very energetic" Fidel Castro asked visiting Congressional Black Caucus members what Cuba could do to help President Barack Obama improve bilateral relations during his first meeting with U.S. officials since falling ill in 2006.

Caucus leader Rep. Barbara Lee, a Democrat from California, said the ailing former Cuban president talked for nearly two hours with her and two other delegation members on Tuesday in a meeting seen as signaling Cuba's willingness to

discuss better relations with the United States.

"We believe it is time to open dialogue and discussion with Cuba," Lee told a news conference in Washington upon the caucus members' return. "Cubans do want dialogue. They do want talks. They do want normal relations."

Lee said the group would present its findings to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a fellow Democrat from California, and White House and State Department officials.

California Democratic Rep. Laura Richardson, who

also met Fidel with Illinois Democratic Rep. Bobby Rush, said Castro "looked directly into our eyes" and asked how Cuba could help Obama in his efforts to change the course of U.S. foreign policy.

Richardson said she had the impression that 82-year-old Fidel wants to see changes in U.S.-Cuba relations in his lifetime. Lee said she found Castro "very healthy, very energetic, very clear thinking."

The surprise encounter came a day after the full delegation of six representa-

tives spent more than four hours talking privately with Cuban President Raul Castro, his first encounter with U.S. officials since formally replacing his brother as head of state nearly 14 months ago.

And it comes as Washington discusses whether to warm up long-chilly relations with Cuba. Obama has ordered an assessment of U.S. policy toward the communist nation and some members of Congress are pushing to lift a ban on Americans visiting the island.

Italy begins earthquake funerals

Italy yesterday began burying some of the 250 people killed in medieval towns flattened by a quake, while rescuers hampered by aftershocks hunted for people buried alive in the rubble.

A mass state funeral for the victims and a national day of mourning are expected to be held on Friday, Italian officials said, although the first private service was due yesterday.

The death toll climbed overnight to 250 when rescuers pulled out 15 more bodies from the rubble. In Rome, Pope Benedict again prayed for the victims and said he would visit the area soon.

With about 17,000 people made homeless by the quake, Italy's worst in three decades, thousands of distraught people passed a fitful night in tent villages, terrified by strong aftershocks felt in mountainous Abruzzo and nearby Rome.

China sentences 2 to death over Tibet riot

A Chinese court yesterday handed down death sentences to two Tibetans accused of starting deadly fires in last year's anti-government riots in Tibet, state media and a court officer said.

It was the first report of death sentences given out for the March 14 violence in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, that Chinese officials say killed 22 people. The violence led to the most sustained uprising against Chinese rule in decades. State media say 76 people have been sentenced and more than 950 detained.

Beijing claims the protests were part of a violent campaign by the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and his supporters to throw off Chinese rule in Tibet and sabotage last August's Beijing Olympics. The Dalai Lama has denied the charge and has said he seeks only significant autonomy for Tibet under continued Chinese rule.

The Lhasa Municipal Intermediate People's Court also gave suspended death sentences to two other people, and sentenced another to life imprisonment, the official Xinhua News Agency said in a brief report.

US-led troops kill 6 Afghans

US-led troops killed six militants who allegedly were planting roadside bombs for an ambush in southern Afghanistan yesterday, while a clash elsewhere in the region killed one NATO soldier.

The latest violence came

as Poland's President Lech Kaczynski held talks in Kabul with President Hamid Karzai and reiterated his country's plans to increase its troop contribution in the country by 20 percent this year. Southern Afghanistan is the center of a growing Taliban-led insurgency,

where thousands of new U.S. troops will deploy later this year to try to reverse militant gains of the last three years.

In the southern Uruzgan province, U.S. coalition and Afghan troops killed six militants with mortar fire while they were planting roadside

bombs and building an ambush site, the coalition said in a statement.

NATO said in a statement that one of its soldiers was killed in a "hostile incident" in southern Afghanistan, but it did not provide the exact location of the incident or the nationality of

the victim.

Also yesterday, a roadside blast hit a civilian vehicle south of Kandahar city, wounding six civilians, said the spokesman for Kandahar province's governor, Zalmay Ayubi. Two of those hurt were in critical condition, he said.

Trust International

ODD WORLD



A fireman recovers documents from amongst the ruins of the collapsed building of the town archive of the German city of Cologne, March 17, 2009.

Cat found alive after 5 weeks under rubble

A cat named Felix was found alive and well beneath the rubble of a six-storey building in Cologne that collapsed five weeks ago, the fire brigade in German city said Tuesday.

The 12-year-old cat was in surprisingly good health, authorities said. He was found beneath the city archives building that collapsed on March 3. Rescue workers were clearing away the rubble from the ruins, in which two people were killed, when they spotted a pair of small paws.

"The men lifted some concrete blocks when suddenly a little cat came to light," said Dietmar Paust, fire brigade spokesman.

Motorist survives three accidents in an hour

A German woman was involved in three car accidents in less than an hour that left a total of seven vehicles damaged but she suffered only slight injuries from the series of mishaps, police said Tuesday.

The 69-year-old woman from Berlin first crashed into three cars while trying to pull out of a supermarket car park on the Baltic resort island of Usedom. Then, she accidentally stepped on the accelerator and sped across a lawn before crashing into a nearby house, police said. She was taken to hospital in an ambulance but that vehicle was then hit by a truck.

"She was actually fortunate that no one was seriously hurt in any of the accidents," said Zinnowitz police spokesman Axel Falkenberg. "The accidents were a little bit like dominoes toppling."



Traffic moving slowly north of Munich in a file photo

Woman divorces husband for cleaning too much

A German woman has divorced her husband because she was fed up with him cleaning all the time.

German media reported the wife got through 15 years of marriage putting up with the man's penchant for doing household chores, tidying up and rearranging the furniture. But she ran out of patience when he knocked down and rebuilt a wall at their home when it got dirty, Christian Kropp, court judge in the central town of Sonderhausen, said. "I'd never had anyone seek a divorce for this," he said.

Chimpanzees exchange meat for sex

Chimpanzees enter into "deals" whereby they exchange meat for sex, according to researchers. Male chimps that are willing to share the proceeds of their hunting expeditions mate twice as often as their more selfish counterparts.

This is a long-term exchange, so males continue to share their catch with females when they are not fertile, copulating with them when they are. The team describe their findings in the journal PLoS One.

Cristina Gomes and her colleagues, from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany, studied chimps in the Tai Forest reserve in Ivory Coast.

She and her team observed the animals as they hunted, and monitored the number of times they copulated.

"By sharing, the males increase the number of times they mate, and the females increase their intake of calories," said Dr Gomes.

"What's amazing is that if a male shares with a particular female, he doubles the number of times he copulates with her, which is likely to increase the probability of fertilising that female."

Meat is important for the animals' diet because it is so high in protein. Since female chimps do not usually hunt, "they have a hard time getting it on their own," explained

Dr Gomes.

The "meat for sex hypothesis" had already been proposed to explain why male chimps might share with females.

But previous attempts to record the phenomenon failed, because researchers looked for direct exchanges, where a male shared meat with a fertile female and copulated with her right away.

Dr Gomes' team took a new approach. In a previous study, she had found that grooming exchange - where the animals take it in turns to groom each other - happens over long periods, she related.

"So we thought, why not meat and sex? We looked at chimps when they were not in oestrus, this means they don't have sexual swellings and aren't copulating. The males still share with them - they might share meat with a female one day, and only copulate with her a day or two later."

Dr Gomes thinks that her findings could even provide clues about human evolution.

She suggests this study could lay the foundations for human studies exploring the link between "good hunting skills and reproductive success".

"This has got me really interested in humans," she said. "I'm thinking of moving on to working with hunter-gatherers."



Share and share alike: a male chimp will give up his hard-earned catch for sex

Man decides to clean with gasoline while smoking

A man faces an arson charge after telling authorities he wasn't thinking when he decided to use gasoline for cleaning up his apartment, and then tossed a lit cigarette into a pile of gas-soaked cushions

and clothes.

A criminal complaint filed Monday quoted a 47-year-old man as saying he knew gasoline is flammable and never should have used it.

The complaint said that

when the fire began Friday, he didn't pull the fire alarm but instead shouted "fire" a couple times and walked to the Menasha police department for an ambulance to take him to the hospital where he was treated for

burns.

Firefighters said the blaze extensively damaged the apartment and caused heavy smoke damage throughout the building, putting tenants of 11 other units out of their homes.

Skeleton found in tree 29 years after suicide

The skeleton of a German retiree who tied himself to the top of a tree and shot himself to death nearly 30 years ago has been found by a hiker.

German police in the southern town of Landshut said on Monday the 69-year-old man disappeared in 1980 and had been classified as missing.

An 18-year-old hiker discovered a bone in the forest

last week and brought it to police. They searched the area and spotted the skeleton hanging about 11 meters up, near the top of the spruce tree.

"After searching the area we found the skeleton up in the tree with the pistol hanging on a rope next to it," police spokesman Leonard Mayer said. Police were able to identify the man through DNA testing and an artificial hip.



Invitation for Bids

The Federal Government of Nigeria
**SOKOTO STATE HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
 PROJECT II
 (PROCUREMENT OF TEXT BOOKS, TEACHING
 AID AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT)**
 Credit No. 4522 UNI-IFB No.
 SO/HSDPII/AF/045/NCB/09

1. This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business (dg Market)
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Health System Development project II. And it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for procurement of **TEXT BOOKS, TEACHING AID & LABORATORY EQUIPMENT.**
3. The Sokoto State Health System Development Project II now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of the following:

Lot:	Description of Item	Bid Security	Delivery Location	Delivery Schedule (Shipment)
1.	Text Books	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDPII Office	60 days
2.	Teaching Aid	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDPII Office	60 days
3.	Laboratory Equipment	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDPII Office	60 days

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

4. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from (SHSDP II Office) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from **9:00 am to 3:00 p.m. on Monday to Thursday and from 10:00 am to 1:00pm on Fridays, commencing on the Thursday, 9th April, 2009** except on public holidays.
6. A complete set of bidding documents in English Language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Naira (N10,000/or in Equivalent of US Dollars). The method of payment will be Bank Draft or Cash to Sokoto State Health System Development Project II. The document will be collected by hand or sent by Courier Services on request.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 10.00 am local time on Thursday, 7th May, 2009. All bids must be accompanied by a security of at least 2% of bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 10.00 am local time on Thursday, 7th May, 2009.

The Project Manager,
 Sokoto Health System Development Project II
 Shehu Kangiwa Secretariat, Block 13, 2nd Floor
 Tel/Fax 234 60-237059 Or GSM No. 08036271172, 08035044025



Invitation for Bids

The Federal Government of Nigeria
**SOKOTO STATE HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
 PROJECT II
 (PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLES, GEN. SETS AND
 TRANSFORMERS)**
 Credit No. 4522 UNI-IFB No.
 SO/HSDPII/AF/046/NCB/09

1. This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business (dg Market)
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Health System Development project II. And it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for procurement of **VEHICLES, GEN. SETS AND TRANSFORMERS**
3. The Sokoto State Health Development Project II now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of the following:

Lot:	Item	Qty	Bid Security	Delivery Location	Delivery Schedule (Shipment)
1.	a. 4WD Double Cabin b. Saloon Car	3 1	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDP II Office	60 days
2.	30 Seater Bus	2	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDP II Office	60 days
3.	a. Gen. Sets b. Gen. Set	2 1	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDP II Office	60 days
4.	Transformers	2	At least 2% of Bid Price	SHSDP II Office	60 days

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

4. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from (SHSDP II Office) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from **9:00 am to 3:00 p.m. on Monday to Thursday, & from 10:00am to 1:00pm on Fridays, commencing on Thursday 9th April, 2009** except on public holidays.
6. A complete set of bidding documents in English Language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Naira (N10,000/or in Equivalent of US Dollars). The method of payment will be Bank Draft or Cash to Sokoto State Health System Development Project II. The document will be collected by hand or sent by Courier Services on request.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 10.00 am local time on Thursday, 7th May, 2009. All bids must be accompanied by a bids security of at least 2% of bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 10.00 am local time on Thursday, 7th May, 2009.

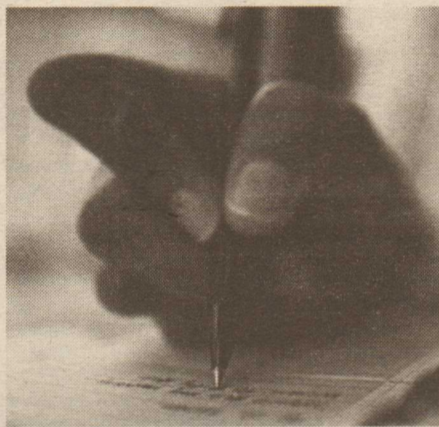
The Project Manager,
 Sokoto Health System Development Project II
 Shehu Kangiwa Secretariat, Block 13, 2nd Floor
 Tel/Fax 234 60-237059 Or GSM No. 08036271172,
 08035044025



To Our
Esteemed Readers,
Advertisers and
Contributors

POLICY ON PUBLICATION OF ADVERTORIALS, PETITIONS AND RELATED MATERIALS

Media Trust Limited, publishers of Daily Trust, Weekly Trust, Sunday Trust and Aminiya newspapers take very seriously its responsibility to the public to publish all points of view, including those we do not share. We think this is the function of an independent, liberal newspaper dedicated to the pursuit of the common good. We are also conscious of the fact that it is a shortsighted business policy for a newspaper to shut out a particular point of view for its own reason or due to pressure from powerful institutions and advertisers.



But we are also aware that professional agitators can use the pages on newspapers to malign governments, companies and individuals on spurious grounds.

Caught between our desire to give voice to the concerns of the voiceless and to protect public officers and institutions from unfair and demoralizing attacks, we have been forced to develop a more stringent policy for the placement of advertorials, petitions and other related materials in the pages of our newspapers.

The new policy is depicted hereunder

1. The writer(s) of such advertorials must not be anonymous but people who can stand by what they say, with their full names and address.
2. If there is any accusation against any person or organization, such writer(s) must substantiate the claims with evidence which can stand before a Court of Law. For example, if they claim that a contract was inflated, they must show Media Trust, relevant documents to back this up.
3. The placement must be fully paid for, before it is carried.
4. The author(s) should be prepared to accept corrections or alterations made by us but the corrected version would be shown to the author(s), before publishing.
5. The publishers have the right to reject any piece considered to be libelous, containing assertions without supporting facts and figures to prove the authenticity of such claims.
6. In the alternative, we are prepared to enter into an indemnity agreement with those who place such advertorial which will put the onus of proof squarely on them.
7. Media Trust employees that collect such materials have been instructed to contact the Advert Manager, who will also consult further with the relevant superior officers to analyze the piece before placement is made.
8. If the publishers of Daily Trust, Weekly Trust, Sunday Trust and Aminiya newspapers reject any material regarded as unprintable based on the above consideration, they will not enter into any correspondence with the author(s).

Finally, we wish to assure our readers that we will not shy away from publishing fair and balanced criticisms of any government or individuals, which is in the nature of free exchange of ideas.

This, we will continue to do in our free opinion columns and with advertorials where some readers feel strongly enough to pay for them.

We thank you for your support and assure you that we will do our best to keep your trust.

Signed:
MANAGEMENT



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

NO. 3 HARGEYSA STREET, OPP. ACCRA STREET, WUSE ZONE 5, ABUJA

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION:

1.0 The National Institute for Hospitality & Tourism (NIHOTOUR) is desirous of executing its capital projects under the 2009 fiscal year and hereby invites interested and competent contractors to bid for the following job aspects:-

- A. Construction of a demonstration Kitchen and Restaurant at NIHOTOUR Kano Campus;
- B. Construction of a student hostel, 200 capacity at NIHOTOUR Kano campus;
- C. Construction of road net work within the premises of NIHOTOUR Kano campus;
- D. Renovation/construction of a student hostel, 150 capacity at NIHOTOUR Enugu campus;
- E. Purchase of a 150KVA generator for NIHOTOUR Bauchi campus;
- F. Purchase of a 150KVA generator for NIHOTOUR Kaduna campus;
- G. Purchase of a 150KVA generator for NIHOTOUR Lagos campus;
- H. Purchase of a 150KVA generator for NIHOTOUR Benin campus;
- I. Purchase of a 150KVA generator for NIHOTOUR Enugu campus;
- J. Supply of teaching aids and equipment to Nigerian Hotel and Catering Schools Benin, Lagos, Enugu and Kaduna, as well as, NIHOTOUR Bauchi and Kano campuses;
- K. Supply of library books to Nigerian Hotel and Catering Schools Benin, Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna, as well as, Bauchi and kano campuses;

2.0 Pre-Qualification Documents

The prospective contractors are expected to submit their company's corporate profile containing the following information/documents:

- (i) Certificate of Incorporation;
- (ii) Evidence of Registration with Federal Ministry of Works (i.e for all construction works);
- (iii) Tax Certificate for the last three (3) years and VAT Registration Certificate;
- (iv) Evidence of experience in similar jobs within the last three (3) years with detailed description of the works and the contract price;
- (v) Bank Statement for the past twelve (12) months;
- (vi) (Letter of Attestation on good financial standing of the Company from a reputable commercial Bank;
- (vii) Evidence of payment of Tender Fee with the Institute for those Companies that have been pre-qualified.

3.0 Tender Documents

Tender Documents, which contain detailed description of the projects, should be obtained at NIHOTOUR Headquarters, No. 3 Hargeysa Street, Off Accra Street, Zone 5, Wuse-Abuja and these will be issued only to successfully pre qualified contractors.

4.0 Submission of Documents

All Pre-qualification Documents should be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked:

- (i) "Pre-qualification for e.g. proposed demonstration kitchen and Restaurant for NIHOTOUR, Kano Campus." While the tender should be
- (ii) "Tender for e.g. proposed demonstration kitchen and Restaurant for NIHOTOUR, Kano Campus."

The sealed envelope should be submitted within two (2) weeks from the date of this publication, i.e. on/before 12 noon of April 20TH, 2009 to the address indicated below:

The Director-General,
National Institute for Hospitality & Tourism,
No. 3 Hargeysa Street, Off Accra Street,
Zone 5 – Wuse, Abuja.
Attention: Director of Admin. & Supplies;

NB: Only prequalified contractors will be invited to tender for the Commercial bidding.

5.0 Opening of Tenders

- * The commercial bids will be opened by 2.00p.m. prompt on Monday, April 27, 2009.
- * Venue of opening of bids will be:-
NIHOTOUR's Conference Room,
No.3 Hargeysa Street, Off Accra Street,
Zone 5 – Wuse, Abuja.

Signed
AHMED MOHAMMED SULE
Chief Public Relations Officer
For: Director-General

BUSINESS TRUST

● **FG urged to rescue small businesses** —Page 27

● **FCC wades into PTFD scholarship tussle** —Page 27

Stock Market Report

—Page 31 & 32

Hotline: 08051000536



Flight Schedule

Chanchangi Airlines

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

IRS Airlines

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

Aero Contractors

Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30; 16.30; 19.45(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16:45 (Sat).
Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30; 14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30(Sat).
Lagos-Ben: 07.45; 11.00; 15.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).
Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun)
Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun)
Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun)
Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00(Sun)
Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)
Lagos-PHC: 07.30; 09.30; 15.00(Mon-Fri/ Sat/ Sun)
PHC-Lagos: 11.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 18.00 (Fri)
Lagos-Warri: 07.45; 16.00 (Mon-Fri/sat) 09.15 (Sun)
Warri-Lagos: 09.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 10.45(Sun)

Virgin Nigeria

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

Bellview Airlines

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

Arik Air

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

Naira falls again

...\$1 = N180

Despite measures taken by the Central Bank to reverse the falling trend in the value of Nigeria's currency, yesterday it became apparent that the value of Naira was on the downward trend.

The dollar was exchanged for between N180 and N182 at the parallel market yesterday.

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

According to Mr. Shittu, banks "call some people and sell to them at between N170 and N172 and they are told to pay into private accounts of some of the banks' managers to avoid monitoring from the CBN."

The ABCON spokesman

see what is going on now. The Dollar has jumped to N180, N182 again and the trend may likely continue as the banks refuse to sell at official rates. The banks should be held responsible because they have continuously refused to sell to customers directly at official rates of N140 and N150; instead they call people I can



From left: Mr. Frank Nweke Jr, DG/CEO, NESG; Mr. Emeka Onwuka, GMD/CEO Diamond Bank Plc; Malam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, GMD/CEO First Bank of Nigeria Plc and Mr. Chris Newson, CEO, Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc at the CEO Brainstorming Session hosted by FirstBank preparatory to the World Economic Forum holding in June.

Meanwhile, the Association of Bureau De Change Operators of Nigeria (ABCON) has accused the commercial banks in the country of round tripping as they deliberately sell dollars to touts at rates higher than the official rate given by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Efforts to get the CBN's comment on the matter failed.

Speaking with Daily Trust in Lagos yesterday, the Public Relation Officer of ABCON, Mr Olajide Shittu said the government should hold the commercial banks operating in the country responsible for the ongoing appreciation of the dollar against the country's currency as they continuously refuse to sell to genuine customers but rather sell to touts who in turn increase the price and sell to the BDCs.

said since banks sell only to touts at N171 or N172 "they (touts) call us and sell to us and since we are in the business to gain we also put some amounts and that is why Dollar now goes for between N180 and N182 in the country."

He said unless the CBN takes drastic measure against the banks, the round tripping being done by them, as per the exchange rates, may soon spell doom for the sector, adding that the way things are going the dollar may hit N200 again.

"This will surely have a negative effect on our economy generally," he added.

"We said then that the CBN measure to flood the market with dollars would not bring lasting solution to the crisis in the market, now we are vindicated. You can

refer to as touts and sell to them at higher rates of between N171 and N172. They are given private accounts to pay to in order to avoid the monitoring from the CBN. It is these touts who now sell to the BDCs who in turn sell at higher rates.

"The government should investigate the banks with view to stopping the round tripping they are carrying out because if truth must be told the banks are really ruining the country's economy. I have been doing independent monitoring of the commercial banks for a long time and I discover that Nigerian banks do everything illegal that is detrimental to the country in order to make huge profits", he said.

ABCON had told Daily Trust that the fire brigade approach employed by the CBN two weeks ago, which

made the Naira to appreciate a little against the Dollar and some other foreign currencies, may not be the permanent solution to the problem.

It said: "But I can tell you this may not be the permanent solution as we may still

made the Naira to appreciate a little against the Dollar and some other foreign currencies, may not be the permanent solution to the problem. The naira may still fall."

Meanwhile, Pounce has also gone up again against the Naira as one BR pounce now equals to N240. ABCON said the government needs to act fast as the economy may be the worst for it. The association called on the CBN to revert to the old system prevalent in the sector as the new system being used has not helped matter. It would be recalled that the CBN two weeks pumped dollars into circulation and the Naira slightly appreciated. But the joy that followed the appreciation was short lived as the Naira last weekend began to nose dive again.

For helicopter Flights to Anywhere in Nigeria call:

OAS HELICOPTERS

Nnamdi Azikwe Airport, Abuja

GSM: +234 803 446 3432
+234 705 666 9020

Web: www.oas-helicopters.com

E-mail: contact@oas-helicopters.com

BUSINESS TRUST

NSE to ban erring brokers

As part of efforts aimed at ensuring sanity in the Nigerian capital market and to forestall the recurrence of the African Petroleum Plc share price manipulation saga, the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) yesterday announced its decision to sanction some of its dealing members for flouting its laws, especially as it pertains to movement in the share price of quoted companies.

Speaking on the floor of the NSE, in Lagos, yesterday, Mr. Binoy Yaroe, General Manager / Head, Market Operations and Information Technology Department, disclosed that the NSE, as a result of closer monitoring of activities on the NSE, observed a number of irregularities being perpetrated by some of its dealing members and decided to address the issue to prevent its escalation.

As a result, Yaroe said any dealing involved in such unlawful act would be barred from trading on the floor.

"We have stepped up our monitoring of activities in the capital market. While closely monitoring the market, we observed some irregularities. We observed that some dealing members are moving the prices of certain stocks without achieving the required minimum. We discovered that people are moving prices of these stocks with the trading of only one unit. To this end, we may be barring some dealing members from trading on the floor soon. Those responsible for it, they know themselves and we know them. We are appealing to them to stop it," Yaroe said.

He noted that it discovered that some of the stockbrokers are moving the prices of certain stocks without satisfying the minimum required units to move the prices of such stocks, adding that it hopes to mete out sanctions to erring stockbrokers to serve as a deterrent to others.

The minimum unit of

* Stock market sheds N8.542bn

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

shares required to move the prices of equities on the secondary market, either upward or downward, was put at 50,000 units by the authorities of the NSE. The NSE had reduced the minimum units from 100,000 to 50,000 units in the wake of the protracted bearish run in the market last year, following submissions by various stakeholders on ways to address the continuous decline in the share prices of quoted equities.

He however called on stockbrokers to desist from such illegal activities in the near future, so as to prevent putting the integrity of the market in question.

Meanwhile, the market shed N8.542 billion yesterday, about 0.2 per cent to close at N4.520 trillion against the previous trading of N4.528 trillion.

All share index also lost 37.76 points or 0.2 per cent to close at 19,980.79 points level in contrast to the previous day trading of 20,018.55 points level.

A total of 237.436 million shares were transacted on the floor on Wednesday against the Tuesday's trading of 246.067 million shares worth N1.297 billion in 6,708 deals

Banking sub sector led other sub sectors with a total of 152.803 million shares worth N1.061 billion in 3,269 deals

Activities in the shares of First City Monument Bank drive the sub sector with 30.664 million shares worth N144.020 million exchanged in 122 deals. This was closely followed with transactions in the shares of Wema Bank in which 30.140 million shares were exchanged for N104.587 million in 12 deals.

Insurance sub sector followed with a total 51.109 million shares valued at N38.472

in 606 deals.

Activities in the shares of Standard Alliance Insurance drive the sector with

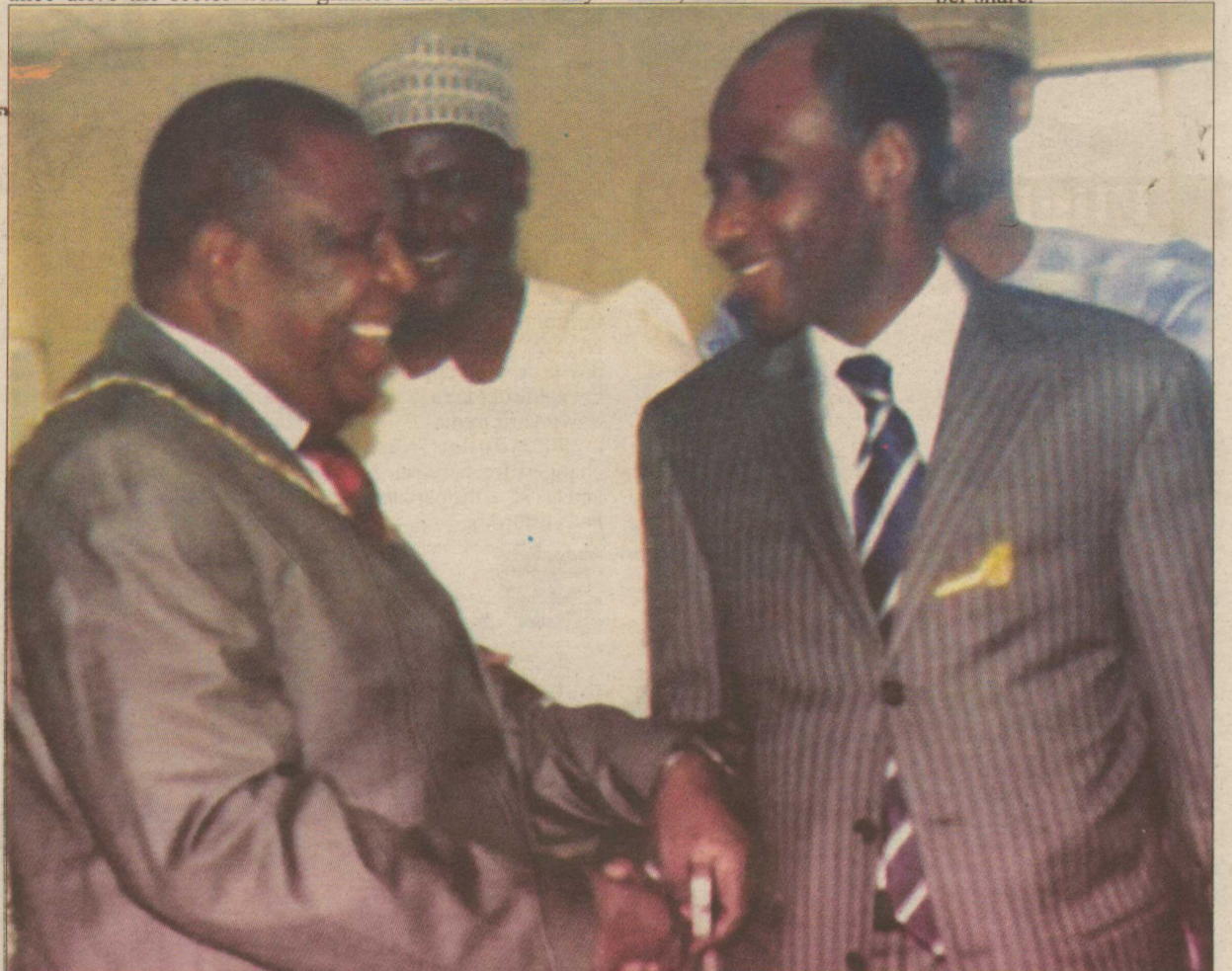
17.557 million shares worth N10.709 million in 48 deals.

Nestle led others on the winners list on Wednesday

with a gain of N4.51 to close at N140.02 per share, AP N3.89 to close at N83.51 per share, UACN N0.89 to close

at N29.90 per share.

On the losers' table, Oando led others with N3.00 loss to close at N65.00 per share, BCC N0.92 to close at N21.76 per share, UAC-Property N0.86 to close at N16.44 per share.



President of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), Dr Samuel Nzekwe (left) welcoming the Director-General of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Malam Musa Al-Faki (right) to the 3rd Convocation ceremony of the Nigerian College of Accountancy (NCA) in Jos recently.

Northern govts urged to emulate Wamako on agric

A Kano based public and media consultant, Alhaji Ibrahim Muhammad Jirgi, yesterday urged the northern governors to emulate Sokoto State's agricultural development initiatives, saying the policies of the Wamako administration towards agriculture are good enough to revive the declining sector in the north.

Jirgi, Chairman Tripple Cee Investment Ltd, said he was moved to make the call by the provisions of Sokoto State's 2009 budget on agriculture and youths empowerment.

According to him, measures on the ways to minimize rural-urban migration through the empowerment of peasant farmers and unemployed youths as contained in Sokoto State's 2009 budget are what the north need to diversify from oil to agriculture for survival.

He said from the onset of the last rainy season the state government has procured 24,610 metric tonnes of assorted fertilizers at the total cost of N3billion, which were sold to the state's farm-

From Isa Sa'idu, Kano

ers at subsidised rate. Because of the large number of the commodity, the product is still in stock for the dry season farming, Jirgi averred.

"Gone are the days when North, and the country in general, would keep on relying on oil for survival especially if the present predicament that fell the oil price is anything to go by. Therefore,

as entrepreneurs of northern origin it is our duties to encourage the implementation of good policies as development of the north would translate to the development of our people and businesses," Jirgi said.

Jirgi explained that the proposed plan to empower about 30,000 youths in 2009 by Sokoto State is commendable and is something, which other states, espe-

cially those in the north, should emulate.

"The 2009 budget passed by Wamako speaks volume on the commitment of the governor to address the problems of Sokoto State. The budget also speaks volume on the Wamako's style of leadership and also indicates that he is the type of leader which his state and the country need at this critical time of our economy," Jirgi said.

MTN out with innovative products, services

In its determination to enrich the lives of its subscribers, MTN Nigeria has adopted a strategy of sustainable customer engagement which will enhance both existing and new products and services.

Speaking on this groundbreaking development, Mr. Bola Akingbade, the Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer, MTN, said "MTN has developed products and services to meet its customers' 'special needs' in unique ways. We want our customers to enjoy the latest offerings in the world of telecommunications, which will place them ahead of their friends and

relations who are not on the MTN network."

The new products and services will be showcased across three locations in Abuja and Lagos during a series of mega events tagged 'MTN Innovation Day.'

The MTN Innovation Day will play host to Les Brown, a renowned public speaker, author and television personality, who rose to international prominence by delivering highly charged messages which motivate people on how to shake off mediocrity, and live up to their greatness. He will speak on the theme 'Enriching lives

through innovation' which derives from what he has learnt from his own life, which is a classic 'rags-to-riches' story.

Like Les Brown, MTN's brand essence is based on constant innovation, which has set the business apart as a true leader in the forefront of the ICT revolution in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, MTN recently introduced 'MTN One World,' a seamless roaming service designed to boost cross-border movements of Nigerian tourists and entrepreneurs. With that, MTN customers, especially those on the prepaid platform no longer have to buy SIMs of local MTN networks in parts of West Africa where MTN is present.

Air France takes delivery of Boeing 777

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

Air France will today in Everett take delivery of its 54th Boeing 777, with registration F-GZND. A statement from Air France indicated that, the aircraft 777th Boeing 777 produced by the manufacturer, Boeing at its workshops in Everett, near Seattle.

Air France's 54th Boeing 777 will be the first aircraft in the fleet to sport Air France's new livery and will land at Paris-Charles de Gaulle on Saturday 11 April 2009, at 6:45 am, after a nine-hour flight of said.

On this occasion, Air France will be broadcasting five programmes telling the story of the delivery of this aircraft on its corporate website.

The scheduled programme include; Thursday 9 April the final touches; Friday 10 April Air France takes possession of the aircraft; Saturday 11 April: "Boeing hands over the keys of the aircraft"; Sunday 12 April: "Air France's new colours at Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Monday 13 April: "Air France's 54th Boeing 777 is put into operation.

BUSINESS TRUST

Arik Air to sponsor Sierra Leonean pilots

Nigeria's largest airline, Arik Air has offered to sponsor Sierra Leoneans to become pilots and engineers to help develop aviation in the west coast country.

A statement said this pledge was made in Freetown, Sierra Leone on Monday, March 30, 2009 by

the chairman of Arik Air, Sir Joseph Arumemi-Johnson, at the ceremonial handover of the 'City of Freetown' aircraft by the airline to President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone.

Sir Arumemi-Johnson pledged the airline's readiness to work together with the country's

government to bring development to the region. "We owe it a duty to bring development to Sierra Leone. If we don't develop Africa, who will do it", he asked.

He said the decision to start operation in Sierra Leone is borne out of the need to ease intra-African

trade and requested that Arik Air be granted the status of national carrier of Sierra Leone.

The chairman thanked President Koroma for his untiring effort to develop Sierra Leone, pledging support for him and a promise to operate another brand new Boeing 737-800

connecting Freetown with London Gatwick if granted such right. He called on Sierra Leoneans to fly Arik Air when the Lagos-Freetown flight would commence.

Sir Arumemi-Johnson was also full of praises for President, Umaru Yar'adua for his leadership role in the west coast as the chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Managing Director, Arik Air, Mr. Michael McTighe promised that the airline would offer world-class service to Sierra Leoneans. "We would not compromise on safety and will go the extra mile to ensure the satisfaction of our increasing customer base. This is a new dawn in air transportation in Freetown", McTighe said.

The 'City of Freetown' aircraft, a Boeing 737-700, will

be used to service the Mano river region via Freetown. Nigeria's first brand new Boeing 737-800NG aircraft operated by Arik Air was also on display at the ceremony.

Arik Air is expected to connect key markets from Lagos, all the way along the West Coast to Freetown, Banjul and Dakar. It is expected that the connection of the Mano river region by Arik Air will improve accessibility to the region.

The Boeing 737-700 (City of Freetown) to be dedicated to this route is a modern state-of-the-art aircraft configured to carry 124 passengers with 12 business class seats and 112 economy seats. It is one of the two latest Boeing 737-700 aircraft delivered to the airline in March 2009.



Mr. Okey Nwosu, Group Managing Director, FinBank (L) and Alhaji Muktari Shagari, Deputy Governor of Sokoto State, at a courtesy call on the deputy governor in Sokoto recently

FG urged to rescue small businesses

The Federal Government needs to urgently come up with a deliberate policy to assist small and medium enterprises in the country to whether the storm in this period when the global economy is in serious recession, the Managing Director Fini Aluminum, Alhaji Abdullahi Idris has suggested.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in Bauchi, the indigenous industrialist said small and medium enterprises in the country are facing serious challenges most especially during this period when the whole economy is in a mess thus the sector's need for an urgent intervention by the government.

He said to ensure that industries operating in the country do not cave in to the crisis affecting the world economy government must as a matter of urgency fashion a way out through promulgating deliberate policies that will directly assist them to whether the storm to avoid plunging the country in to social unrest that might arise as a result of job losses when the companies are left no choice but to close shop.

"Government should assist small and medium enterprises in the country through the waiver of import duties, cutting down banks' interest rate and so on. This should not be politicized. Government must deal directly with entrepreneurs af-

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

ter seeing their physical structures on ground. Banks should be made to give loans to us at lower interest rate. At the moment they are too reluctant to give loans."

He said the current global financial melt down is affecting small businesses in the country because of the high exchange rate of the American Dollar and industries in the country espe-

cially the small and medium scale ones will suffer because the competition between them and foreign ones will be unfavorable.

"Unless government comes to our aide we will be force to close down because the situation is not favorable to us. We are force to produce at higher prices than finished goods imported into the country. If I can produce, say toilet soap, and sell for N100 before making a profit and somebody can import similar item and sell

at N90, who will buy mine? It means I will run out of business," he reasons.

Alhaji Abdullahi Idris, who was the commissioner for Housing and Transport in Gombe state, said government can always come to the aide of small and medium enterprises in the country because it is in its own interest to ensure that companies that provide employment opportunities to the people are given all the necessary support to survive whatever calamity befalls them.

Peace MFB leases 15 buses in 4 months

By Abubakar Buba

As part of its corporate social responsibility to communities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Peace Micro Finance Bank (MFB) has in the last four month leased 15 buses to various beneficiaries including Bwari Area Council.

The lease agreement which is aimed at stimulating grass root economy and empowering Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SME's) to be self-reliant has a repayment period of 18 months within which beneficiaries can spread payment in installment.

The buses which originally cost N2.3 million were leased at N2.1 million with a 20% monthly payment.

Managing Director of Peace (MFB), Mr. Ukasoanya Ejike Innocent said that the buses will help

alleviate the problem of transportation in some areas of the FCT and bring about job opportunities for many unemployment people in the society.

He said that the flexible nature of repayment makes it easier for beneficiaries to pay at installment and enjoy the double benefit of empowerment and employment put together.

He said: "We have leased out about 15 buses in the last four months. This is a giant stride in the fight against poverty in the country. We are trying to play a responsive corporate role by appreciate the communities we serve".

"Repayment pattern is flexible. We give them 18

months within which to pay for the buses which originally cost us N2.3 million each. However, we lease them out at the rate of N2.1 million to ease payment and achieve the target goal of empowering the poor. They are expected to pay 20% monthly".

Mr. Innocent said that compliance to the lease agreement has been successful because many of the beneficiaries pay promptly, adding "we have not recorded any default on the part of the beneficiaries. They pay promptly as stated in the lease agreement".

The bank which was nominated as the best micro finance bank of the year 2008 by Bwari Area Council had earlier entered into a lease agreement with the council and gave out 10 Foton buses on lease.

FCC wades into PTDF scholarship tussle

By Hamisu Muhammad

It took the intervention of the Federal Character Commission to verify the alleged violation of federal character principles in the overseas scholarship programme of the Petroleum Technology Trust Fund.

The funds has been under pressure for alleged violation of the Federal Character principles in its scholarship programmes where some states saw different names on the final lists of the qualified candidates that sounds not representing the indigenes of their states.

Daily Trust learnt that Nassarawa and Rivers States have decried including some names of candidates against their states which are not their indigenes.

The Power and Energy committee of the Federal Character Commission Chairman, Engr. Ahmed Ishaq said that the commission is concerned about the administration of the overseas scholarship Scheme by PTDF and the conduct of recruitments into the Fund.

He said the Commission has been inundated with complaints by some states alleging marginalisation of their indigenes in the recently concluded award of Overseas Scholarships, while in some cases non indigenes are awarded Scholarship by impersonation.

After due consultation with FCC the Executive Secretary of the PTDF, Muttaqha Rabe Darma said "unfortunately one of the names Dele Sunday was offered Scholarship from Rivers state for Refinery Design and Operations. It is alleged that the name is not indigenous to Rivers State and the bearer could not have come from the State. Another was Benjamin Bala from the same Rivers State and another beneficiary of our Scholarship Scheme. The name raised doubt as to the bearer being an indigene of Rivers state.

A statement from the Head, Press and External Relations Kalu Otisi, the PTDF boss said at the meeting that, "My response is that if you say Dele Sunday and Benjamin Bala do not come from Rivers state, how then did Rotimi Amaechi come from Rivers State. Rotimi is known to all as Yoruba name while Amaechi is Igbo name. So how with such a name, Rotimi Amaechi is not only an indigene of Rivers State but also the governor". Rabe said

He said some of the assertions of the Commission are completely and totally wrong and exhibits a lack of understanding of the operations of the Fund.

"When PTDF is considering candidates for Scholarship awards, it does not go to each and every Local Government to enquire if such eligible names come from the Local Government; go and show me his father, his grandfather in order to authenticate indigeneship of the state".

"Once a letter of indigeneship is issued by the Local Government, PTDF will not challenge its authenticity. So if a Local Government gives somebody who is not from that Local Government, a letter of indigeneship for whatever reason, then it is not the fault of PTDF. That indicates, even if the bearer's name is not indigenous to the area that the person is from the Local Government. Then there is nothing PTDF can do other than to locate that candidate in the Local Government", he added.

FEATURE

Pilgrims of the Atlantic Ocean

When a band of pilgrims in 1950 made their way to Ori-Oke, a little island at the tip of the Atlantic, they never belived the number one citizen of Nigeria will one day feast with them.

Ori-Oke community is situated at Iwamimo, Ilaje local government of Ondo State and it is only accessible by a 20 minute boat drive through the marshy delta.

According to indigene of the community the land was founded by His Holiness Wilson Etan Ikudehinbu, Ogbon Olorun, Oba Alaafia I, when he migrated from Aiye-toro with a few followers.

A member of the community, Moloro Felix, stated that the first Oba was a mighty prophet raised by God to preach salvation and bring healing to all mankind.

"We are all Christians and the founder of this community is His Holiness Wilson Etan Ikudehinbu, Ogbon Olorun, Oba Alaafia, who migrated from Aiye-toro in 1950 to this place," he said.

However, Felix stated that before the prophet prayed their was an injunction given to him by Almighty God to tell the people to remove all forms of jewelleries from their body and cast them away before they will be healed from their ailments.

"Our women also don't wear men apparels like trousers and the like because according to the law of Moses women are not suppose to wear anything that men wear and likewise men," he concluded.

Also an indigene of the area Isigun Shem, said that women are not allowed in the community to wear such apparels but other women who are not from the same community or those of the community married to outsiders are exempted from the law.

"Yes, women are not allowed to wear jewelleries, trousers or any form of male apparels because we are operating the law of Moses here, but our women who are married to outsiders or other women who are strangers can wear it and their won't be punishment meted on them," he said.

He also added that the law is binding on neighbouring Ilaje women who venture to the Island for one business or the other.

Another feature that stands out in the island is the imposing community church of the Holy Apostles which is about two meters to a football field that is about three meters to the Atlantic Ocean.

Surprisingly, the football pitch is the last land mark one notices before putting his foot on the Atlantic and stories have it that come rain, come shine the youths are always engage in one form of competition or another.

By Benjamin Auta, who was in Ori-Oke Iwamimo

"We love the game that is why we are always playing and even if the ball falls into the ocean we just jump into the water, swim and retrieve the ball, said Samson a 19-year-old senior secondary schools (SSS3) student.

Another revelation was the mixed cultural background in the community. Speaking to *Daily Trust*, the Sarkin Hausawa, Ori-Oke, Iwamimo, Malam Abdullahi Umaru said

that he has been residing in the area for over 18 year.

Malam Umaru, who hails from Sokoto State, said that the community is basically agrarian as fishing is the only trade practice by the people.

"I am from Sokoto State and I have been staying here for over 18 years and I am a trader by profession but the people's here are mainly fishermen because of the nature of the environment," he said.

He added that he has two wives, one in Sokoto who has seven children for him and the other who is an Ilaje woman

from Ori-Oke has two children.

Malam Umaru further said that he divides his time between the two women since they are not all staying with him in the same place.

"I spend four months each with every one of my two wives and my children as it has helped me in keeping in touch with my business here and Sokoto," he added.

So also is the chairman of the Hausa market community, Garba Abdullahi, who has been residing in the community for about 20 years.

"I came here to look for my

daily bread, I am also from Sokoto State and I have been residing in this community for close to 20 years," he said.

He added that when he first arrived the community he felt challenged by the life style of the inhabitants of the island despite the challenges of the terrain.

"What brought me to this community first of all is trading and when I arrived I was greeted warmly by the community, though I am not used to seeing such vast expanse of water because I am from the far north but I adapted well and

have been living here since about 20 years now," he said.

Malam who is just married a native of Ilaje from the community further said that his wife has just delivered a child.

However, the paramount ruler of the island, who is also the son of the late founder of the community, His Holiness, J.A. Alebiosu, Ogbon Olorun Okun Ajiri, Oba Alaafia II decried the low level of development in the island.

Speaking through some of his cabinet members, the Oba stated that the community which has become heterogeneous now requires more schools as the ones provided by the community a primary and secondary school are now dilapidated.

He added that with eight polling booths in the community alone more utilities are needed for the ever increasing population that flock into the community on daily bases to transact business.

"We need a lot of developmental projects here; we need light, portable water even a bridge that we can convey our produce from the ocean to the mainland as it is the major produce for us in this island," he said.

He further said that many people from neighbouring Ilaje lands and beyond come to the island for healing or receive blessing from the spiritual head who also doubles the Oba of the community.

"You know our spiritual leader is still our Oba and people from far and wide who come to healing and spiritual advise also," he added.

However at the main event which took president Umaru Musa Yar'adua to the island community, the Joint Operation Exercise (JOPEX) tagged Operation "Ologun Meta," which literally means "three warriors," the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike promised the community a borehole which will provide by the Nigerian Armed Forces as well as free medical treatment during the one week of the exercise.

He said the selection of the area with its difficult terrain is aimed at achieving the dual goal of joint mobilization of men and material as well as build synergy among three services.

He added that lessons learnt from the exercise will be used in enhancing the operational ability of the armed forces as results from the exercise will be used in boosting the capabilities of the armed forces especially those in operational areas.

While reassuring Nigerians of the capabilities of the armed forces to defend the territorial integrity of the nation he added that the exercise was driven by the desire of the armed forces to exercise the troops in a tri-service setting.



President Umaru Yar'adua and Minister of State for Defence Mr. Ademola Seriki (in camouflage) at the site of the 2009 joint military operation exercise (Ologun meta) at Ori-Oke Iwa Mimo Island in Ondo State.



A view of Ori-Oke Iwa Mimo Island, a costal area of Okitipupa, venue of the 2009 joint military exercise tagged Operation Ologun Meta.

FEATURE

A day out with Jalingo's local brick layers

Faced with the biting effect of the current global financial crisis, many Nigerians have gone back to their traditional ways of earning a living. In Taraba state the local block industry has come alive as jobless youths have turned to it as an alternative means of survival. Fidelis Mac-Leva, had a day out with the local bricklayers at one of their fields in Jalingo.

At the base of the popular Nukkai Bridge found along the way to the College of Education Jalingo, otherwise known as ATC, is a vast marshy land measuring several kilometres. For the benefit of the doubt controversial Nukkai Bridge is better remembered for its collapse years ago during which over 200 people reportedly perished.

During rainy seasons, various vegetables and crops are grown on the fadama-like land which is said to be rich in nutrients. Some of these include garden eggs, onions, maize, sorghum as well as tuber crops like cocoyam and sweet potato.

But as soon as the rains are over and the crops are harvested, the land is taken over by a community of youths. These able bodied youths, most of who are from neighbouring Benue state, have discovered in the marshy soil a veritable raw material for their livelihood: bricklaying.

As part of self employment efforts, these youths have therefore set up what could be regarded as a local burnt-brick industry at the bank of the river that flows under the Nukkai Bridge.

When this Reporter visited the Nukkai Bridge last weekend it was a beehive of activities reminiscent of a typical termite's colony as the youths busied themselves with the process of producing their burnt bricks.

Caleb Hilekaan is one of those who produce burnt bricks at the base of the Nukkai Bridge. Like other producers he has a number of labourers working with him.

"I have been producing burnt bricks here for the past two years. Every producer here is allocated a portion of this land where he works with his own staff. As you can see I have about five staff working with me on my portion", Hilekaan explained.

Among those working for Hilekaan is Joseph Zege, whose duty is to mould the blocks. For every 1000 blocks laid Zege is paid the sum of N2,000.

Zege explains the process of laying the blocks: "We dig up the clay soil underground and arrange in heaps. Water is then added and the sand is mixed and softened. We then use either a 5 inches moulder or that of 6 inches to lay the blocks."

Another producer, Alagh Akaa, conducted me through the various stages and processes involved in the burnt bricks production business which involves a high division of labour.

After the blocks are laid in layers, they are covered with hay in order to prevent them from getting cracked; he began the lecture adding that days

after drying under the sun the edges of the blocks are scrapped and smoothed with sharp knives to get the desired shape.

Next is the process of burning the bricks which is as complex as it is interesting. Every producer engages the services of another group of youths whose duty is to arrange the bricks into pyramid-like layers of about twenty-five inches high.

The pyramid-like layers which contain about 5000 blocks each are constructed in the form of secular tabernacles with tunnels underneath. A furnace is then constructed round each pyramid of bricks before the burning process.

Through the two tunnels that are delicately created under the pyramid of blocks, heavy logs of firewood are arranged and fire is made inside in such a manner that prevents the smoke and flames from billowing outside. By so doing the blocks are made to sufficiently undergo the burning process.

When fully burnt, the colour of the bricks is then transformed to either pink or red depending on the intensity of the heat. It is at this stage that the bricks are now ready for purchase by prospective customers.

How is the market for the Jalingo local block industry? Terzungwe Ichihi is the chairman of the association of burnt brick moulders. Apart from the field at the base of Nukkai Bridge Ichihi, who has been in the block business for about 15 years, also supervises other fields located at Sabon Gari, Bakin Dutse, Tsunkani, Iware and Zing.

"The market fluctuates depending on the demand", he responded. According to him, each of the 5 inch blocks sells for N25 each while those of 6 inches go for N30 each.

Apart from building houses, Ichihi disclosed that their burnt blocks were purchased by individuals and government agencies for the construction of culverts, drainages, dams, boreholes and fish ponds.

"People prefer our blocks to the cement ones because they are stronger and water resistant. They are also fire and bullet proof", he said.

A customer who simply identified himself as Dr.

Nwachukwu of the Agape Missionary Eye Services Jalingo, attested to these advantages. Nwachukwu who had just taken delivery of a pick-up load of burnt bricks at the Nukkai Bridge site said the burnt bricks were particularly good for the construction of domestic wells and boreholes.

"As you can see I have just

bought some quantity which will be used for the construction of a well inside my compound", Nwachukwu said.

However, the chairman laments that the burnt brick business in Jalingo was marred by a number difficulties. According to him, the major difficulty was the allocation of sites for the local industry.

"In all the fields we are using, we pay huge sums of money to the *mai angwa* [ward head] before being allowed to use the land.

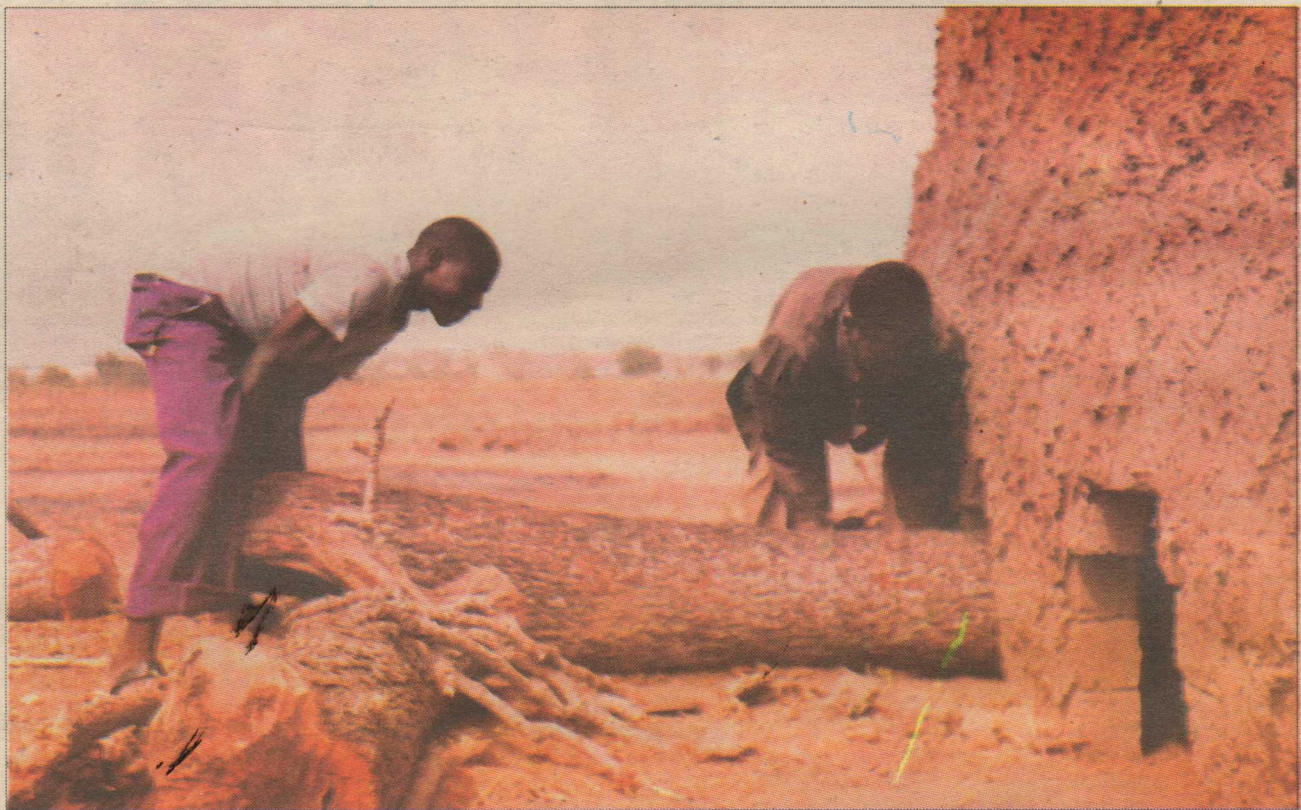
He also complained of water problem as well as lack of other working tools such as wheel barrow, shovels, hand gloves as well as firewood.

"We produce in less quantity due to the problem of

lack of working tools as listed earlier. During the rainy season, we are compelled to suspend production because of the rains. But if we have umbrellas, we could carry on with production even in the rainy season."

He appealed to the Taraba state government to grant the association soft loans under the micro credit scheme of its poverty alleviation programme to enable them purchase working tools.

A cross section of workers at the field said they were propelled into the burnt bricks production business as a self reliant effort to cater for the needs of their immediate families.



Moulders driving in wood to burn moulded bricks.



Some moulded bricks at a moulding site.

INSURANCE BUSINESS

CIIN to review syllabus to reflect insurance dynamics

Following constant changes in the insurance space and the need to develop requisite manpower in Nigeria to meet global best practices, the Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria (CIIN) has said it would continuously review its curriculum to reflect new dynamics.

Institute's president,

Stories from Chris Agabi, Lagos

Adeyemo Adejumo gave the commitment in Lagos at the Institute's Golden Jubilee celebration in Lagos.

"We assure that the Institute's professional examinations will continue to reflect the developments in the business and practice of Insurance

through regular and sustained syllabus review" he said.

According to him, "this is the only way we can make our qualifiers relevant in the scheme of things and ensure that they perform as global professionals."

He explained that, "following the emerging companies,

following the recapitalization and consolidation exercise, the industry now require better professionals whose perception match the big pictures of the new stake holding equation.

"These companies require professionals and managers who should be able to: Key

into the mission and vision of the investors; Recreate their skills and expertise to cope with the new market realities; Exercise adequate technical depth and managerial controls over the emerging mega businesses; Redefine their roles and responsibilities in the new financial stake hold-

ing matrix; Engender appropriate market intelligence requisite for creating and sustaining more value in service delivery and corporate wealth creation."

The Institute was established in 1959 and one of the oldest professional body in Nigeria.

Royal Exchange launches digital card payment system

To provide insurance to the largely uninsured low earning Nigerians and also tap into opportunities that the sector holds for the industry, Royal Exchange Insurance has introduced a product that is grass root based.

Unveiling the Royal Exchange scratch card in Lagos, the Group Managing Director, Royal Exchange Group, Mr. Allan Walmsley said the scratch card works like conventional GSM cards and with education, Nigerians can use it to buy, for now, life based insurance policies.

The technology which cost the company some N27 million to develop is 100 per cent home-grown and tailored for the convenience of Nigerians he said.

With the card, Walmsley explained it's a scratch card based method of payment of insurance premiums thus, customers of Royal Exchange will now be able to activate new accounts and make payment of their insurance premiums via their mobile phones, using easily obtainable scratch cards.

According to Larry Ademeso, Managing Director of Royal Prudential Life Assurance, the innovation is the first ever in Nigeria's insurance industry and "reflects our determination to continuously seek ways of deploying technology for the benefit of our customers and potential customers."

The new method of paying premiums said Ademeso, takes advantage of the increasing popularity of scratch cards and affords customers the convenience and additional choice in the manner in which they make their transactions.

For now, he explained, the scratch cards would be only used to activate new accounts and pay premiums for life based insurance policies for now but will be extended shortly to reflect other products.

"The Royal Exchange group is developing additional solutions which will be introduced shortly will cover all life assurance and general insurance products."

Ademeso said the scratch cards are particularly easy to

use as they are used in the same way as GSM recharge cards but also provides opportunities to transact same business on the internet.

Customers, he said, would no longer need to visit physical payment points, including Royal Exchange offices, in order to activate new accounts or make payments for their insurance premiums.

But before a customer uses the top up card, the customer must first buy a policy card which ranges from N1,000 to N10,000.

Ademeso added that the scratch card operates on a very robust and secure platform, saying, "at Royal Exchange, we are happy and proud to announce that the entire solution was developed in Nigeria."

The digital innovation, stated Ademeso, is in line with the company's rebranding mission, which is itself founded on the twin pegs of technology and human resources.

"We want to continuously employ the use of technology to deploy unparalleled value to our customers, working through people who are well trained and motivated to best deliver value in the industry and we are proud of the progress we have continued to record in this area."

The scratch cards will soon be available nationwide and can be used by customers in any part of Nigeria, wishing to activate their accounts or pay their premiums.

IGI showcases insurance services at Enugu fair

Industrial And General Insurance Plc, has taken its insurance products closer to customers at the ongoing 20th Enugu International Trade Fair.

The products, according to a statement include, IGI School Fees Insurance Scheme (SEIS); IGI Mortgage Care Policy (MoreCare); IGI Estate Fire Insurance Scheme (EFIS); IGI LeaseCare Policy and IGI Estate Comprehensive Insurance Scheme (ECIS). Others are IGI Personal and Annuity Plus Plan (PPA), IGI Integrated Benefits Plan (IBP) and IGI Dividend Plus Plan (DPP).

IGI's Enugu branch manager, Mr. Tony Okeume, said:



Participants at a business process re-engineering workshop for staff of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) held in Lagos recently

'Some insurers qualify for TARP fund'

The U.S. Treasury said on Wednesday some life insurers have met requirements for government capital investments under an existing rescue plan, clarifying that it is not launching a new bailout for the sector.

"There are a number of life insurers that have met requirements for the Capital Purchase Program because of their bank holding company status," said Treasury spokesman Andrew Williams. "These are among the hundreds of financial insti-

tutions in the CPP pipeline that will be reviewed and funded as appropriate on a rolling basis."

The statement was made in response to a Wall Street Journal story published late on Tuesday saying the Treasury would extend its \$700 billion financial bailout program to certain life insurers and would make an announcement in coming days.

Williams said any capital investments in insurers that have bank holding company status would not

constitute a new rescue program for the insurance sector.

The Treasury clarification caused stocks to pare gains, particularly the major insurers which were viewed as the likely beneficiaries of a widening of the Treasury's financial bailouts. Prudential Financial Inc shares had climbed more than 12 percent at one point in early trade, but by midday were up 7 percent at \$23.65, while MetLife's earlier 10 percent gain was chopped back to about 3.3 percent at \$24.96.

In recent months, some insurance companies have received approval to acquire banks, paving the way for them to participate in the Capital Purchase Program, which the Treasury has estimated will top out at \$218 billion.

As of Tuesday, the program had \$198.5 billion invested, leaving \$19.5 billion in available funds, according to Treasury documents. A Treasury official said only a small number of life insurers

have met the qualifications for the program.

The Treasury estimates it has around \$134.5 billion left in the overall bailout fund, but it faces heavy funding demands from additional automaker aid requests and the launch of toxic asset purchase funds and a new program to provide additional capital if necessary to the largest 19 banks following the completion of stress tests at the end of April.

The American Council of Life Insurers, an industry lobbying group, said it expects the Treasury to communicate decisions on capital investments directly to companies that have applied.

"As we have argued all along, allowing life insurers to participate in the CPP would be consistent with the stated goals of the program to increase the flow of financing to U.S. businesses and stabilize the credit markets," said Frank Keating, chief executive of the group.

NOW THICKER STRONGER LONGER LASTING

CALL: 0800 888 2222

PROTECTING YOU ALWAYS

FINANCE BUSINESS

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2009

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	1	13.83	500	6,915.00
Sector Totals	1		500	6,915.00
AGRICULTURE				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	2	0.86	3,432	3,088.80
FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	25	1.10	1,149,173	1,256,500.72
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	12	1.08	171,866	184,160.73
PRESKO PLC	5	5.33	32,750	166,042.50
Sector Totals	44		1,357,221	1,609,792.75
AIR SERVICES				
NIGERIAN AVIATION HANDLING CO. PLC	43	7.12	569,625	4,055,463.71
Sector Totals	43		569,625	4,055,463.71
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	22	0.50	1,098,688	549,461.99
R. T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	11	8.71	105,236	916,605.56
Sector Totals	33		1,203,924	1,466,067.55
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	160	4.85	3,577,107	17,444,905.52
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	83	5.21	725,938	3,739,269.56
DIAMOND BANK PLC	52	4.50	1,256,487	5,679,012.92
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	7	27.96	5,709	159,623.64
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	122	4.89	30,664,402	144,020,387.20
FIDELITY BANK PLC	140	2.21	7,127,575	15,859,466.84
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	928	15.05	21,277,624	326,261,791.87
FIRST INLAND BANK PLC	15	2.25	23,941	55,613.89
GTBANK PLC	330	10.00	22,732,558	226,769,364.87
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	43	5.27	2,311,325	12,209,983.80
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	356	7.27	11,767,183	83,294,651.67
OCEANIC BANK INTERNATIONAL PLC	233	6.41	3,211,290	20,924,394.17
BANK PHB PLC	41	5.20	1,554,971	8,065,168.30
SKYE BANK PLC.	48	4.04	1,613,099	6,524,685.01
SPRING BANK PLC	6	5.59	11,264	62,965.76
STERLING BANK PLC	41	1.32	3,801,761	4,951,025.57
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	286	8.40	4,436,037	37,390,108.01
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	143	11.57	1,523,853	17,578,690.26
UNITY BANK PLC	18	1.20	3,097,244	3,716,692.80
WEMA BANK PLC	12	3.47	30,140,455	104,587,378.85
ZENITH BANK PLC	205	11.13	1,943,244	21,711,886.66
Sector Totals	3,269		152,803,067	1,061,007,067.17
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	44	89.90	98,947	8,866,904.97
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	10	2.85	42,450	125,495.50
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	109	36.96	1,317,988	48,767,412.68
Sector Totals	163		1,459,385	57,759,813.15
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	44	8.40	571,207	4,758,637.14
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC	11	21.76	160,598	3,507,412.13
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIGERIA PLC	31	7.08	218,373	1,551,035.70
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	81	17.00	2,963,500	51,200,429.83
Sector Totals	167		3,913,678	61,017,514.80
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS NIGERIA PLC	1	6.31	2,742	16,452.00
CHEMICAL AND ALLIED PRODUCTS PLC	2	32.77	478	14,884.92
DN MEYER PLC	1	9.88	100	939.00
I. P. W. A. PLC	1	3.19	187	568.48
Sector Totals	5		3,507	32,844.40
COMMERCIAL SERVICES				
COURTVILLE INVESTMENTS PLC	2	2.99	100,626	300,965.64
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	10	1.98	153,500	304,410.00
Sector Totals	12		254,126	605,375.64
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	8	0.85	134,390	114,055.90
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	2	7.39	42,500	298,775.00
Sector Totals	10		176,890	412,830.90
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIGERIA) PLC	3	6.79	21,203	136,971.38
CHELLARAMS PLC	7	19.19	41,338	754,005.12
JOHN HOLT PLC	1	11.97	658	7,488.04
PZ CUSONS NIGERIA PLC	36	17.00	164,608	2,667,716.10
SCOA NIGERIA PLC	1	11.95	380	4,316.80
TRANSNATIONAL CORP. OF NIG. PLC	40	0.51	1,055,382	544,578.06
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	26	29.90	173,187	5,183,177.33
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	74	7.64	901,198	7,011,127.21
Sector Totals	188		2,357,954	16,309,380.04
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	43	4.61	337,357	1,600,826.74
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	11	22.80	20,764	471,774.20
MULTIVERSE RESOURCES PLC	12	0.56	1,889,892	1,002,881.76
Sector Totals	66		2,248,013	3,075,482.70
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	1	1.41	11,369	15,234.46
Sector Totals	1		11,369	15,234.46
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	9	37.05	14,061	512,039.60
BIG TREAT PLC	2	2.35	12,300	27,552.00
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	17	10.60	19,330	200,217.82
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	77	8.00	366,089	3,009,806.56
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	74	14.75	1,240,282	18,297,697.34
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	37	14.67	111,828	1,596,810.64
NATIONAL SALT COMPANY NIGERIA PLC	14	3.80	379,103	1,439,491.40
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	12	22.50	35,071	803,334.00
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	31	140.02	77,885	10,875,243.58
TANTALIZERS PLC	12	1.02	382,000	388,600.00
UTC NIGERIA PLC	5	3.01	573	1,638.78
Sector Totals	290		2,638,522	37,152,431.72

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC	2	5.87	1,083	6,043.14
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	2	2.66	2,000	5,060.00
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	13	2.28	118,104	272,235.26
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	5	15.73	135,410	2,129,999.30
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	10	4.50	31,850	147,800.53
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMA. PLC	14	1.86	145,300	264,868.00
UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SER. PLC	11	0.60	424,000	254,400.00
Sector Totals	57		857,747	3,080,406.23
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	4	16.96	51,000	864,960.00
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	2	1.95	11,000	20,460.00
VITAFAM NIGERIA PLC	6	3.90	16,000	62,831.15
VONO PRODUCTS PLC	1	1.99	1,500	2,850.00
Sector Totals	13		79,500	951,101.15
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TELECOMMUNICATION				
CHAMS NIGERIA PLC	33	1.17	1,147,500	1,302,428.10
MASS TELECOM INNOVATION NIG. PLC	1	0.59	2,000	1,140.00
STARCOMMS PLC	38	2.10	1,451,200	3,034,889.63
Sector Totals	72		2,600,700	4,338,457.73
INSURANCE				
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	268	1.03	9,220,672	9,476,794.94
CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE PLC	7	0.94	803,451	747,743.94
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	19	1.30	1,007,900	1,258,978.00
CUSTODIAN AND ALLIED INS. PLC	23	2.06	770,811	1,594,415.66
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	1	1.63	80,000	130,400.00
GREAT NIGERIA INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	0.86	3,000	2,460.00
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	6	0.50	249,475	124,737.50
GUINEA ASSURANCE PLC.	17	0.52	473,000	239,240.00
CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INS. PLC	7	0.52	578,547	291,754.44
INVEST. AND ALLIED ASSURANCE PLC	10	0.50	2,365,500	1,182,750.00
INT'I ENERGY INSURANCE CO. PLC	29	1.05	2,771,872	2,930,795.80
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	29	0.92	1,456,835	1,282,773.14
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	3	1.35	21,200	27,348.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	4	0.50	24,000	12,000.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	29	0.71	1,579,030	1,132,796.25
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG) PLC.	36	0.62	2,654,687	1,666,245.94
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	12	1.47	149,700	220,059.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	2	4.62	5,050	22,169.50
REGENCY ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	0.50	10,000	5,000.00
SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	4	0.77	80,800	62,216.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	48	0.61	17,557,300	10,709,953.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	11	0.70	1,300,750	933,032.50
UNIVERSAL INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	27	0.54	7,866,481	4,247,899.74
INTERCONTINENTAL WAPIC INS. PLC	12	2.17	78,978	171,382.26
Sector Totals	606		51,109,039	38,472,945.61
LEASING				
C&I LEASING PLC	2	6.04	3,500	20,090.00
Sector Totals	2		3,500	20,090.00
MARITIME				
JAPUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	139	1.73	1,000,125	1,748,645.58
Sector Totals	139		1,000,125	1,748,645.58
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	233	1.44	6,084,649	8,620,514.56
Sector Totals	233		6,084,649	8,620,514.56
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ABBEY BUILDING SOCIETY PLC	1	2.78	1,500	3,975.00
ASO SAVINGS AND LOAN PLC	19	0.98	396,146	404,352.80
UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	53	1.43	1,635,804	2,300,683.47
Sector Totals	73		2,033,450	2,709,011.27
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC.	1	3.62	1,500	5,160.00
DEAP CAPITAL MANAG AND TRUST PLC	1	5.71	500	2,715.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	1	2.17	1,000	2,070.00
Sector Totals	3		3,000	9,945.00
PACKAGING				
NIGERIAN BAG MAN. CO. PLC	456	1.23	586,934	743,949.94
Sector Totals	456		586,934	743,949.94
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	249	83.51	1,196,685	99,802,095.83
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	2	90.30	1,217	115,383.77
CONOIL PLC	8	67.23	2,745	175,323.15
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	1	26.68	1,300	34,684.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	7	96.61	2,578	261,512.32
OANDO PLC	46	65.00	141,770	9,274,674.20
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	9	143.32	11,242	1,564,120.34
Sector Totals	322		1,357,537	111,227,793.61
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	1	3.56	600	2,238.00
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	12	4.18	115,877	479,553.70
Sector Totals	13		116,477	481,791.70
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CO. PLC	11	16.44	53,000	884,200.00
Sector Totals	11		53,000	884,200.00
ROAD TRANSPORTATION				
ASSOCIATED BUS COMPANY PLC	13	1.00	79,800	77,850.00
Sector Totals	13		79,800	77,850.00
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	1	3.26	1,595	4,944.50
Sector Totals	1		1,595	4,944.50
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORP.	111	9.55	2,472,059	22,997,054.95
Sector Totals	111		2,472,059	22,997,054.95
Overall Totals	6,417		237,436,893	1,440,894,915.82

Continued on page 32

FINANCE BUSINESS

Start from page 31

Top 10 Trades

Symbol	Volume	Value	Trades
DAARCOMM	6,084,649.00	8,620,514.56	233
FIDELITYBK	7,127,575.00	15,859,466.84	140
UNIVINSURE	7,866,481.00	4,247,899.74	27
AIICO	9,220,672.00	9,476,794.94	268
INTERCONT	11,767,183.00	83,294,651.67	356
STDINSURE	17,557,300.00	10,709,953.00	48
FIRSTBANK	21,277,624.00	326,261,791.87	928
GUARANTY	22,732,558.00	226,769,364.87	330
WEMABANK	30,140,455.00	104,587,378.85	12
FCMB	30,664,402.00	144,020,387.20	122

Gainers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
NESTLE	135.51	140.02	+4.51
AP	79.62	83.51	+3.89
UACN	29.01	29.90	+0.89
BOCGAS	16.16	16.96	+0.80
GLAXOSMITH	14.99	15.73	+0.74
PZ	16.27	17.00	+0.73
FLOURMILL	14.02	14.67	+0.65
UBN	11.02	11.57	+0.55
ETI	9.10	9.55	+0.45
GUINNESS	89.53	89.90	+0.37

Losers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
OANDO	68.00	65.00	-3.00
BCC	22.68	21.76	-0.92
UAC-PROP	17.30	16.44	-0.86
FIRSTBANK	15.65	15.05	-0.60
RTBRISCOE	9.16	8.71	-0.45
CCNN	7.45	7.08	-0.37
DANGFLOUR	8.37	8.00	-0.37
WAPCO	17.35	17.00	-0.35
UNILEVER	7.90	7.64	-0.26
COSTAIN	4.85	4.61	-0.24

Market State: Closed

Index	: 19,980.79
Deals	: 6,417
Volume	: 237,436,893
Value	: N 1,440,894,915.82
Cap.	: N 4,520,108,336,250.61

Half of world's work force lacks job security

More than half of the world's workforce lacks job security or benefits, and the number is growing during the downturn.

The increased number of workers in the informal sector will have "severe consequences for poverty" in poor countries, the OECD has warned.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), which represents rich countries, says there are now 1.8 billion informal workers.

The number could grow to two-thirds of the workforce by 2020, it warns.

Informal economic activity is highest in some of the poorest regions of the world.

The financial crisis is throwing many people out of work...they are forced to take informal jobs with low pay, no protection, and high risk exposure

In sub-Saharan Africa, three-quarters of jobs in the non-agricultural sector come without security, legal rights or any benefits.

In South Asia, the number is two-thirds, while half of those in Latin America work without security. If agricultural labourers were included, the numbers would be even higher, according to the report.

"The financial crisis is throwing many people out of work, and in developing countries with no unemployment protection, they are

forced to take informal jobs with low pay, no protection, and high risk exposure," the OECD says.

It warns that the number of informal jobs could increase as migrants who have to return home as the economic crisis deepens are forced into that sector.

The OECD says that 700 million informal workers live on less than \$1.25 a day, the world poverty line, and 1.2 billion earn less than \$2 a day.

The report says that even with robust growth rates, countries such as India, China and Brazil have a growing number of low-quality jobs in the informal sector.

"Though India grew by 5% per year in the last decade,

people there feel that better jobs are not being created," says the OECD's Johannes Jutting, "since nine out of 10 employees, around 370 million people, do not have formal access to social security."

The OECD says that the growing informal sector "generates segmentation in the labour market which obstructs growth and creates inequalities".

And it says that as a result, the tax and benefit system in many poor countries does not function to redistribute wealth.

Women, young people, and the elderly, who are disproportionately represented in the informal sector, are likely to be hardest-hit by the disparities.

The recent G20 summit of world leaders pledged to make job growth a key priority and also aimed to direct more resources to poor countries.

But the OECD says that "immediate and unconventional action" is needed to boost the job prospects of those in the informal sector, including greater provision of micro-credit, additional public works programmes, and cash transfer programmes to improve the skills and infrastructure available to those working in the sector.

It argues that the larger emerging market countries themselves should look again at their policies, particularly labour regulations, to address the problem. BBC.

German car scrap scheme expands

Germany has tripled the size of its car-scraping scheme, which rewards trading in old cars for new ones.

The government will raise its budget from 1.5bn to 5bn euros (\$6.6bn; £4.5bn), aiming to cover up to two million cars instead of 600,000.

The scheme has been very popular, driving German car sales to their highest level for 10 years last month.

But the news came as parts firm Karmann became Germany's biggest car company to fall victim to the economic crisis.

Another car parts firm, Schaeffler Group, which has been burdened with debt since taking over rival Continental earlier this year, announced on Tuesday that it had secured a 1bn-euro credit line from its banks.

Under the car-scraping scheme, German consumers are paid 2,500 euros for turning in a car which is at least nine years old in exchange for one no more than one year

old. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm said the scheme was being expanded "in view of the strong demand".

The government has previously said it will expire at the end of the year.

Critics of the scheme have alleged that instead of boosting economic demand, it merely redistributes it, as consumers spend money on cars that they would otherwise have spent on other items.

"Now people are buying more cars, but fewer sofas or flat-screen televisions," Wolfgang Franz, head of the

government's independent panel of economic advisers, told ZDF television.

The German car industry, like those in other countries across the world, has been struggling to cope with a dramatic slump in sales during the economic downturn.

Germany's overall economic health took another knock on Wednesday, with the release of figures showing the country's exports had fallen for the fifth month in a row.

Exports in February were a record 23.1% lower than in the same month a year earlier, said the Federal Statistics Office. BBC.

All Irish banks have ratings cut

Ireland has had the debt ratings on all of its banks cut by Moody's, a day after revealing its emergency budget.

Finance Minister Brian Lenihan unveiled on Tuesday his decision to buy toxic debt from banks at a discount

in exchange for government debt.

But the plan did not placate the ratings agency, who said it downgraded the 12 banks because the worsening economy would hurt bank profits anyway.

"The commission's preliminary assessment is that decisive, broad-based action has been taken in the supplementary budget, in very difficult economic circumstances," a commission spokesman said.

Before Brussels gave its backing, shares in Allied Irish Bank and Bank of Ireland both fell by about a third.

However, they later rallied. In early afternoon trade, Allied Irish was 20% lower and Bank of Ireland down 5%.

The Irish government said the Moody's downgrade showed the harsh reality that the Republic must do more to reassure international investors it was getting debt under control.

Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said the downgrade "underlines the absolute urgency and necessity to deal with this in a comprehensive and clear way".

He added: "The banks have been in denial that they have non-performing assets on their books."

The downgrades mean Moody's thinks it is more likely

that all the banks will default on their debt, and makes it more expensive for them to borrow in the future.

Losses from the falling housing market and rising bad loans on their balance sheets will hurt the Irish banks, the agency added.

"We believe that these losses are likely to significantly weaken the capital positions of most Irish banks and building societies over the next two years," Moody's said.

Mr Lenihan's emergency budget on Tuesday included a large rise in taxes and a cut in spending, to deal with the Irish Republic's budget deficit.

Yields on the benchmark Irish debt have risen by more than one percentage point since the start of the year as investors have worried about the state of the Republic's public finances.

The rise means that investors want more compensation to hold the debt because they think there is more chance that the Irish Republic will default.

The increase also means its more expensive for the government to borrow and expand the public debt.

The yield on the Irish 10-year bond was 5.34%, up from 4.27% at the start of the year. BBC.

Asian stocks drop on profit fears

Asian stock markets have fallen after investors reacted to a series of poor corporate results.

The Nikkei 225 index fell 2.7%, or 237.84 points, to 8,595.01, its biggest drop in seven days.

Consumer electronics giant Sharp forecast its first-ever loss. US aluminium-maker Alcoa also posted its second consecutive quarterly loss.

The Japanese government is poised to set out \$100bn of new stimulus spending to boost its ailing economy.

Finance Minister Kaoru Yosano has said he hopes to announce details on Wednesday. It will be the fourth economic package in the past year as the world's second-largest economy faces its worst recession since World War II.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 3% to 14,474 and South Korea's main index dropped 2.9% to 1,262.

The Alcoa loss raised concern that companies globally are set to report a wave of losses as they reveal their quarterly and annual results over the next few weeks.

Sharp's forecast loss for the fiscal year to 31 March in Japan is now expected to be 130bn yen (\$1.3bn; £886m), more than the 100bn yen loss it predicted in February.

Daiwa Securities also said it expects an annual loss, sending its shares down 6% and hitting other bank stocks. Shares in Japanese steelmaker Kobe Steel fell by almost 5% after reporting its first annual loss in seven years.

Many stocks in Tokyo were lower on concerns over the strength of the Japanese yen, which hurts most companies in this export-dependent country.

The yen is only one of the 16 major currencies to have risen against the US dollar during the past year. BBC.



NATIONAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

4 SHAW ROAD, IKOYI - LAGOS

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR TENDERS

As part of the Due Process procedure requirements for certification for the award of contracts, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) hereby invites reputable and eligible companies/contractors to formally indicate their interest in Renovation and Rehabilitation Projects under the 2009 Capital Projects Expenditures at its Regional Academy for Drug Control (RADC), Jos, Plateau State in the following areas:

1. COMPLETION OF BADAGRY AREA COMMAND OFFICE COMPLEX
2. PROVISION OF SAFE WATER: BOREHOLES & PIPING
3. PROVISION OF SAFE/REGULAR POWER SUPPLY
4. UPGRADING OF CADET HOSTELS TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
5. REHABILITATION OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CHALETS
6. REHABILITATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCKS & LIBRARY
7. RENOVATION OF KITCHEN & DINNING HALL
8. PROVISION OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR TENDERS

Prospective contractors are expected to have good track records, proven technical capabilities and good financial standing for the various jobs advertised, and are therefore expected to submit the following:

- i. Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
- ii. Current Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years
- iii. Value-added Tax (VAT) Registration Certificate
- iv. Evidence of similar jobs handled in the last three (3) years
- v. Evidence of Technical and Financial Capability
- vi. Any other document that may enhance the company's chance of qualification for job(s) quoted for

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Interested contractors and suppliers are required to submit pre-qualification documents, neatly bound, in a sealed envelope with the phrase "2009 Projects pre-qualification" boldly inscribed at the top left hand corner of the envelope.

The pre-qualification documents should be addressed to the **Chairman/Chief Executive, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)**, and should be deposited in the Tenders Box at the Main Reception, NDLEA Headquarters, 4 Shaw Road, Ikoyi, Lagos between 0900hrs and 1600hrs daily on or before 12noon, Friday, 17th April 2009.

Please note:

- (i) Late Submission will not be accepted
- (ii) This is "Prequalification" and **NOT** "Invitation for Tender"
- (iii) **Only** qualified contractors/companies shall be contacted
- (iv) The Agency will not enter into correspondence with any applicant who fails to qualify

Signed:

DIRECTOR GENERAL/ SECRETARY

Nigerian Society of Engineers Strategic Career Opportunities

The Nigerian Society of Engineers is a professional body with the key mandate of enhancing the competence and professional development of its members. The Society has its National Head Quarters in Abuja, with liaison office in Lagos and branches across all states of the country.

As a result of organizational restructuring and the need to reposition the Society to better accomplish its mandate, career opportunities exist for ambitious and results oriented professionals.

We are recruiting experienced professionals with the highest standards of integrity and drive to succeed in a performance-driven environment.



Legal Officer (LO01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Law (LLB) and BL degree
- Minimum of 2 years post graduation relevant experience in a reputable law firm
- Good negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills
- Good knowledge of the laws and regulations governing the engineering profession and professional bodies, and Nigerian labour laws
- Excellent communication and Interpersonal Skills (oral & written)

Key roles & responsibilities

- Provide prompt and efficient legal services to the Society so as to minimize the Society's contravention of stipulated rules and regulations.
- Protect the Society's interest in legal matters

Auditor (AS01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Accounting/Finance or any business discipline. A professional accounting/financial qualification (ACA, ACCA, CFA, etc) is required
- Minimum of 2 years post graduation relevant experience in an audit function
- Good negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creative thinking, and financial reporting skills

Key roles & responsibilities

- Develop and implement strategies to manage operational risks and safeguard NSE's assets through the development and implementation of adequate internal controls
- Monitor adherence to stipulated internal control procedures so as to minimise losses due to fraud/errors

Investment Management Officer (OF02)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Finance or any business discipline. A professional accounting/financial qualification (ACA, ACCA, CFA, etc) will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 2 years post graduation relevant experience in an investment or finance function
- Good negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creative thinking, and financial reporting skills

Key roles & responsibilities

- Assist in the development and implementation of strategies to boost the revenue base of the Society
- Manage the Society's investments to achieve optimal returns

Media & Communications/Branding & Publications/Stakeholder Mgt Officers (OM02)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Mass Communication or any social science discipline. A masters degree in Mass Communication will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 3 years post graduation relevant experience in a media and communications function. Membership of a recognized public relations institute will be an added advantage
- Good negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Excellent communication and Interpersonal Skills (oral & written)

Key roles & responsibilities

- Assist in the development and implementation of the Society's Media & Public Relations Strategy so as to project the image of the Society

METHOD OF APPLICATION:

If you meet the requirements listed for any of these positions and you are interested in pursuing a career with Nigerian Society of Engineers, please send your detailed resume to nse_recruitment@ymail.com, stating the job code in the subject line, not later than two weeks after this advertisement. Location for all positions is Abuja.

Director, Professional Development (DPD01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in any engineering discipline. A masters and/or doctorate degree in engineering will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 7 years post graduation relevant experience. With minimum of 3 years in an academic or research environment (serving/retired university lecturers will be considered)
- Membership of the NSE and registration by COREN is mandatory
- Good negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creative thinking, and curriculum development skills

Key roles & responsibilities

- Develop and implement the professional development strategies of the Society to deepen the skills, competency and overall professional conduct of the Society's members.
- Coordinate the consultancy services arm of the Society, and provide support to the Professional Development Board

Director, Membership (DM01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in any engineering discipline. An MBA and/or CIT will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 10 years post graduation relevant experience
- Membership of the NSE and registration by COREN is mandatory
- Good negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creative thinking, and data management skills

Key roles & responsibilities

- Develop and implement strategies to boost NSE's membership base, and sustain membership enthusiasm
- Provide a strong liaison with the branches to drive growth in membership
- Provide support to the Membership Board and other relevant Board Committees

Head, Media & Publications (HM01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Mass Communication or any social science discipline. A masters degree in Mass Communication will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 5 years post graduation relevant experience and membership of a recognized public relations institute.
- Good negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills
- Excellent communication and Interpersonal Skills (oral & written)

Key roles & responsibilities

- Develop and implement the Society's Media & Public Relations Strategy so as to project the image of the Society
- Ensure that various philanthropic gestures undertaken by the Society are within laid down policies

Head, Finance (HF01)

The ideal candidate profile

- A good first degree in Accounting/Finance or any business discipline. A professional accounting/financial qualification (ACA, ACCA, CFA, etc) is required
- Minimum of 5 years post graduation relevant experience in a finance function
- Good negotiation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creative thinking, and financial reporting skills

Key roles & responsibilities

- Develop and implement strategies to boost the revenue base of the Society
- Undertake all functions relating to the management of the secretariat's books of accounts and finances
- Provide support to the Finance and General purpose Board



THE NEW PICANTO | STREET FASHION BY KIA



Picanto
1.1 Litre Engine

STARTING AT **N33,300**/Month

- 1.1 Litre Engine
- Power & Tilt Steering
- Power Windows
- Central Locking
- Airconditioner
- Radio / CD Player

3 Years or 100,000 km
KIA PLUS Warranty

Up to 5 years Finance Available
Lease Hotline: 01-8133160
* Terms and Conditions Apply



THE PREMIUM CAR BRAND OF KOREA AND ALWAYS THE NO. 1 CAR IN NIGERIA

Website: www.kiamotorsnigeria.com

Service Numbers: 01-8179595, 01-8179596, 01-8947489
Lekki: 01-7748000, 01-7749585, 01-7742080

Email: kia@danagroup.com

Lagos: 0805 535 9999 / 0803 534 9999 / 0803 676 8888
Ikeja: 0805 999 8190
Lekki: 0702 931 0211 / 0803 288 8882
Surulere: 01-7276083-4
Abuja: 0807 709 3404 / 0802 776 9999 / 09-314 9694
Aba: 0803 571 7804 / 0702 965 6788
Abakaliki: 0806 835 5717 / 0807 903 1913 / 0807 903 2667
Akure: 0705 611 1334

Asaba: 0803 738 5553 / 0706 070 3754
Benin (1): 0805 857 8789 / 0805 531 5145 / 052-450 479
Benin (2): 0705 563 6183 / 0705 563 6185
Calabar: 0803 363 1210 / 0805 814 0271
Enugu: 0803 635 4641 / 0807 513 1813 / 0807 061 4504 / 042-325 618
Ibadan: 0703 404 7494 / 0807 979 5335
Ilorin: 0802 307 5692

Kaduna: 0803 680 5245 / 0805 320 2667 / 062-243 522-24
Kano: 0802 776 3333 / 0805 676 2222 / 064-897 753
Katsina: 0803 712 7232
Oshogbo: 0807 979 5337 / 0705 611 1336
Port Harcourt: 0803 676 3333 / 0805 676 3333
Uyo: 0803 644 2483 / 0802 304 1192
Warri: 0806 588 7771 / 0803 357 8540

Trade-in: 0702 877 7398, 01-732 9999



DANA MOTORS OFFERS YOU 18 DEDICATED KIA AFTER SALES SERVICE CENTRES NATIONWIDE



DIGEST

'I just can't stop tearing my hair out': The mother of four who has spent 27 years suffering from little-known disorder

When Robina Hutchings started pulling her hair out as a child, doctors said it was just a passing phase.

By the age of 13, however, she was nearly bald.

And 27 years later, she still cannot stop herself even though it causes her huge embarrassment.

'Your hair is such an essential part of who you are as a woman and it's the first thing people see when they look at you,' she said.

'I don't think people understand how awful it can be to lose it. It completely destroys your self-confidence.'

Miss Hutchings, a mother of four from Northamptonshire, suffers from trichotillomania, a disorder characterised by the uncontrollable urge to pluck out the hair, usually from the scalp but also sometimes eyebrows and eyelashes.

The syndrome, for which there is no known cure, is thought to affect anywhere between 2 and 4 per cent of the population and its

sufferers are overwhelmingly female.

Miss Hutchings, who recently lost her job as a customer care worker, says

she first pulled out her hair at the age of 11 while sitting on the sofa at home, watching television.

By 13, she said, she

resembled a monk, with a huge bald patch, and was tormented by the children at school as a result.

She blames her disorder

for the breakdown of her marriage and has since broken up with two other partners. Miss Hutchings, who has two sons and two daughters aged from

seven months to 18, says that no doctor has ever been able to deal with her problem.

But she now feels better able to face the world, having turned to an authority on trichotillomania who fitted her with hair extensions which transform her appearance.

Based in West London, Lucinda Ellery set up the first UK clinic specialising in female hair loss and has treated hundreds of women with similar problems.

She said: 'It's a humiliating, devastating syndrome and it affects clever, beautiful women. Half my clients are lawyers, doctors, journalists and politicians.'

'Twenty-five years ago, when I first started doing this, I was seeing women in their fifties and sixties. But now I see children who are younger and younger because there's more recognition of the syndrome.'

Culled from dailymail.co.uk



Two faces of Robina Hutchings: With her self-inflicted bald patches (left) and after fitting hair extensions

Bone-repairing stem cell jab hope

Doctors may soon be able to patch up damaged bones and joints anywhere in the body with a simple shot in the arm.

A team at Keele University is testing injectible stem cells that they say they can control with a magnet.

Once injected these immature cells can be guided to precisely where their help is needed and encouraged to grow new cartilage and bone, work on mice shows.

The aim is to treat patients with injuries and arthritis the UK National Stem Cell Network conference heard.

Professor Alicia El Haj, working with Professor John Dobson, also of Keele University, says the technology, patented by MagneCell, could be tested in humans within five years.

It would provide a way to treat disease without invasive surgery or

powerful drugs.

The injection would use the patient's own stem cells, harvested from their bone marrow.

These mesenchymal cells would be treated in the lab to give them a coating of minute magnetic particles.

Use in scans

These same magnetic nanoparticles are already approved in the US where they are routinely used as an agent to make MRI scans clearer to read.

Targeted magnetic fields could then move the cells around the body to the desired place and switch them into action without the need for drugs or other biochemical triggers.

Professor Al Haj said: 'The ultimate aim is to repair cartilage and bone. We have been able to grow new bone in mice. Now we will look at whether we can repair damaged sites in goats.'

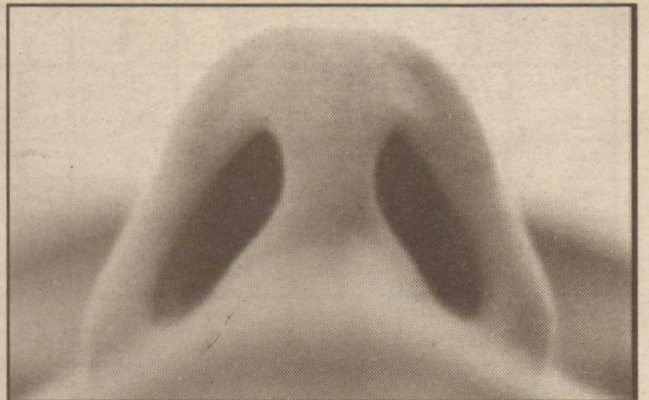
'We should be able to move to human trials within five years.'

Meanwhile, experts at the University of Southampton, led by Professor Richard Oreffo, have treated four patients with hip joint problems using stem cell therapy.

The technique combines the patients own bone marrow stem cells with donor bone cells to patch-repair damaged bones that would otherwise need treatment with metal plates and pins.

They say it is only a matter of years before their method could be used routinely to treat some of the 60,000 people who fracture a hip in the UK each year.

Culled from bbc.co.uk



Is the female nose more highly attuned to body smell?

Women pick up body odour better

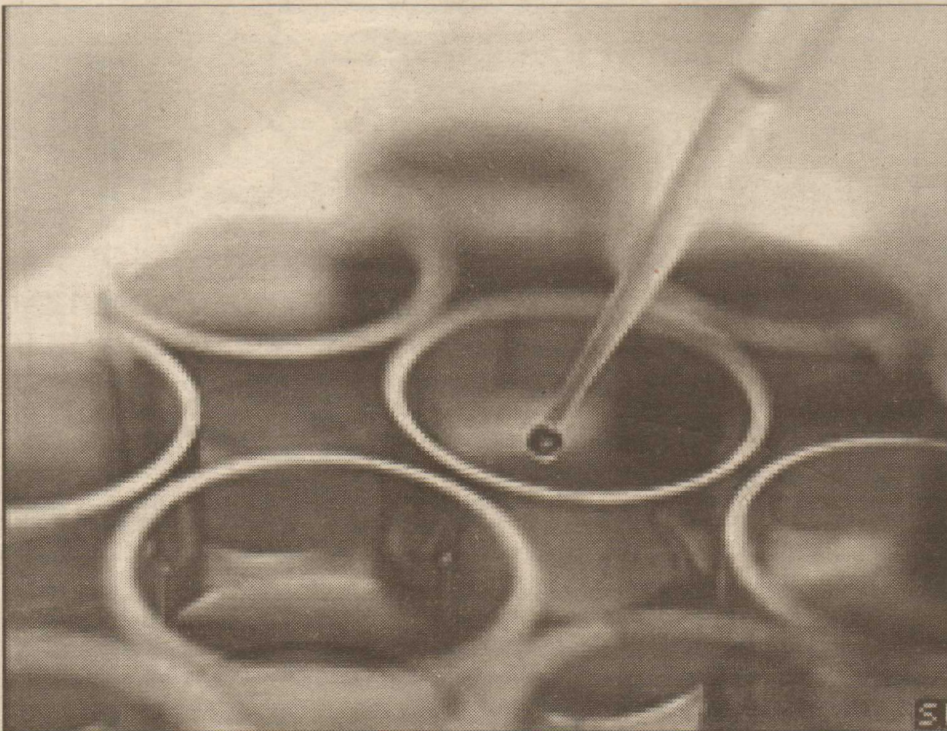
Women may be better at sniffing out biologically relevant information from underarm sweat, a US study suggests.

Researchers found it was difficult to mask underarm odour when a woman was doing the smelling, but quite easy to do so when it was a man. They speculate that a woman's highly attuned smell radar might help her select a mate.

The study, by Philadelphia's Monell Center, appears in *Flavour and Fragrance Journal*. In the study, women and men rated the strength of underarm odours, both alone and in conjunction with various fragrances. The fragrances were selected to test their ability to block underarm odour through a method known as olfactory cross-adaptation. This occurs when the nose adapts to one odour, and then also becomes less sensitive to a second odour. Sniffed alone, the underarm odours smelled equally strong to men and women. But when fragrance was introduced, only two of 32 scents successfully blocked underarm odour when women were doing the smelling.

In contrast, 19 fragrances significantly reduced the strength of underarm odour for men. Lead researcher Dr Charles Wysocki, a behavioural neuroscientist, said: 'Taken together, our studies indicate that human sweat conveys information that is of particular importance to females.'

Culled from bbc.co.uk



It may be possible to control stem cells with a magnet

DIGEST

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

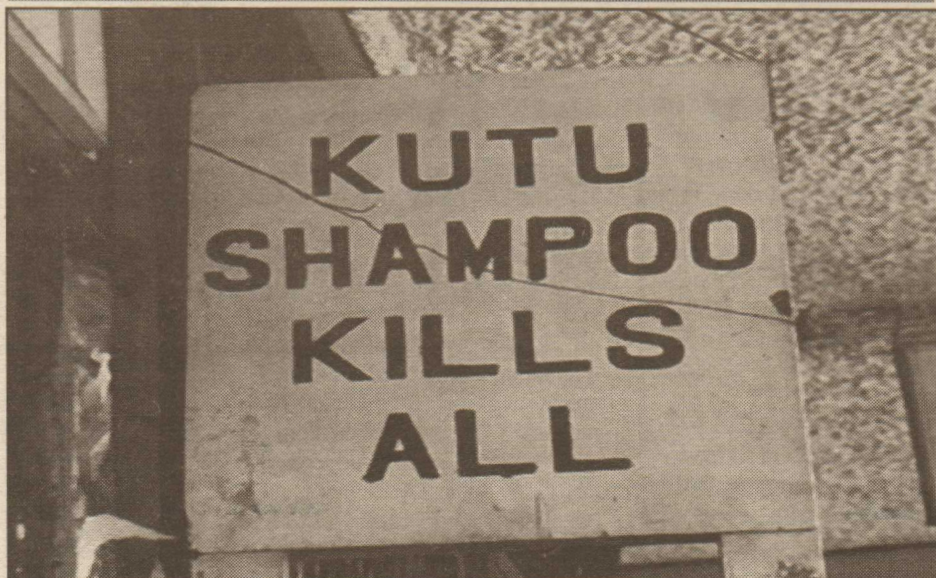
EASY
55.

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

SOLUTION TO SUDOKU PUZZLE No. 54

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

SIGN LANGUAGE



Killer shampoo. You have been warned.
Photo location: Fiji by Tony Wheller
Culled from the telegraph.co.uk

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO puzzles are solved by finding all the hidden words in the diagram. The words are always in a straight line and may read up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally. Cross a word off your list once you have circled it. Many words will overlap.

44

Discover oil

N	C	P	D	F	E	D	J	I	G	Y	T	L	S	A	Losing
L	O	T	S	I	P	D	V	N	O	C	W	O	A	D	Lotion
E	L	I	B	O	M	V	I	K	F	I	O	I	I	I	Loving
G	F	I	T	S	E	V	I	L	O	L	L	T	L	L	Mobile
L	J	R	I	O	O	D	L	R	D	O	P	E	O	O	Oblige
H	E	C	O	L	L	I	E	I	O	P	F	R	R	T	Oilers
I	N	S	O	L	E	L	E	L	C	O	E	L	L	S	Oldies
M	N	H	I	X	I	S	W	Y	I	I	U	E	B	S	Olives
E	I	L	A	O	G	C	H	L	L	O	G	D	L	P	Pillow
G	L	A	B	P	N	U	E	O	E	I	C	Y	O	S	Pilots
I	B	I	Z	I	T	D	H	P	O	C	M	L	T	O	Pistol
L	O	V	L	L	O	S	I	N	G	D	I	O	L	J	Police
B	G	O	X	L	I	O	C	E	R	T	L	L	H	M	Policy
O	I	J	S	O	I	L	E	D	E	I	P	K	O	G	Polite
V	D	S	Y	W	K	U	Q	W	P	V	E	X	E	P	Recoil

Boiler	Frolic	Insole	Sailor
Coiled	Goalie	Jovial	Soiled
Collie	Goblin	Legion	Stolid
Docile	Holier	Lesion	Violin
Foiled	Homily	Loiter	

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 43

S	I	Z	E	V	R	B	O	O	K	S	I	F	L	J
T	K	I	V	C	N	P	O	R	D	N	Y	Z	O	L
R	E	T	A	E	W	S	R	S	Z	W	C	O	L	
E	S	B	E	M	L	R	Z	T	D	E	A	A	W	O
G	B	K	W	W	E	O	R	G	F	E	P	S	R	O
D	S	U	C	T	E	U	H	T	P	R	B	T	Z	S
E	L	R	T	O	C	L	R	M	O	U	I	O	A	E
C	I	A	O	T	S	C	B	N	B	S	R	N	Z	L
R	E	C	I	L	O	D	T	A	O	A	K	U	G	D
E	T	O	E	L	O	N	L	A	C	E	A	I	K	E
A	N	E	B	Z	I	U	H	G	W	M	K	M	P	E
S	V	I	D	E	C	T	O	O	U	B	L	E	Y	N
E	L	A	K	R	I	Z	I	E	L	Y	G	R	A	X
X	R	S	I	N	C	R	E	A	S	E	G	U	A	G
N	O	C	K	O	O	B	U	V	J	V	H	X	Q	S

HYUNDAI Vs KOREAN COMPETITION

Drive your way



If you can buy a Korean vehicle of the same specification we will **STILL BEAT** the price.



**GAME OVER,
HYUNDAI ALWAYS WINS!**

After all, Hyundai is the NO.1 selling Korean automobile in the world and in Nigeria.



No. 1 Selling Korean Automobile in the WORLD and in NIGERIA.

HOTLINES: - 0703000123, 0703002051, 0703002371, 01-8520012, 01-8520006, 01-8520774/5, 01-8520007, 07030020131, 01-8520001, 08054750000, 0805420000, 08052221224, 08054000000, 0803264000, 08030740000.



THE ALL-NEW 2009
CIVIC



- 140HP 1.8-liter SOHC i-VTEC Engine
- 5-speed Automatic/Manual Transmission
- AM/FM/CD Audio system with MP3 input jack
- 16-inch Alloy Wheels
- Leather-Trimmed Interior
- Heated Front Seat
- Drive-By-Wire Throttle System
- Redefined Front Grille
- Advanced Airbags
- Electronic Brake Distribution
- Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA)



SLEEK, SPORTY & FULL OF SOUL

HEAD OFFICE/SHOWROOM
13A, Adeyemo Alakija/Akin Adesola Street, VI, Lagos
01-8525040, 8520004, 8520005, 0803-3264526,
0805-7759689
VICTORIA ISLAND (2)
01-8520007, 0803-4799999

APAPA
01-8520222, 01-8524444, 0805-7761008
LIESHA
01-8520202, 01-8520776, 8520203, 0803-7761004
IKEJA
01-8520003, 0805 4799990, 0702006117, 8741005
0702802371
LEKKI
01-8520001, 0803 9765001

ABUJA
0805 4089999
09-2348007, 2349394
0803 4089999, 0804 2133868
PORT HARCOURT
0805 4277777, 0840228317,
0803-4277777, 0803 4299999

KADUNA
Tel/Fax 062-237810, 211289
08037040138
KANO
0805 4399999, 0803 3264552,
064-640862
CALABAR
0803 9765000, 0805 9765000

MAIDUGURI
Plot no 179/180/196,
Pompeni Commercial Layout,
Kano/Jos Road, Maiduguri,
07028034665/ 0805 2222 324

HOTLINES:
SALES/LEASING
01-8520010, 01-8520011, 01-8524444,
01-8520776, 01-8525040
SERVICE
01-8520202, 01-8520222,
01-8520207, 01-8520203



HONDA
The Power of Dreams

STALLION
Email:
hondasales@stalliongroup.com
hondaservice@stalliongroup.com
hondacare@stalliongroup.com

PROPERTY

HOTLINES:
08064416006, 08035946883

NEPZA moves to new office in Abuja

By Nasir Imam

The Nigeria Export Processing Free Zone Authority (NEPZA) finally moved to its new office complex located in the ever busy, upscale business district of the Maitama district of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The four-story building, the few of its type, considering the usual stereo types of government buildings in the Federal capital, in the words of the Managing Director, Mr Sina Agboluaje, aptly captures the new spirit of creativity of Ministerial Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The most unique feature of the 96-room building is the fact of being built entirely of burnt bricks, thus standing it out as one of such few government buildings which has incorporated both eco-friendliness and functionality in line with global practices.

Agboluaje who spoke while conducting journalists round the new 5,400 square meters office complex, said the use of burnt bricks and the general aesthetics has been a pattern of its offices, including the one that was burnt in 2007.

Said he, "If you had visited the former office, you will know that it was unique as well. We built it within a period of six months. We used the money meant to rent an apartment to build it.

"We have always tried to be creative, of course made possible by the support and encouragement of the federal government for positive initiatives.

Moreso because like other MDAs, we have been

given opportunity to prove ourselves.

"What we have done is to move in the spirit of the federal government's directive to allow the MDAs to express themselves in a manner that will complement the achievement of the goals set by Mr President to improve the quality of lives of the citizenry as enshrined in the principles of servcom through improved service delivery.

"This is a good example of how to make government offices eco friendly by using burnt bricks which of course you know is 100% locally sourced and capable of inducing a cool work environment no matter the season.

"Of course, we did not compromise the standard of

other materials used as well and we adhered strictly to all building and safety codes in the course of building this office complex.

"We really believe that this edifice will add to beautify the Abuja skyline particularly given the sort of materials used. And for the opportunity to achieve this feat, we are truly appreciate the Federal government," he added.

The NEPZA boss explained further how effective supervision of the N380 million building project resulted in a completion period of 15 months instead of the original completion period of 18 months.

According to him, "Remember that we started this journey arising from an unfortunate fire incident we had on February 2, 2007.

After the fire, we moved to the site of the present office complex using containerized portacabins accommodation from 2007, until we moved to the new office complex.

"What was unique about our experience as a government agency was that we had to move to the site of the uncompleted office complex still under-going construction, thus providing opportunity for effective supervision of the building project.

"Infact, the immediate benefit of this rather unique situation is that we were able to achieve a completion period of 15 months, instead of 18 months as originally intended in the contract.

"Of course this was possible because we report for work at the building site every day, meaning that we

interacted with the contractor or site engineer on a daily basis, implying that the project supervision was therefore on a daily basis too.

"In addition, because the project was effectively supervised arising from the fact of having to work within the project site, it translated into a reduction in the original completion date from 18 to 15 months, which in turn translated into some savings in terms of what would have been incurred, if the project were to stretch to 18 months and of course not forgetting the money saved in the process.

"This achievement in my humble assessment, is very significant because, in some instances, projects like this could go on for as long as four years, particularly because fiscal appropriation for it was spread over three budgets.

"The budgetary appropriation for the project began in 2007, stretched to 2008 and the current year. During this period, we were able to have money allocated for this project which of course, was a very good way to manage and maximise

finances.

"We did not need to have all the money for the project in one year's budget and we did not allow that to affect the completion date as well. If you recall, most abandoned projects have often been blamed on the absence of complete funding packages in one budgetary year, but we have proven that it should not be an issue once there is determination to see a project to completion stage.

"And this is what the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), with whom we have enjoyed excellent co-operation, has continued to emphasise. I sincerely believe that it is a workable model which if applied to all facets of public works, will lead to the complete eradication of abandoned projects.

"The fact of an achievement within 15 months completion period instead of the originally conceived 18 months is a commendation for Mr President and the overall policies of the Federal government to cut costs and add value to government expenditure.



NPA to decongest Lagos ports access roads

The Managing Director, Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA), Mallam Abdul Salam Mohammed, says the NPA will strive to continue with the good work started by the Implementation Committee/Lagos Port Access Roads Management Unit (IC/LAPARMU) to decongest the access roads to the Lagos Ports Complex.

Mohammed spoke in Abuja at the handing over ceremony of the activities of the IC/LAPARMU to the NPA.

While thanking the committee for its good work and the leadership shown by its chairman, the Managing Director said anybody who wants to assess the performance and success of the assignment given to the committee needs to know just one or two things.

"Those who are familiar with Lagos," Mohammed said, "need to look at the condition of the roads between 2007 and 2008 and the period before the constitution of the committee." Citing examples of the successes of the committee, he added that, "if you consider the Mile 2 area to Liverpool bridge in Apapa and the road that starts around the Leventis bridge to the gate of the Apapa port, they are a clear testimony of the success of the committee."

IC/LAPARMU, which submitted its report in December, last year, was given extra three months to conclude some outstanding assignments under the funding of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA).

Chairman of the Committee, Dr. Tunji Bolade, who handed over activities of the committee to the NPA Managing Director, said the demerging of the erstwhile Federal Ministry of Transportation led to the revised decision for a hand-over to the NPA.

Bolade drew the attention of the NPA Management to other assignments requiring completion. Most pressing among them are the provision of temporary holding bay for dry cargo trucks at Kirikiri Lighter Terminal road and final outcome of nine reported illegal Tank Farms on NPA land on Cardoso road. The NPA is also to conduct Health and Safety Environment (HSE) Audit of Tank Farms through the Llyods Register of the United Kingdom and to articulate a draft Federal Executive Council Memo on the outcome of the exercise.

Two Benue communities get electricity

Two more rural communities in Benue State were on Monday linked with the national grid when Governor Gabriel Suswam commissioned the rural electrification project in Mchia and Wende in Logo local government area.

However, officials of the Rural Development and Cooperatives, the Ministry in charge of the project, powered the two electricity projects with generators which operated in a hideout, a development which the Governor's Special Adviser on Media and Public Affairs, Mr. Cletus Akwaya, said was necessary because the source was yet to be

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

stepped down for individual commission.

Although the Commissioner in charge of the ministry, Mr. Eugene Aliogba, declined disclosing the contract sum, he said the expectation of the people of the two communities fully met with the commissioning of the projects.

While commissioning the projects, Suswam told the people it was part of the social contract he made with the people whose mandate he said deserves reciprocity.

He charged them to defend the project from vandalism, saying

government will not tolerate any theft of items from the former.

The commissioner challenged local government chairmen in the state to complement the effort of the state government in providing electricity to rural communities.

"If they cannot wholly execute the projects, we will provide them with the needed manpower and technical assistance.

"When this is done, in no time, the rural areas of Benue State will be completely transformed and our abundant food crops wasting all year round will be given added value", the commissioner said but

declined stating the source of the electricity being commissioned.

The Gboko Business Manager in charge of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), Engr. Roland Oriakwo, who described the two projects as giant strides, said the new energy source will reduce the pressure hitherto placed on PHCN arising from non availability of electric power in the affected areas.

The people of the two communities and the council chairman, Reverend Joseph Adure, commended Governor Suswam for the electricity, saying the service will bring relief to the communities.

FG to maintain N/Assembly buildings with N3bn

The Federal Government will spend N3 billion to maintain the buildings of the National Assembly in the 2009 budget. The amount which includes engineering maintenance

costs of the new Phase III building complex also encompasses the amount to be spent on the maintenance of the gardens in the National Assembly complex.

Details of the expenditure as contained in the 2009 Appropriation Act passed by the National Assembly, indicates that the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), which is the landlord

of the National Assembly, will spend N750 million on renovations and decoration of the White House as well as Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the National Assembly complex.

Four hundred million naira

will be spent on cleaning services for Phase III building which will be shared at N200 million each for the Senate building and the House of Representatives Building.

Details in the budget also

showed that the government will spend N700 million on engineering maintenance of the Phase III building which comprises a building each for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

ENVIRONMENT

In sanitation no town can beat Jos - Commissioner

Nankin Bagudu is the Plateau State Commissioner for Housing and Environment. In this interview with Andrew Agbese, he explains what has been achieved since his coming on board as Commissioner and the challenges he is facing.

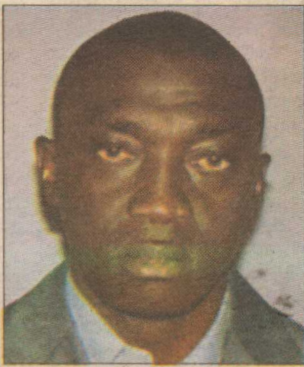
How will you react to the view that with almost two years into this administration, the government is yet to commission a project?

Many projects are near the stage of being commissioned. In a month or two, many will be commissioned by the government. This government believes in high quality work. It always wants to ensure that they meet set standard. If you drive around Jos, you will see that the government has already embarked on many road projects; so also in the local government areas. Officials are going round to monitor the projects and where they are yet to meet the standard, they make sure the contractors go back to do it again to measure up to standard. Within the next two months many of the projects will be completed and will be commissioned.

In any case the Jang administration is not a government that believes in commissioning everything that it does. Many things have been done in the last one and half years were not commissioned publicly. For instance in my ministry, we have purchased our huge yellow bins and trucks from Germany, if it was another government, it would have been commissioned because it was a milestone in the life of the administration, but it was not done. This is not a government that believes in publicity for the sake of it. Before the end of the second year, many projects would have been commissioned.

Would you say what has been achieved is close to what you had in mind when you started?

When I came in as a Commissioner, the mission of Ministry of Housing and Environment was to transform Jos and Bukuru into garden cities and to establish it as a base for entrepreneurship and businesses all over the world. Jos has been a very dirty town before now; with heaps of refuse everywhere so from day one, this government was determined to improve the sanitary condition of the state. I would say we have achieved something to an extent. We started from zero and have moved to achieving something about the sanitation and the environment of the state. But a lot needs to be done especially in the area of changing people's attitude. In the ministry today, we have employed about 5,000 widows sweeping the streets in 23



Mr. Nankin Bagudu

towns. Each person is paid N8,000 a month. Apart from getting the state clean, it is also providing a source of income for the underprivileged in the society. We still have a lot to do; especially about changing peoples attitude because they are not cautious, they throw refuse any how. When you talk to them, they challenge you. Even the efforts to plant flowers and trees have been frustrated many times. We have to replant many times. It is quite a challenging work but we are consistent about doing the job. They put fire in the mighty refuse bins. When you talk to them, they do not care about what you are saying. They equally dump refuse into drainages. We tried barricading the drainages but they have not stopped doing it. The challenges are enormous and people learn very slowly. But since I became Commissioner, I have remained focused on the objective of improving the system. It is very difficult but in the end we hope to change the face of Plateau. When rain comes, we will replant all the flowers again. We want to make sure all the roads and roundabouts are beautified. We want people coming into Jos to see it as a very beautiful city. We have enough stamina to last us for four years and

What about in the area of housing?

On housing, we have tried to renovate as many government structures as possible. Many government houses are in bad shape. We are trying to bring all of them to standard. A lot has been done and a lot still needs to be done. We are also working on providing houses for the less privileged in the society. The housing programme had its own problem when we came in. We have started putting money in the housing fund. The money the civil servants were giving to the ministry of Finance was not being remitted to the Federal

Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN). The union of civil servants stopped the contribution. When we came in, we had to hold meeting with the ministry of Finance and the FMBN and we had an agreement that the government is going to pay what was not remitted to them so that the civil servants can resume the payment.

We have had applications from about 48 mortgage institutions who want to carry out housing projects in the state. We have looked at the applications and have selected four of them; including the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). The four of them will start the housing project. We have set up an inter-ministerial committee comprising the ministries of land and Survey and Housing and Environment. We have identified four areas where the housing projects would be sited. This year, the government has given an approval in the budget for N500m to pay compensation for the land for the housing projects. As soon as the final draft of the agreement is sent to the council for its approval and it is approved, we shall start the project. We are holding meetings with the companies to discuss how the projects will be of benefit to the state. We are planning to build 4,000 housing units; 1,000 per company. The Federal Housing Authority is even saying it will build more than 1,000 because they have asked for 150 hectares of land on the way to Miango. We have gotten it for them already. What they are planning to do is like the federal and state low cost houses; all combined in a place.

Once the project gets started, we are going to provide houses for people and decongest the city of Jos. This will be done within the master plan; that is the new master plan we have which covers 25 kilometers radius; from Airport to Hiepang, from Riyom, Fobur, and Miango, all in a circle surrounding the centre of Jos. The new projects would be in these places. It would be like building new towns; having their own police stations, neighborhood shopping mall and fire service. ;

In the ministry, we have done a lot in the last one and half years. We have an engine room to make implementation easier. Before we came in there was only one vehicle in the ministry but now we have 28.



Minister for Works, Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Hassan Lawal, right, with Managing Director of Dantata and Sawoe, when the minister inspected a project site.

Fire razes three classrooms in Funtua

A fire inferno that occurred during class hours in Government Girls' Secondary School, Funtua in Katsina State has completely razed down three class rooms.

Daily Trust gathered that, though the situation caused a pandemonium from the mad rush for safety from students who were attending lessons at the classes, there was however no casualty recorded as a result of the incident.

The cause of the fire which started at around 12

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

noon was not immediately known as some of the students who witnessed the inferno said they were only attending to their academic activities when the fire broke out and spread fast into the classes.

Though the school principal, Hajiya Halima Ladan, decline comment to newsmen, sources claim they suspect an electric fault even as there is no concrete evidence to suspect same.

The director of Funtua

Zonal Education Department, Alhaji Salisu Abdu Maska, said the committee has been set up by the department to uncover the cause of the fire with a view to preventing further outbreak.

He said the school authority has also been directed to conduct its internal investigation into the matter and submits its report to the zonal department for onward review and submission to the state ministry of education's headquarters.

Brown heralds 'green economy' budget

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is promising this month's Budget will plot a "green" route to economic recovery.

Trials of electric cars, a roadside network of vehicle-charging points and incentives for environmentally-friendly carmakers are among planned measures.

Mr Brown told the Independent there was scant room for further fiscal stimulus.

Instead, he said, the Budget on 22 April would be "a job creator, a quality of life improver, and an environment-enhancing measure".

Mr Brown told the newspaper: "It is not just what we do to give real help

to people and business now, but about setting a path for the future as well.

"We always take into account both what we need to do now and what is the best future for the fiscal position," he said. BBC political correspondent Ross Hawkins said Mr Brown's words "will be seen by many as a sign he has heeded the warning from the governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, that Britain cannot afford another fiscal stimulus".

Last month, Mr King warned against further public borrowing to fund measures to boost the economy while being questioned by MPs from the Treasury Committee.

The Independent said trials of electric cars are

likely to begin next year in two or three cities, while ministers would open talks with electricity suppliers on developing the roadside power points.

Councils would also be invited to submit bids to become Britain's first "green cities", it said.

Mr Brown has previously called for an international "green new deal" to stimulate growth.

He said that moving the UK to a low-carbon economy would create 400,000 new jobs over the next eight years.

However, he was recently criticised by the New Economics Foundation think-tank for failing to harness Labour's economic stimulus for the benefit of the environment. -BBC

ENVIRONMENT

Contractors may lose PTDF contract as deadline approaches

Many contractors handling various projects for the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) in different parts of the country may forfeit them as the deadline given by the executive secretary of the fund is fast approaching.

The Executive Secretary of the PTDF, Muttaqha Rabe Darma, yesterday insisted on the March 31 deadline that any contractor who fails to make significant progress on the site of the contract face revocation.

At a meeting with consultants and contractors recently in Abuja, Engr Darma said, "all contractors are therefore requested to meet with various consultants and prepare a new work plan that

By Hamisu Muhammad

will ensure that all ongoing projects are completed and delivered on or before the end of March, 2009".

Speaking at a meeting with the governing council of the proposed Federal Polytechnic, Ewoke, Bayelsa State, Rabe said the polytechnic project is among the projects he has special interest in, therefore, he will not allow any contractor to put it in jeopardy.

He said it is unfortunate that a few weeks to the end of the deadline, some contractors are not making enough progress in their projects, saying, the poly project is a 3-year old project due for completion in 2007, but the contractors are still giving

excuses to justify their delay.

According to him, most of the contractors handling various projects have made significant progress since the last meeting but still, some are not making any progress.

"We are determined to build a world class polytechnic in that region and no contractor will jeopardise our intention," he warned.

He said the management of the fund has been meeting with all the key politicians, youths groups, traditional rulers and monarchs to ensure that the project becomes a success, adding that the preliminary survey of the area has indicated that the area has satisfied all the conditions to site the polytechnic in the environment.

The newly introduced guidelines for mass housing schemes in the FCT will help curb land speculation and incessant building collapse in the FCT.

This assertion was made by the FCT Minister of State, Chief Chuka Odom, during an interactive session with journalists in Abuja on Tuesday.

He said the FCT Administration has worked out a new legal framework to give all stakeholders a level playing ground as well as to assist genuine developers in the FCT to achieve their goals.

According to him, the guidelines have been made more stringent by the FCT Administration to ward off land speculators in order to

'New mass housing scheme to end speculation, building collapse'

partner with only serious developers and not those who carve out large tracts of land allocated to them to individuals for development to.

Chief Chuka Odom said that in the area of security, the FCTA is increasing the capacity of surveillance as very soon, CCTV cameras will be installed in public buildings, while the Police will be more equipped and encouragement given for neighbourhood associations to implement community policing.

The minister, who described the problem of

transportation in the city as a big challenge, said the Area Councils have been directed to provide mass transit schemes pending the commencement of the light rail project and the dualisation of the Kubwa and Airport expressways which is almost at the point of contract award.

On youth empowerment in the territory, the minister said that a considerable number of Keke-NAPEP have arrived the sea port of Lagos and will soon be brought to Abuja for onward distribution to beneficiaries.

Minister threatens to terminate Abuja-Lokoja road contract

The minister of Works and Housing, Dr. Hassan Lawal, has warned contractors handling various road dualisation projects along Abaji-Lokoja expressway to mobilize fully for work or get their contracts terminated. The minister read this riot act on Tuesday while inspecting various road projects awarded to four contractors along Abuja-Lokoja expressway.

He expressed satisfaction at the Phase One of the dualisation project handled by Dantata and Sawoe Construction Company, saying they have done well.

He added Dantata and Sawoe have continued to work on site despite the fact

By Mustapha Suleiman

that they have not be fully paid for the contract.

At the Phase Two being handled by Bulletin Construction Company, he commended the contractor for a good job while urging him to redouble his efforts.

The minister was however enraged while inspecting the Phase 3 of the road projects being handled by Reynold Construction Company (RCC) which according to him performed below average.

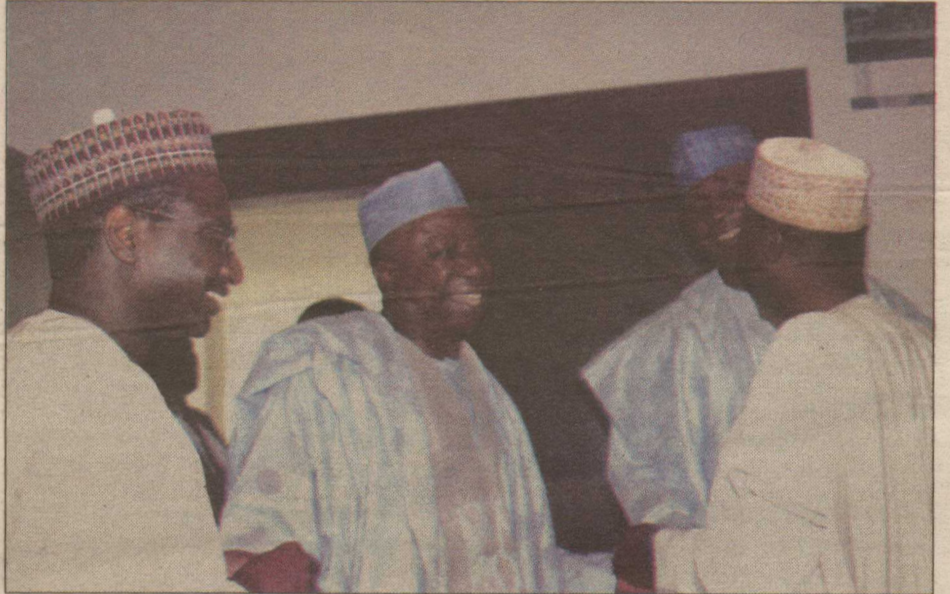
Dr. Hassan who looked visibly angry warned the contractor to brace up or get his contract terminated.

"You have done well below average and this inspection is going to be a

continuous one. At the next inspection if you are found not to have fully mobilized you will have your contract terminated," he warned.

While inspecting the fourth phase of the project being handled by Gitto Construction Company, he commended the contractor but advised him to redouble his effort.

Speaking to journalists at the end of the inspection, the minister said that the government will no longer pay contractors billions of naira while they abandoned sites, adding that any contractor found wanting in meeting up with the contract agreement as at when due will get his contract revoked.



(L-R) Finance Minister, Dr. Mansur Mukhtar, FCT Minister Sen. Adamu Aliero, Kwara State Governor Dr. Bukola Saraki and National Planning Minister Dr. Samshudeen Usman at a function in Abuja.

Aliero's 100 days: An overview

He took the traditional "bow and go" in the Senate during his confirmation hearings for Ministerial appointment last December.

Then Senate President, David Mark, urged him to go out there to the Executive Branch and show them the quality that the Senate is made of. Hundred days later, Senator Mohammed Adamu Aliero has been showing why he has the accolade of GSM attached to his name. GSM simply means an accomplished Governor (of Kebbi State), Distinguished Senator representing Kebbi Central and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory. He is showcasing the experiences garnered from these positions as he battles to enthrone some order and good governance in the Federal Capital Territory.

His first day in office consisted of an address to his management team and advisers, a day he took time to warn all concerned that he will have to step on toes if need be to sanitise every aspect of the management of the Federal capital. Shortly afterwards, he addressed a mammoth crowd of new year party revellers at the Millenium park by the NICON Hilton where he promised water, electricity and a clean city for the

By Tony Amadi

residents of Abuja. Since that New Year eve, Senator Aliero has several times visited the lower Usman dam, the Federal government project set up to ensure Abuja has clean water.

The contractors handling the Lower Usman water project have had a bit of the flipside of Senator Aliero. Here is a seasoned administrator who rarely gets angry in the course of doing his work you begin to wonder because he always has a positive disposition most of the time. There seems to be a feeling in Investment House, the temporary office of the FCT Minister that Bi-Water, the contractors handling the dam are using delay tactics on the water project. So senator Aliero called the managers to his official residence at Life Camp, Gwarimpa and had a good discussion with them. Gentlemen, he told the water providers: "I have promised the residents of the Federal Capital Territory adequate water supply within six months which I am determined and committed to achieve at all cost."

"If you stand on my way to fulfilling this promise, I shall make life difficult for you or any other contractor

who disrupts the timely provision of democracy dividends," he warned. The Bi-Water executives led by David Thorpe, their Managing Director, can't remember ever having this kind of rattle and were clearly shaken. Any delay tactics by contractors handling FCT projects with a view to getting an upward review of the contract will not be acceptable by the Aliero administration, the minister emphasised.

The Minister later disclosed that he hates upward review of contracts, adding that throughout his stint in Kebbi State, contractors who try to review contracts with a view to getting more funds don't usually get on with his administration and he won't let that happen at the FCTA. In his first hundred days in office, Senator Aliero has touched every area of governance in the territory from Education to Health, Housing, Land administration, Agriculture and Sports.

When the organizers of the FIFA Nigeria 2009 competition called on him, everything the Taiwo Ogunjobi team requested were granted because the FCT Administration is keen to have a problem free competition. The Nigerian

international Kanu, Nwankwo, also came for dinner one night to consult with the Minister on soccer related issues and he got a rousing welcome with assurances that the FCT administration will do everything within its powers to raise the standard of soccer in the territory.

But it was in the area of education that the Minister demonstrated his readiness to turn around the sector. He had arrived Lugbe primary school early one Monday morning unannounced and found the standard so appalling that he almost wept before the cameras, because as he put it, not only in his own primary school days did he get such a terrible treatment with the kind of poor infrastructure that the kids were using.

One hundred and fifty children were crammed into a small room with the teacher barely managing to find space to place her legs and to write on the board; yet the kids managed to give the Minister a warm welcome. After going round the school, he ordered the Secretary for Education in the FCT, Halilu Pai, to put up more classrooms in that school as quickly as possible and alleviate the suffering that the children were going through.

In the area of health, the Karu General Hospital in Nasarawa state end of Abuja which has been under construction since 2004 should be completed in the current financial year, as there is already a 74% completion recorded. The Federal Executive Council has just approved a variation caused by additional works on the hospital ground after a convincing memo was defended by the FCT Minister.

Senator Aliero is anxiously awaiting the passage of the FCT budget within the next one or two weeks before he moves into the crucial stages of his plans for the development of the federal capital. Three districts are to be opened up with massive infrastructure - roads, bridges, culverts, drainages, water etc in a move to decongest the central area and create room for Nigerians wishing to move into Abuja and make their residence there. But it is also in the area of mass transit that Senator Aliero is very keen to make some impact.

He did inspect the progress being made by the Chinese company handling the Abuja Light Rail project and was satisfied with what he saw. Three rail lines are planned for the city: one

coming from Gwagwalada via the airport into the city, another from Suleja into NICON Hilton while one will come from Nyanya into the central area. That, along with the planned expansion of the Airport road and the Kubwa-Abuja road, the city should be ready to handle mass transiting soon.

Senator Aliero has realised that without action on the mass transit now, Abuja traffic situation will probably come worse off than that of Lagos in the next couple of years. In the next month or two, the Senator will be unleashing his mass housing programme and promises housing for all - the rich and famous, the poor and the homeless. His Chief of Staff, Abubakar Sadiq Yelwa, who worked closely with him in Kebbi as Commissioner of Works, is currently working closely with the FCTA administrators to fashion out a workable housing policy.

As the distinguished Senator put it when asked in February what his first hundred days would be like, he said and I quote, "by our first hundred days, everything would be in place such that we shall have hit the road running and the territory will be in a damn good shape". And that is what has happened.

UNION BANK

Bureau De Change Services

Cash on time
All the time



Sale and Purchase of Foreign Currencies for:

- ▶ Business Travel Allowance (BTA)
- ▶ Personal Travel Allowance (PTA)
- ▶ School Fees Abroad
- ▶ Medical Fees Abroad
- ▶ Credit Card Payment
- ▶ Utility Bills Payment Abroad
- ▶ Mortgage Monthly Payment

Available in all major cities nationwide

Information on the service is available in all branches of UNION BANK Nationwide



UNION BANK

UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC

...Big, Strong, Reliable

www.unionbankng.com

City news

NEWS ABOUT
YOUR
CAPITAL CITY

email: citynews@dailytrust.com

Hotlines

0803-3493-462

0803-8927-513

Engineer in court over rape attempt

A 29-year-old engineer, Isah Yusuf was on Tuesday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly entering the house of one Angela Joseph while she slept and attempting to make love to her without her consent.

The engineer was also charged for criminal assault, intimidation and resisting arrest.

Prosecutor Mustapha Mohammed told the court that on April 5, 2009, one Angela Joseph of Mabushi village reported to the police that the accused criminally entered her room while she was asleep and made attempts to rape her.

He said when the complainant resisted all efforts by the accused to rape her, the accused started beating her, adding that in the pro-

By Ibraheem A. Fatai & Husein Yahaya

cess of the beating, he cut her wrist watch valued at N3,000 as well as destroyed her necklace valued at N2,500.

The prosecutor argued further that the offences committed by the accused are punishable under Sections 95, 263, 264, 397 and 172 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and requested for bail.

Following the denial of the charges, the prosecutor asked the court for a hearing date to enable the police prepare its witness.

Magistrate Hafsat Soso granted the accused bail in the sum of N150,000 with a surety in like sum that must

be a civil servant and reside within the court's jurisdiction as well as swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to May 12 for hearing.

In another court, a 27-year-old printer, Oneiji Aloma was on Monday arraigned for allegedly being in possession of suspected stolen items and attempting to break into the house of one Yemisi

Olakoshe.

Prosecutor Jeremiah Elijah told the court that on March 23, 2009, one Yemisi Olakoshe of Federal Housing, Phase 1, Lugbe Estate, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused and three others now at large were caught removing her window net with intent to break into her house to steal.

He said when the police conducted searches in the accused person's house, a 14

inches television set, five speakers, one desk top computer, eight laptop bags, one Sony DVD, eight handsets without SIM cards, one DVD player, four cameras, three remote controls, two international passports, earrings and two flasks were found there.

"The accused could not give account of how he came about the item and committed offences punishable under Sections 95, 317 and 79 of the Penal Code Law," he

added.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and requested for bail.

Magistrate Hadiza Shagari granted him bail in the sum of N50,000 with a surety in like sum that must be a civil servant and swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to April 30 for hearing.

Easter: Foundation to host the disabled

Members of Sir David Osunde Foundation (SDOF) have concluded plans to host hundreds of disabled persons that would come to Abuja from different

By Abubakar Yakubu

parts of the country as from Friday, to celebrate the 17th

Edition of the foundation.

The physically challenged persons would be in Abuja for a five-day programme that will involve a national retreat, musical carnival/procession round the major streets in Abuja, attending a Holy Mass, National seminar, thanksgiving mass, grand reception that will entail presentations of awards, gala nite and distribution of gifts to disabled persons at St Aloysius Primary School Field, Area 3, Garki, Abuja on April 14.

President of the foundation, Sir David E. Osunde, yesterday at a press briefing in Abuja appealed to Nigerians to show love as well as help the less privilege people in the society.

"As human beings, Christ has instructed us to look after one another by being our brothers keepers, and by these statements we have to love our neighbour as much as ourselves," he stated.

He said the foundation members had to go through varied of problems affecting

the less privilege before deciding on assisting persons that are disabled, adding that for the past 17 years, disabled persons are brought together from all over the country to attend programmes organised by the foundation yearly.

According to him, the foundation programmes yearly are meant to educate the disabled persons as well as to make them know that they have special gifts from God.

He disclosed that the yearly programmes have always been organised in Benin but had to be shifted to Abuja because of complaints from disabled persons from the north that the journey was long and strenuous.

The president called on other well meaning Nigerians to join in the crusade to assist disabled persons by participating in the programme and bringing gifts.

"Don't wait to be invited officially, join other men and women of goodwill to put smiles on the faces of persons with disabilities by being a part of the programme, and bringing them gifts of wheel chairs, callipers, cane-guides, Braille, fairly-used clothes, shoes, etc," he added.

Also speaking, Barrister Ikem Uchegbulam said the organising committee has made arrangement with the Federal Road Safety Commission to lead the congregation round Abuja.

He said the theme of the event is 'Disability and road traffic accidents', adding that it would sensitize people on the risks involved in careless driving, especially when they know that road accident is a cause of disability.



From right: Sir David E. Osunde and Barrister Ikem Uchegbulam, during a press briefing organised by Sir David Osunde Foundation to reel out its programmes for the disabled during Easter.

Odom didn't demand money from us

—Area Council chairmen

By Mustapha Suleiman & Hussein Yahaya

The six area council chairmen in the FCT yesterday refuted a newspaper report that quoted one of them as saying that FCT Minister of State, Chief Chuka Odom demanded money from them to run his office.

The chairmen, who are members of the Association of Area Council Chairmen, jointly issued a communiqué describing the allegation as baseless, false and malicious.

The communiqué which was read by the Abaji Area Council Chairman, Alhaji

Yahaya M. Musa at a news conference in Abuja, said such an issue has never been discussed in any meetings with the minister, adding that the minister has shown a deep commitment to the development of the satellite towns through his efforts at ensuring that development projects are diligently ex-

ecuted.

He said other initiatives of the minister include getting the American Embassy in Abuja to partner with the area councils in the construction of refuse incinerator.

"We regret the embarrassment the said publication must have caused the minister and challenge the said newspaper to name the chairman that granted him the alleged interview and details of

the bank and monies paid into the said account or in the alternative tender an unreserved apology to the minister in the interest of credibility," Alhaji Musa stated.

In another development, the death of the speaker of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) was announced by council officials yesterday.

AMAC's Chairman, Mr Zaphaniah B. Jisalo disclosed that he died in the early

hours of Tuesday after a brief illness.

The chairman described the speaker's death as a great loss to the area council.

According to him, the late speaker was a hardworking man with a lot of great ideas, adding that his death came at a time the council needed his service most.

The chairman prayed for the repose of his soul and asked the late speaker's family to bear the irreparable loss.

Our reporter learnt that the speaker will be buried today.

City news

Lady charged for squandering mother's wealth

A middle-aged woman, Jessica Joseph was yesterday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly wasting her mother's wealth that ran into N2.2million.

The lady was arraigned alongside her boyfriend, Obinna Nwagwu, who was accused of acting jointly with her to waste the money.

Court Registrar, Mrs Salamatu Bauna, while reading the police report said on February 24, one Joyce Joseph of Karu Site reported to the po-

By Sikiru M. Jimoh

lice that Jessica collected the sum of N2.2million, being the benefit of her mother and took it to Obinna Nwagwu and they both converted it their personal use and wasted it.

Prosecutor Stephen Eimoga, who investigated the allegation, told the court that Jessica confessed to the crime.

When the charge was read to both accused persons, the denied it.

Magistrate Hadiza Dodo granted each of them bail in the

mother's wealth

sum of N500,000 each and a surety each in like-sum that must be civil servants and own houses within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to April 14 for hearing.

In another case, seven men were yesterday arraigned for allegedly gathering in a bush near a court with dangerous weapons.

The accused persons were equally charged with the offences of inciting disturbance and attempting to commit an offence in the neighbourhood of the court, where a case was going on.

The men, Mujachi Martins, Tosin Ibrahim, Abubakar Aliyu, Mamuda Shehu, Aliyu Baba, Isiaku Yakubu and Mukhtar Mati all of no fixed

addresses were accused of gathering unlawfully with the intention of rioting during a court trial against one Oni Adeyemi in the FCT.

Court Clerk, Lele Akawu while reading out the police report said in the morning of February 16, the accused persons of no fixed addresses were sighted in a bush during the proceedings of a case of cul-

pable homicide against Oni Adeyemi.

"When the accused persons were arrested, various types of dangerous weapons were recovered from them and none of them could give satisfactory account of their mission in the bush at that time," the clerk continued.

The seven accused persons did not take their plea and Magistrate Fatima Usman Mukhtar adjourned the case to April 20.

Woman in court for hiding suspected debtor

A middle-aged woman was on Monday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly assisting one Hajia Nasiru to avoid her creditor.

The accused, Hauwa Mejitaba was said to have committed the offence middle March, 2009 and arrested on March 31, 2009.

Prosecutor Jeremiah Elijah informed the court that on March 31, 2009, Mariam Mohammed, Zaliha and Adama Mohammed, all of Karamajiji village, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused prevented them from collecting their money from their debtors.

He said one Hajia Nasiru of Karamajiji village, Abuja, collected rice valued at N16,000, 14 wrappers and N16,000 contributions from the complainant and ran away.

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

"Having known that the woman committed an offence, the accused promised to bring her before them; but instead, she only paid N10,000 to one of them," the prosecutor added.

He said the accused committed an offence punishable under Section 167 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charge was read to the accused, she pleaded not guilty and asked for bail.

Magistrate Hafsat Soso granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a surety in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to May 6 for hearing.

Police Hotlines in FCT

Divisional Police Officers	Telephone Nos
1. Maitama	08038485123
2. Central Police Station	08033568389
3. Lugbe	08077657371, 08037882321
4. Wuse	08053088102
5. National Assembly	08065777706, 08045317637
6. Asokoro	07028134449
7. Nyanya	08046115181
8. Utako	07055888119, 07038621264
9. Karshi	08023565354
10. Wuye	08023314440
11. Karu	08036098804
12. Gwarimpa	08059113555
13. Karmo	08033773129
14. Garki	08033560903
15. Life Camp	08058036613
16. Kubwa	08036134478
17. Gwagwa	08035537989
18. Zuba	08036311967
19. Bwari	08075804475
20. Dutse Alhaji	08053089999
21. Kuje	07030800531
22. Kwali	08033062496
23. Rubochi	08060568342
24. Gwagwalada	08057467369
25. Abaji	08037209328

Abuja Area Command Heads

1. Metro: 08033052353, 08059099953
2. Kubwa: 08033560903, 08026760504
3. Gwagwalada: 08033041083



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA

(FOUNDED IN 1979 AND CHARTERED BY ACT No. 76 OF 1993)

NOTICE OF 27TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the 27th Annual General Meeting of the Association will hold on Thursday 30th of April 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at **THE NIGERIAN COLLEGE OF ACCOUNTANCY, Permanent Site, Kwall Basa Local Government Area, Plateau State.**

AGENDA

1. To adopt the minutes of 26th AGM.
2. To receive the Report of Council and the Financial Statements the year ended 31st December 2008.
3. To be informed of the Council Members for the year 2009.
4. To authorize the Council to appoint Auditors and to fix their remuneration.
5. Resolutions.
6. Handing Over Ceremony.
7. Other General Business.

By Order of Council

SIR. (DR.) PETER C. IBEKWE, FCNA, FIMC

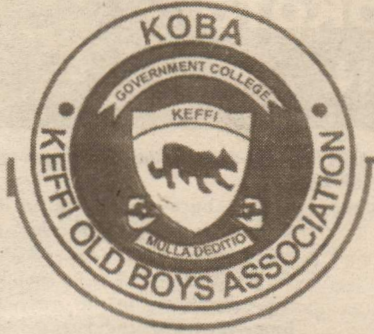
Registrar/Chief Executive

250, Herbert Macaulay Street, Yaba, Lagos Date:

Email: info@anan.org.ng

Website: www.anan.org.ng

19th February, 2009



Keffi Old Boys Association

387, Ikorodu Road,
Ojota-Lagos, Nigeria.
P. O. Box 50611,
Falomo, Ikoyi, Lagos.
Tel: 01-4973034, 0803-302-8706
09-2349456, 0803-407-8801

APPRECIATION

The National EXCO and entire membership of Keffi Old Boys Association (KOBA) wish to extend their sincere appreciation particularly to His Excellency, **Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR** (Mutawallen Katsina) President, Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria (KOBA 992) for finding time from his busy schedules to personally attend and grace the 60th anniversary celebration of Government College Ketti, his Alma Mater.

Our gratitude goes to Alhaji (Dr.) Mahmud Yayale Ahmed, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and the Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Ms Ama Pepple.

Special gratitude also goes to the amiable and indefatigable Governor of Nasarawa State, His Excellency, Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma OON, (Madauchin Doma) for his laudable efforts towards restoring the lost glory of Government College Keffi and tirelessly working towards re-building the school and achieving more.

Worthy of special mention and commendation is the Governor of Katsina State, His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Shehu Shema for associating himself with the Public Private Partnership programme initiated by KOBA with the support of His Excellency, Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma, Governor of Nasarawa State.

Our appreciation goes to their Excellencies, the Executive Governors of Benue State, Rt Hon. Gabriel Suswan, Niger State, Dr Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Taraba State, Pharm. Danbaba Danfulani Suntai, Kogi State, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, Enugu State, Sullivan Chime, Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau and Nasarawa State Deputy Governor, Chief John Michael Abdul.

We appreciate the presence and contributions of former Governors, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa State and Sir Peter Odili of Rivers State.

Special appreciation goes to our Chief Launcher, Alhaji Dahiru Barau Mangal and the Co-launchers, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Chief Femi Otedola, Dr. (Mrs) Cecilia Ibru and Otunba Wale Adenuga.

We acknowledged the presence and contributions of all Honourable Ministers especially Senator Muhammad Adamu Aliero, FCT Minister and Dr. Hassan Lawal, Minister of Works and Housing.

The association also recognizes the tremendous support of the Chairman of the Occasion, HRH, Alhaji Dr. Ado Bayero, CFR, The Emir of Kano, who contributed towards the success of the launching. We also note with gratitude the immense contributions of the Grand Patron of KOBA, HRH Alhaji Dr. Muhammadu Chindo Yamusa II, OFR, Emir of Keffi, whose wise counsel has continued to keep the association moving. We appreciate the presence of The Emir of Lafia, Alhaji (Dr.) Isa Mustapha Agwai I, Chairman, State Council of Chiefs, who led all traditional rulers in the State to grace the Occasion.

Our special appreciation also goes to the following:

1. Senator Abubakar Danso Sodangi
2. Senator Suleiman Adokwe
3. Senator Patricia Akwashiki
4. Hon. Ahmed Aliyu Danyaya
5. Hon. Samuel Egya
6. Hon. Mohammed Almakura
7. Speaker and Members of Nasarawa State House of Assembly
8. The Secretary to Nasarawa State Government, Head of Service and all Members of the State EXCO.
9. Alhaji Tanko Almakura
10. Imani Group of Companies
11. Alhaji Abdul Gafaru Yusuf
12. Arthur Collins Nda
13. Ashaka Cement Company Plc.
14. President & Members, Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA)

The list is by no means exhaustive.

We thank all those who contributed in one way or the other and those who accompanied our Special Guests to witness this historic occasion and the entire membership of Keffi Old Boys Association (KOBA) for making the occasion a success.

Long live Government College keffi!
Long live KOBA!!
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

NULLA DEDITIO

Major General (Chief) E.O. Abisoye (rtd)
(Ogbajiri of Ogori)
President-General (KOBA)

Shamsudeen Abubakar
(Magajin Rafin Keffi)
Secretary-General (KOBA)

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL BATTLE IN THE SOKOTO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION PETITION

The way and manner in which election petitions are being handled in Nigeria is viewed differently by Nigerians depending on their level of education, their understanding of legal issues, or even their status in life. This may be the reason why people tend to be surprised why certain court decisions on similar matters differ, hence leading to so much confusion. It is this confusion the present writer is trying to clear on how the legal tussle in Sokoto state is unfolding. This is to enable all interested parties have a general understanding of the whole situation.

The legal battle over the seat of Sokoto State governorship between the candidate of DPP, Alhaji Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi and Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako of PDP, began immediately after the April 14th, 2007 gubernatorial election. The DPP immediately after the election contested the result at the Sokoto State Governorship and Legislative Houses Election Petition Tribunal contesting among others, the qualification of PDP's candidate, Aliyu Magatakarda to contest the election for multiple nominations, lack of proper membership of the PDP and lack of a valid running mate.

This petition which was dismissed at the lower tribunal ultimately went on appeal to the court of Appeal Kaduna, which on April 18th 2008, set aside the decision of the lower court and ordered for fresh election, which was conducted on 24th May, 2008. This election also raised certain legal issues, which DPP and its candidate Alhaji Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi are contesting at the relevant tribunals.

The court of Appeal in its judgment over the April 14th 2007 election in Sokoto held that the election of His Excellency Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako be annulled for substantial irregularities in the conduct of the election and on the ground that Aliyu M Wamako was not qualified to contest the 14th April 2007 governorship election. The court ordered that a

fresh election be conducted between the same parties and candidates as appear on Exhibit R8, (the form on which names of nominated candidates were listed).

To DPP and its flag bearer Alhaji Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi, the independent National Electoral Commission INEC, erred in allowing Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda of PDP to participate in the re-run election of 24th May 2008, as a result of which they ran to the re-constituted governorship tribunal to challenge Aliyu Magatakarda's participation in the election and his subsequent swearing-in having not been qualified to contest in the re-run election for invalid nomination prior to both the April 14th 2007 and May 24th, 2008 elections.

Two main issues were presented to the tribunal for determination with regards to the May 24th, 2008 re-run election which is the matter in contention. According to the dissenting judgement of the tribunal "Enveloping, shrouding and beclouding these two fundamental issues are a myriad of issues bothering on jurisdiction, abuse of court process and incompetence". On the question of jurisdiction and abuse of Court processes as canvassed by the respondents, a majority judgement of the tribunal decided on the affirmative i.e that it had no jurisdiction to entertain the matter.

Also, the majority judgement decided that sitting on that same matter would amount to an abuse of court process, in view of the fact that another matter has been decided by the Federal High Court and now on appeal at the court of Appeal seeking to know whether Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako was qualified to contest in the May, 24th 2008, re-run governorship election in Sokoto state. The appeal to the court of appeal resulted in the Federal High court declining jurisdiction on the issue.

On the other hand, a dissenting decision of two members of the tribunal disagreed with the

majority decision to say that it has no jurisdiction to entertain the matter by virtue of section 145(1)(a) of the Electoral Act 2006 which gives the tribunal the jurisdiction to inquire into whether a person whose election was questioned at the time of the election was not qualified to contest the election; In this case the 24th May 2008 election in Sokoto State. On the issue of abuse of Court process, the dissenting judgement also disagreed with the majority, as the issues before the tribunal and those before the Federal high Court are radically different.

Having exhausted these preliminary issues, the tribunal in the dissenting judgment of Okonkwo and Ahamaioje (JJ) went further to examine the issue of qualification of Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako to contest the 24th May 2008 election, which is the main issue in contention. According to them, by virtue of the Court of Appeals' decision which led to the re-run election, Aliyu Wamako of the PDP was not qualified. Their argument is not difficult to appreciate as the April 14, 2007 election was annulled due to irregularities in the form of multiple nominations, lack of proper sponsorship and lack of valid running mate with regard to the purported winner of the election, Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako of the PDP. Therefore a fresh nomination ought to have been made to INEC, if PDP had actually wanted him to be its candidate. This is by virtue of section 32(7). The two judges also quoted section 177 and 187(1) of the 1999 constitution which they said apply to general election such as the April 14, 2007 election, which was annulled by the Court of Appeal and ordered a fresh election within 90 days. The new election ordered was in the opinion of the dissenting judgment a bye - election which this writer entirely agrees with.

In arriving at their dissenting decision, Okonkwo and Ahamaioje (JJ), listed some authorities some of which are sections 32(1) -32(7) to buttress their argument.

Section 32 which contains the main reason reads as follows

Section (1) Every political party should not later than 120 days before the date appointed to a general election under the provisions of this Act, submit to the commission in the prescribed forms, the list of candidates the party proposed to sponsor at the elections.

Section (2) The list shall be accompanied by an affidavit sworn to by each candidate at the High Court of a state, indicating that he has fulfilled all the constitutional requirements for election into that office.

Section (3) The commission shall, within 7 days of the receipt of the personal particulars of the candidate; publish same in the constituency where the candidate intends to contest the election.

Section (4) Any person who has reasonable ground to believe that any information given by a candidate in the affidavit is false may file a suit at the High Court of a State or Federal High Court against such person seeking a declaration that the information contained in the Affidavit is false.

Section (5) If the court determines that any of the information contained in the affidavit is false the court shall issue an order disqualifying the candidate from contesting.

Section (6) A political party which presents to the commission the name of a candidate who does not meet the qualifications stipulated in this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N500,000.00

Section (7) Every political party shall not later than 14 days before the date appointed for a bye-election by the commission submit the list of candidates from the party for the bye-election.

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL BATTLE IN THE SOKOTO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION PETITION

After a cursory look at the above section, the dissenting judges in their decision believed section 32(1) applied only to a general election such as was held on 14th April, 2007, but Section 32(7) applies to the case of bye-election or special election, that is where an election was cancelled and a new one held. Also, according to them section 32(7) as opposed to section 32(1), provides or affords the 1st respondent and the political party sponsoring him very ample opportunity of remedying or rectifying whatever errors were found by the Court of Appeal in the nomination of 1st respondent (Aliyu Wamako) for the April 14, 2007 election and to correct same in the 24th May 2008, it is this opportunity which he did not take that made all votes cast to him null and void, because they were scored in favour of a party which has not actually sponsored any validly nominated candidate, hence decided that the petitioners petition succeeds.

Consequently, the judges made the following orders:

1. The 1st respondent not being validly nominated as at 24th May, 2008, was not qualified to contest the Governorship election for Sokoto state held on May 24, 2008.
2. The 562,395 votes recorded for the 1st respondent by the 3rd respondent and its agents at the said election are void and wasted.
3. The 1st petitioner scored majority of lawful votes at the Governorship election having scored 124,046 votes and also scored not less than one quarter of the lawful votes cast in at least two thirds of the Local Government Areas of Sokoto state.
4. 1st petitioner is entitled to be returned by the 3rd and 4th respondents as having been duly elected Governor of Sokoto state in the Governorship election held on 24th May 2008.
5. The 1st petitioner shall forthwith be sworn in as Governor of Sokoto state.
6. There shall be cost of N10, 000.00 for the petitioners.

Dissatisfied with the decisions in the majority judgment, the petitioner went on Appeal to the Court of Appeal for redress.

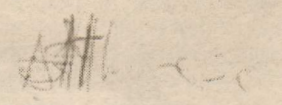
It is however, unfortunate that election petition tribunals in northern Nigeria always give verdicts that seems watery and confusing to the generality of the people. These are distinct from decisions

handed down by their counterparts in the south, which give verdicts that look somewhat impressive to the people, particularly in some cases such as gubernatorial elections in Ondo and Edo States. The elections were annulled and petitioners sworn-in. Why are these kinds of radical judgments not happening in the north? This is a one million dollar question which only Judiciary can answer.

Judiciary being the last hope for an aggrieved party, from all indications it is not doing what it is supposed to be doing especially in the case of Sokoto. In spite of the judgment of the Court of Appeal which nullified the election on the ground that Governor Wamako was not validly nominated by the PDP, INEC went ahead and allowed him to participate in the re-run election. This has raised a lot of doubts about the integrity of the Court of Appeal's judgments and INEC in allowing the same candidate to re-contest.

Since the matter is now back to the Court of Appeal, the issues to be determined are whether the lower tribunal had actually no jurisdiction to hear the case; and whether the 1st respondent (Wamako) was qualified to have contested the May 2008 re-run election in Sokoto State.

Since courts do not normally overrule themselves, Wamako is already not qualified to have contested the 14th April, 2007 election. What will remain is to determine whether he was qualified to re-run for the May 2008 Election. This we think and are sure is not easy for the Court of Appeal to find out. Justice delayed, it is they say justice denied.


 Signed:
Barrister Dahiru Sani Muhammad
 Faculty of Law
 A.B.U Zaria

MEDIA TRUST LIMITED

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

DAILY TRUST			
DURATION	COVER PRICE	DISCOUNT	SUBSCRIPTION
	N	%	N
1 Year	26,000	25	19,500
6 Months	13,000	20	10,400
3 Months	6,500	15	5,525

WEEKLY TRUST / SUNDAY TRUST			
DURATION	COVER PRICE	DISCOUNT	SUBSCRIPTION
	N	%	N
1 Year	7,800	25	5,850
6 Months	3,900	20	3,120
3 Months	1,950	15	1,657

PERSONAL DETAIL

Name of Subscriber: _____

Company Name: _____

Delivery Address (Not Box No.): _____

Telephone (s): _____

Start Date: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Paper Subscribed for: Daily Trust Weekly Trust Sunday Trust Aminiya

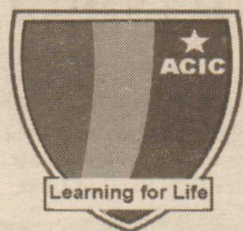
Tick 1 year 6 months 3 months

Please send form to any of the following Media Trust Limited Offices.

ABUJA Plot B55, Off Solomon Lar Way (Behind Chida Hotel) Utako District Abuja	LAGOS Textile Workers House 10, Acme Rd., Agidingbi, Ikeja, Lagos	KADUNA No. 6 Sulubawa Close Off Kaluru Road, Ungwar Sarki GRA, Kaduna	KANO Abdullahi Ma'adua House Murtala Moh'd Way, Fagge D Kano
PHC 24, Ikwemi Road, Cahary House, M/E 1, Decbu	JOS Former British American Building Jos, Plateau State	ENQUIRIES The Marketing Manager, 08038298374, 0805500114	

ABUJA CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

An ideal and well equipped co-educational school with ultra modern Boarding facilities as well as, air conditioned classes and offices.



ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FOR THE YEAR 2009/2010

The College offers the Cambridge Curriculum to students drawn from around the world Our curriculum covers Cambridge Primary, IGCSE and A Levels.

- We provide well rounded world-class International Education which develops the whole person, fostering intellectual, spiritual, creative, physical and social growth.
- Our Teacher - Student Ratio is presently 1:2.
- ACIC not only offers academic excellence but also allows the students to enjoy a stress-free life involving them in extra-curricular activities such as Sports, Music, Fine Art and Drama.
- French and Arabic are offered as foreign languages for the future enhancement of their careers.
- Information Communication Technology is embedded in all subject areas.
- The learning goals for each subject area are identified to facilitate learning, acquiring knowledge and skills and developing understanding.
- Civic, moral and religious instruction are given to imbue in students a sense of responsibility, tolerance and uprightness.
- The ACIC curriculum includes the rigorous development of international understanding as an integral part of all that it does.

Abuja Capital International College is situated in Gwarinpa Federal Housing Estate Phase 2, between Roads 352 and 353 off 3rd Avenue. Phone 670-4466 or 314-9492, 095200297-300,08035046139

Website: www.acicnigeria.org

e-mail: info@acicnigeria.org

VENUE: School premises

DATE: 18th April, 2009

TIME: 9a.m, prompt.

Obtain your form AT the SCHOOL premises

Are You The Best Graduating Mass Communication Student?



Media Trust Limited, publishers of *Weekly Trust, Daily Trust, Sunday Trust* and *Aminiya*, in demonstration of corporate social responsibility and commitment to human capital development, offers employment slots for best graduating students of Mass Communication in the following universities/polytechnics:

1. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
2. Bayero University, Kano
3. University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri
4. University of Jos, Jos
5. Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna
6. Federal Polytechnic, Bida

The authorities of the above named institutions are hereby requested to forward the names of their brightest graduating students for consideration and job offer. All correspondence offer should be sent to:



The Editor-In-Chief,
Media Trust Limited,
No 20 P.O.W. Mafemi Crescent,
Off Solomon Lar Way,
(Behind Chida Hotel),
Utako District, Abuja.

Signed
Management

Labour Report

labour@dailytrust.com

Labour Minister decries marginalisation of Nigeria by ILO

The Minister of Labour and Productivity, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode yesterday decried the absence of competent technical staff in Nigeria's office of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Kayode expressed dismay with the absence of technical cooperation on ground for Nigeria by the ILO.

A press statement signed by the ministry's Assistant Director of Press, Samuel Olowookere, said that the minister, "while playing host to the ILO's Deputy Regional Director for Africa, Mr. Mpenka Kabunde noted that he is not comfortable with the appallingly weak staff structure of the ILO office in Abuja which has the

By Francis Okeke

least professional staff of all ILO offices in Africa."

He also decried the "relegation of Nigeria which is the most populous country in Africa in the approved new field structure for Africa Decent Work Country Support Teams while other African countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa and Senegal were prominently featured in the ILO scheme of things."

The Minister emphasised that the adoption of more efficient and fairer deployment of the ILO Human Resources for West Africa should involve the deployment of 8 of the 16 international staff meant for West

Africa, to the ILO office in Abuja.

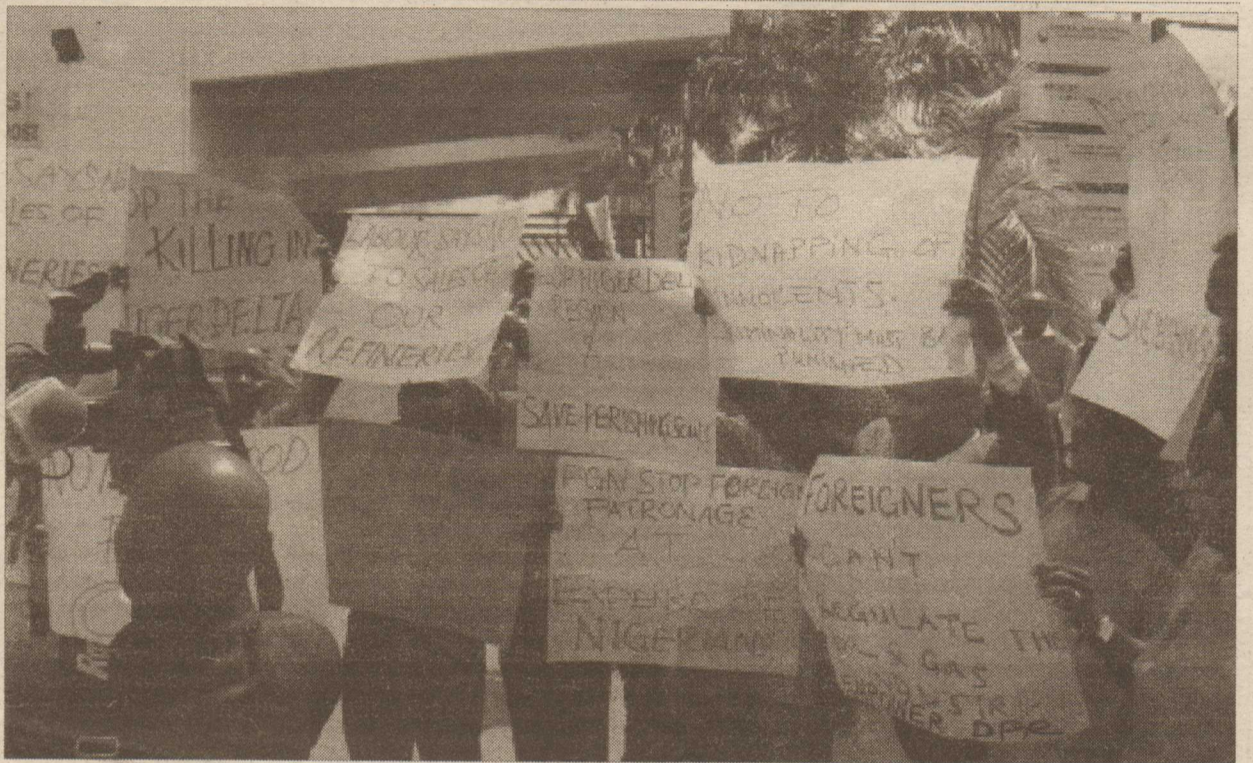
"This highly unfair and unjust treatment of Nigeria by the ILO must be urgently

and immediately redressed in the interest of good name of the ILO and respect for Nigeria," he added.

In his response, Mr.

Kabunde promised that the problems highlighted by the minister will be forwarded to "ILO's Regional Director Mr. Charles Dan, the ILO Direc-

tor General, Mr. Juan Somavia and ILO's governing body in order to ensure that justice, equity and fair play prevails



Members of NUPENG and PENGASSAN protesting recently at the National Assembly.

Pix: Francis Okeke

Civil Service training guidelines for review

Guidelines for training in the Federal Civil Service are being reviewed so as to reposition the civil service for maximum efficiency in line with current global best practices, the Permanent Secretary, Manpower Development in the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF), Dr. Ochi Achinivu has said.

Achinivu, while declaring open a retreat/workshop on Human Capital Development at the Public Service Institute, Abuja said the review was predicated upon recent developments occasioned by far reaching reforms in the Public Service.

He noted that the Head of the Civil Service (HOSF), Ms Amal. I. Pepple "being a strong believer in Human Capital Development and Institutional Capacity Development graciously approved the

Workshop/retreat made for all Departmental Training Officers (DTOs) and the staff of the Training Departments of various Ministries,

By Francis Okeke

Departments and Agencies (MDA's).

In a press statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the HOSF, Okwudiafor Anthony, the Permanent Secretary pointed out that the Workshop/Retreat aimed to discuss issues that arose from the implementation of the "training programmes of year 2008 and come up with strategies to make the implementation of the programmes of the current year more successful."

He observed that, the only way of repositioning the Public Service for the discharge of its responsibilities "is sustaining investment in human capital development" while assuring that the initiatives "will improve the public service with professional, technical and administrative competence, that will make the service much effective and capable of supporting the government in harnessing all potentialities for nation building."

COE lecturers on strike over CONTISS

Lecturers of the College of Education in Minna, Niger state have embarked on a seven day warning strike over failure of the state government to implement the federal government approved Consolidated Tertiary Institution Salary Scheme (CONTISS).

The chairman of the Joint Action Committee on the implementation of the CONTISS, Alhaji Abdulkadir Pai speaking with pressmen in Minna yesterday said the lecturers embarked on strike to compel the state government to start payment of the

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

new salary scheme.

His words, "the strike is to serve as a warning as we are only going to stay away from the classroom for only seven days after which we shall embark on indefinite strike until the state government yield to our demands."

"We have tried our best in the area of deliberations with the state government with a view to having an agreeable solution to the problem and it has failed. The strike is our last resort

and we shall continue until we succeed in our demand", he said.

Pai observed that lecturers had been agitating for the payment of CONTISS since the immediate past administration of Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, adding that the agreement reached was that of principle which was not implemented until he left office.

Speaking on the issue, the Commissioner for Higher Education, Dr Peter Salka Sarki expressed surprise at the decision of the lecturers to embark on industrial ac-

tion, saying that the issue was being deliberated upon.

He stated that the state government was already acting on the payment of the new salary scheme, adding that the strike action was unnecessary as compliance with CONTISS will soon be enforced in the state.

"We are surprised that they are going on a seven day strike when the state government is trying its best to work out ways to assist them to get the CONTISS. The strike is not necessary at this point", he said.

Minister asks unions for understanding

The Minister of Labour and Productivity, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode yesterday charged trade unions in the country to show understanding with

By Francis Okeke

government when making demands due to the global economic meltdown.

Kayode stated this in a

meeting with the Joint Union Council (JUC) of the ministry, just as he emphasised that the global economic crisis "has much effect on the developing nations due to their various stages of development and the absence of basic economic needs."

In a press statement signed by the Assistant Director of Press in the ministry, Samuel Oluwookere, the minister cautioned that the crisis, if not handled carefully, may result to "serious job loss which will also affect the corporate existence of the union," while urging the union to always take into consideration the "challenges faced by the management when making demands."

He assured the union of

government's commitment to create a harmonious working environment for sound economic growth and development, just as he commended union's pursuit to better the welfare of its members.

Earlier in his speech, the Chairman of JUC, Comrade Tommy Etim Okon, charged management on commitment to the plight of workers in the ministry.

Okon informed the Minister that the union had over the years exhibited maturity in handling issues affecting its members in the ministry and hoped that the Minister would reciprocate by ensuring that the welfare of workers in the ministry is promptly attended to.

NDE trains 50 disabled in Niger

Fifty disabled persons have been trained in Niger state by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) yesterday as part of efforts to rehabilitate and empower vulnerable people in the state.

The training, directed at putting beggars out of the street aims to create avenues for disabled people to be self employed and meaningfully contribute to the development of the state with skills

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

acquired.

The Director General (DG) of NDE, Alhaji Abubakar Mohammed speaking at the training programme stated that the directorate is worried with the growing number of disadvantaged people in the society and their continued dependency on alms and family members for survival.

Mohammed pointed out that apart from disabled persons in Niger state, the scheme also covers widows, widowers and victims of natural disasters not financially capable to survive without external assistance.

"The aim of training this group of people is to reduce unemployment, street begging, veiled begging, armed robbery and other social vices.

"We also hope to remove

disillusionment among vulnerable and disabled persons and equip them with a sense of self worth and self confidence through the provision of marketable skills", he said.

The DG said that the directorate was working tirelessly to ensure people are engaged in different aspects of the economy, adding that it is in the NDE mandate to create an economy saturated with job makers rather than job seekers.

INSIDE POLITICS

I know Atiku will never beg OBJ—Associate

Alhaji Muhammadu Abdullahi Sugar, a founding member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), is a seasoned politician and a political associate of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. In this interview, Sugar explains Atiku's controversial visit in January to former President Olusegun Obasanjo and other matters.

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo was reported saying his erstwhile deputy, Atiku Abubakar, begged for his support in his (Atiku's) bid to return to the PDP. As a close associate of the former vice president, what do you make of this?

This is untrue because this is not the first time Chief Obasanjo lied against Atiku. I am sure Atiku is so principled enough that he wouldn't do that to him. Even when Obasanjo had power, Atiku did not beg him to spare him from his attack against him. And at that time Atiku showed the world that he was equal to the task. Everyone can bear Atiku witness, because if he would ever do that to him, he would have done that since. Atiku is a forgiving person who never bore malice or rancour to any person. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar tries to adhere to the teachings of Islam that counsels against bearing malice against anybody. Even in Christianity, bearing grudge against anybody is sinful. Atiku visited his former boss to fulfil his obligation not to beg him, or to seek any political favour.

Some people say given that Atiku seems no longer committed to the AC, it could be true he sought support from the former president to return to PDP. What can you say about this?

Don't forget that Atiku was among those that worked for the PDP to attain this height. I can assure you that the mother and father of the PDP is Atiku Abubakar. When we first launched PDP in Adamawa State, from where we proceeded to Plateau State where elder statesman Solomon Lar made a very instructive remark. Lar likened PDP to a car, whose fuel and the employer of its drivers was Atiku. You can see Atiku's immense contribution to PDP. Atiku does not deserve the treatment being meted out to him.

Do you now support his return to the PDP since he was one of the founding fathers?

We that know him know his contributions to the formation and nurturing of the PDP want him to return to the PDP. He is in politics to help the people of the country. Atiku is in politics to bring development to Adamawa and Nigeria in

**From Hassan A. Karofi,
Kano**

general. What cast blight to his ambition is his association with Obasanjo.

Don't you think that even if Atiku is readmitted into PDP he would not be able to secure the PDP presidential ticket?

Both the securing of the ticket and leadership come from Allah (SWT). In 1999, Atiku had no ambition to become vice president. He only contested for the Adamawa governor but found himself as a vice president. That is the will of God. Allah saw the competence, the goodwill in him. Our hope is that when President Umaru Yar'adua completes his term, Atiku will succeed him so that he will move the country forward. Between Atiku and Yar'adua there is long-fostered bond and family relationship that political differences cannot alter. The call we are now making on this respected politician, Atiku Abubakar to return to PDP and contest the election is for the country to have a better leadership. We also want the president to extend the hand of friendship to Atiku.

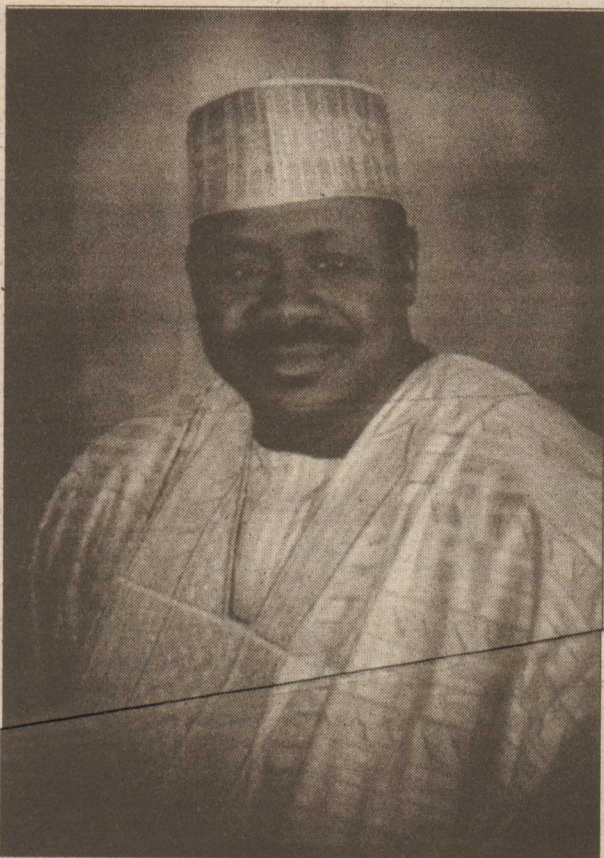
Supporters of AC will not find this call from you very funny because Atiku is founder of AC as well.

AC is a child of necessity, conceived principally in order to get refuge from the torment of Obasanjo. It was this reason that made us to defect to AC. But now since an understanding and kind person is at the helm, we are calling on all our political allies in the AC to unite. However I will like to also add that Atiku visited Obasanjo just to demonstrate his forgiving spirit. I could recall how he forgave those who sabotaged his rise to being the Comptroller General of Customs. In those days some unscrupulous people wrote articles in the newspapers saying bad things about him but he later forgave them. Through my humble self, Atiku has pardoned quite a number of politicians. Whenever I presented some issues to him over reconciliation with political opponents, Atiku warmly welcomed the idea. Atiku is one of the respected heavyweight politicians who helped the country in so many ways. Because of his

credibility, once he shows support to any politician, the politician will succeed in politics. I could recall a time in the early 90s when the Northwest was given the deputy speaker slot. Atiku was the one who insisted and worked for Alhaji Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso's emer-

kwaso. But when I explained to him that he is a forgiving person, he obliged and let him be. But no sooner had he become governor than he rebelled against Atiku in solidarity to Obasanjo.

Do you think Atiku could mobilise support within PDP without the support of



Alhaji Muhammadu Abdullahi Sugar

gence as the deputy speaker. I, alongside Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, were the ones who prevailed on Atiku to talk to the late Tafidan Katsina, Shehu Yar'adua, so that the political aim was achieved. Late Tafida already had his candidate, but because of Atiku's political relevance, the late Tafida accepted the idea. I also could recall a time when the preparation toward the fourth republic was in top gear. I was with Senator Hamisu Musa, Musa Gwadabe, Alhaji Uba Danbaffa, Alhaji Sadauki Danbatta, Alhaji Mustapha Maiwake, Alhaji Kabiru Sagagi, former Jigawa State governor Alhaji Ali Sa'adu and late Alhaji Shehu Kwatalo when the candidacy of our once preferred candidate Muntari Zimit was quashed in favour of Kwankwaso. I told Zimit that the anti-Atiku political rally that you organised has cost you your aspiration under the platform of our party. When I informed Atiku of the development, he queried why we should take Kwan-

Chief Obasanjo?

Of course he doesn't need support of Obasanjo to actualise his presidential dream. Nigerians can bear witness to the fact that Atiku is the soul and body of Nigerian politics. He is blessed with charisma and political prowess. He is a philanthropist par excellence and he gives support to both the privileged and less-privileged. That is vintage Atiku. And mark you, his meeting Obasanjo is characteristic of him—a forgiving person. He was not at his home to beg him to return to PDP nor was he in his house to beg him to become president. Atiku was among the power brokers who imposed Obasanjo on the nation, ostensibly to appease the Yoruba people for the travails of the late Abiola. Obasanjo was at the political stage as a fire-fighter to extinguish the political conflagration that engulfed the nation. But instead of him setting off the fire, he rather stoked the fire. Our today's northern politicians who did not toe the lines of the stated

elder statesmen were the ones who created conflict between them. They told Obasanjo that Atiku was not a good person, was very ambitious, and all that.

Obasanjo was reported in the media as saying that Atiku is the architect of money-politics in Nigeria. What is your reaction to this?

This is totally untrue. Whoever knows Atiku knows him as a generous person, in addition to being a philanthropist. He is an upright person who does not deceive people. So being a good man does not mean you are corrupt or you are the one who introduced corruption and money-politics into the Nigerian political scene.

Consider this logic, whoever gives and helps people must endear himself to the people. But I still wonder why it did not occur to Obasanjo before now that Atiku corrupts Nigerian politics until their estrangement. Third term issue is still in our mind and we could recall how billions of naira were squandered to actualise the agenda. But for Atiku's political doggedness and ability to tame the former president, we would not have been able to reap the fruit the democracy. Third term could have brought a serious damage to our democracy. Therefore I will say that Atiku is not the one who introduced money politics into the country.

Ondo Assembly begins screening of commissioners

The Ondo State House of Assembly yesterday in Akure began the screening of the 19 nominees of Governor Olusegun Mimiko for confirmation as commissioners.

The Speaker, Mr Taofiq Abdulsalam, warned that any nominee who failed to appear before the House Selection Committee before 9.00 a.m. today would be dropped.

He criticised some of the nominees for reporting late before the screening committee.

"The attitude is not good enough for anybody who wants to be a commissioner. If you cannot keep to time at this point of screening, it means you will be going to the office," he said.

The committee, headed by the Speaker, screened nine nominees, while the remaining 10 will appear today.

Those screened include Chief Clement Faboyede, Mr Ranti Akerele, Chief Julius Akinnigbagbe, Mr Adetola Wewe, Mr Olawole Akinjo, Prince Shola Amodeni, Mr Akin Adaramola, Chief Omolebi Adepiti and Mr Olumuyiwa Akinterinwa. (NAN)

How politicians promote corruption—Onaiyekan

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, yesterday in Abuja accused political leaders of promoting corruption "by the selfish way they conduct the affairs of the country."

"Political leaders are immorally and selfishly approving money for themselves to the neglect of others and the development of the country. One of the biggest problems in the country is that gradually we have almost admitted that some kind of stealing is right," he said.

Onaiyekan noted that today some people were sent to prison for stealing a chicken, while armed robbers are either jailed or publicly executed for stealing N20,000.

"But what we are hearing is that men in top positions in government are now collecting multi-million naira bribes; that is stealing, and nobody seems to think that it is very wrong," he said.

The archbishop said the way members of the National Assembly were approving salary and allowances for themselves was immoral.

He said the whole system was being organised in such a way that "you take as much as you can provided you can take it legitimately but there is a difference between legitimacy and morality."

"In a country where workers are struggling for a minimum wage of N30,000 a month, it is morally wrong for members of the National Assembly who represent us to take home millions of naira as allowances every month from our common purse," Onaiyekan said.

He attributed the situation to the fact that Nigerians were not listening to God who said that "we should be fair to one another."

He said that God was the common denominator for peace and that if human beings were not living, according to God's law; it would be difficult for them to be united.

"We can't even pursue a peaceful and orderly society. We all shout and call God's name, but we do terrible things. Some even call his name and kill. We are not serious," he added. (NAN)



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF POWER

INVITATION FOR PRE QUALIFICATION AND FINANCIAL COMMERCIAL BIDS FOR PROJECTS UNDER THE 2009 CAPITAL BUDGET OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER

The General Public is hereby invited to bid for technical prequalification and financial bids for the execution of the following projects under the 2009 Capital Budget.

Lot No	Project Title	Project Definition	Tender Processing Fee
A	Supply of 2Nos Testing Vans 4WD	The project is for the supply of 2Nos Testing Vans 4WD Air-conditioned Toyota Hilux (Double Cabin); Petrol Engine, Van Canopy (Inside compartment) fitted with heat insulation material. Each Test Van should have the following Test Equipment installed; i. 1No 80KV DC Insulation Test Set ii. 1No 60KV Dielectric D.I Test Set iii. 1No Digital Earth Resistance Test Set iv. 1No 5KVA Generator v. 1No Three Phase Transformer Turns Ratio Test Set vi. 1No Dual Display Digital Multi-mete	N25,000.00
B	Supply of various Test Equipment	The procurement is for the supply of the underlisted Test Equipment or equivalents: i. 6No Primary Current Injection Test set with associated cable. ii. 6No Secondary Current Injection Test set with associated cable iii. 3No AC/DC High pot Tester	N25,000.00
C	Rural Electrification Projects of Ibiaikot Communities Fourteen (14) Villages in Akwa Ibom State (Japanese Grant in Aid Counterpart Funding - Phase III)	The scope of work will include among others: i. The construction of LV distribution lines in all the 14 villages, ii. The installation of 3No 200KVA, 33/0.415KV, distribution transformers procured by the Japanese. iii. The installation of 13No distribution substations complete with associated feeder pillars and LV cabling.	N50,000.00

PRE-QUALIFICATION AND FINANCIAL COMMERCIAL BID REQUIREMENTS

Interested companies should submit the following documents/information for assessment/consideration

- i. Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and Forms C07
- ii. Evidence of registration as licensed electrical contractor, grade A/category 1
- iii. Company Audited Account for 3 years
- iv. Evidence of Tax Clearance Certificate for the last 3 years
- v. Letter of Financial Capability & Banking support.
- vi. Evidence of payment of Tender Fee
- vii. Curriculum Vitae of Key Technical Staff including individual attestation of availability (for Lot C)
- viii. List of similar projects previously undertaken including letters of award, completion certificates, completion

- ix. period & project costs; & for Rural Electrification projects, previous experience in Japanese Grant-In-Aid Projects will be an advantage.
- ix. List/type of equipment including indication of whether owned or on lease; for owned equipment evidence of ownership shall be required (for Lot C).
- x. VAT Registration & evidence of past VAT remittances.
- xi. Proposed Test Equipment Technical details & brochures (for Lots A & B)
- xii. Copy of ISO certificate of the manufacturer (This certificate must in particular cover the equipment being bid for - Lots A & B))

SUBMISSION OF PROCEDURE

Contractors interested in these projects should collect relevant bid documents from the Secretariat of the Procurement Planning Committee (PPC), Federal Ministry of Power, Block D, 6th Floor, NNPC Towers, Central Business District, Abuja, upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated against each project in a bank draft in favour of the Federal Ministry of Power. Duly completed pre-qualification forms and Tender bids with the necessary documents are to be submitted in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marked Pre-qualification bid 'X' and Tender bid 'X' (indicating the Lot of interest) on the left hand corner and should be addressed to:

The Secretary
Ministerial Tenders Board
Federal Ministry of Power
Block D, 6th Floor, NNPC Towers,
Central Business District,
Abuja

Six (6) copies of the Prequalification documents and Tenders in respect of the project should be dropped in the Ministry's Tenders Box at the Office of the Director, Procurement, Federal Ministry of Power, Block D, 6th Floor, NNPC Towers, Central Business District, Abuja, not later than three weeks from the date of this advert (i.e latest 4.00pm of the closing date).

OPENING OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

The Pre-qualification Documents submitted by interested bidders will be opened publicly on Thursday, 30th April, 2009 at the Board Room, Block D, 6th Floor, NNPC Towers, Abuja at 12.00 noon. Prospective bidders, interested members of the Public and non Governmental Organizations are hereby invited to witness the opening of the documents. However only prequalified contractors will be invited for the opening of financial/commercial bids at a date to be announced later.

Applications sent by post will be rejected, please.

For further enquiries on the tenders, contact
The Secretariat of the Procurement Planning Committee (PPC),
Federal Ministry of Power
Block D, 6th Floor, NNPC Towers, Central Business District,
Abuja

SIGNED
Permanent Secretary,
Federal Ministry of Power
Abuja.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 37TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF DEANS OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOOLS (CDPGS) IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN.

The CDPGS in Nigerian Universities held its 37th meeting at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin during 10th -13th March 2009. The meeting was attended by thirty-seven Deans of Postgraduate Schools of Nigerian Universities, and a representative of the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission. The meeting was declared open by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Prof. Ish-Aq O. Oloyede.

After the deliberations, the Committee wishes to issue the following communiqué:

Observations

1. The Committee considered at length, the role of research in development, and concluded that research is central to planned and concerted national development. At present universities and research institutes depend heavily on external sources of funding. These sources and agencies define priorities in ways that do not address local needs.
2. The Committee examined, retrospectively, the sorry state of our universities since the early 1980's, and observed that low research capacity and output are direct consequences of the parlous condition of Nigerian universities. It noted that there were duplications of research efforts and uncoordinated research activities in different centers and universities without any relation to each other.
3. The Committee observed that the outcome of local research is often not translated into products for the market. Companies with the requisite resources to do this have shown a reluctance to commit to this prime means of encouraging local research. Alarming, they have usually opted for a regime of importation of foreign goods thereby, optimizing research capacities elsewhere to the detriment of Nigeria, its research institutes and universities, and the educational sector.
4. The institutional framework for research in the country is at best weak as a result of poor funding. Centers of excellence, for example, have been established with emphasis on infrastructure/buildings at the expense of human capital development.
5. The role of our postgraduate students in the national research agenda is not well formulated. Additionally, the ability of postgraduate students, as well as some faculty, to access the latest available knowledge and improve their research skills is diminished.
6. The CDPGS is of the view that, while we should move away from the blame game of the past, with accusations flying between government and the universities on responsibility for the dire state of affairs in tertiary institutions, certain facts on the funding of education in Nigeria lead to inescapable conclusions. For example, the 2009 budget allocates no more than 6% of national revenue to education. This is the lowest percentage in all of Africa and is a far cry from the 26% recommended by UNESCO.

Recommendations

Based on the above observations, the Committee recommends as follows:

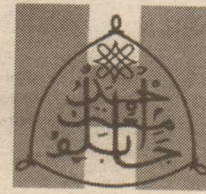
1. Local needs and priorities must drive the research agenda of the country. This is important as a means for building on local knowledge and knowledge systems. In this regard, to rely on external sources for research funding whose priorities are defined differently from ours is the wrong route to take. Local research in our universities and research institutes must also be market-driven in order to be relevant to these needs.
2. We need to rationalize research in our universities by strengthening integration through collaboration, synergy and networking. Unnecessary duplication of research efforts and an insular, individualistic approach to research will neither be beneficial to researchers themselves nor to the communities and the nation they wish to serve with their research output.
3. A well-formulated, well-articulated national research agenda and strategy are important for the country. This can be done as a collaborative effort between the government, the organized private sector and the universities. As part of this process, the mechanisms for disseminating research findings should be evolved.
4. Education is an investment. It is not just a social investment which can be downgraded at certain historical moments of national life; it must be regarded as a critical component of economic investment in the form of human capital development. If Nigeria wishes to produce a better quality of graduates that will serve the needs of commerce, industry and all other sectors of the economy, it must invest seriously in education. In the knowledge economy of the twenty-first century, inadequate funding of education and research cannot be an option.
5. Strengthening human capital in the form of using graduate students to implement national research agenda is a viable part of the strategy. Graduate students and faculty need to have regular updating of knowledge and exposure to best practice in research by means of internal and external travels and exchange programmes and other fora.
6. Above all, there is a critical need to improve the funding of education and research. We recommend that a minimum of 26% of the budget be allocated to education.

Members of the Communiqué Drafting Committee

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Prof E.A. Biakolo | Pan-African University, Lagos | Chairman |
| 2. Prof A.P. Udoh | University of Uyo, Uyo | Member |
| 3. Prof E.O. O... | Delta State University, Abraka | Member |
| 4. Prof. P.A. Eniayeju | Nasarawa State University, Keffi | Member |
| 5. Prof O. Arayela | Fed. University of Tech Akure | Member |

Signed:

Professor Oluwatoyin T. Ogundipe
Honorary Secretary, CDPGS &
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Lagos
08023201618, 01-7403307
E-mail: cdpgssecretariat@yahoo.co.uk, toyin60@yahoo.com



AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL
P.M.B. 06 ZARIA

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS UNDER THE 2009 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR ABUTH, ZARIA

INTRODUCTION:

The ABUTH Board of Management invites interested and reputable Contractors and Suppliers with relevant experience and good track record for pre-qualification for the following projects at ABUTH Zaria:

1. Construction of Nuclear Medicine Centre
2. Completion of Ward Block "S" furnishing/equipment
3. Provision of Cardio-thoracic Centre in Ward Block "S"
4. Supply of Medical Equipment
5. Supply and Installation of Fire Alarm System in Ward Block "K" and "S"
6. Completion of House Officers Quarters
7. Renovation/Maintenance of Roof Leakages
8. Completion of Cold Rooms for Medical Central Store

2.0 PRE-QUALIFICATION

In order to be considered for pre-qualification, bidders must submit the following:

- i. Certificate of Registration with Corporate Affairs Commission
- ii. Evidence of Current Tax Clearance
- iii. Company Audited Account for the last 3 years
- iv. VAT registration certificate
- v. Original copies of documents listed in item (i-iv) for sighting during the opening session which is scheduled for **20th May, 2009 at 12.30pm**
- vi. Evidence of Experience with similar jobs in the last three years. This should include the scope/volume of work and the amount, which should be verifiable.
- vii. Evidence of financial capability to handle the job and bank support.
- viii. Company profile including names and technical qualification(s) and experience(s) of key personnel.

3.0 SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

The completed pre-qualification documents should be enclosed in an envelope, sealed and marked "PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS FOR THE (Indicate the Project you are bidding for) and addressed to:

The Chief Medical Director
ABU Teaching Hospital, Zaria,
attention: Asst. Director of Admin. (Planning)

- 4.0 The completed pre-qualification documents should be deposited in the Tenders Box situated at the Office of the Chief Medical Director, ABUTH, Zaria.
- 5.0 The submitted pre-qualification documents will be opened on the same day in the presence of bidders or their representatives who choose to attend, at the Board Room, ABUTH Permanent Site, Shika-Zaria.
- 6.0 This is not an invitation to tender, full tendering procedure will be applied only to bidders that have been pre-qualified and found capable of project delivery.
- 7.0 Tenderers should note that only pre-qualified companies would be invited to submit financial bids. The ABUTH Management reserves the right to reject any or all pre-qualification documents.

Signed:
Director of Administration

SPORTS

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has released time table for elections into National Sports Federation (NSF) with a call on sport lovers to come out and contribute in the development of sports in the country by

Rep wants replacements for current Eagles

By Orkula Shaagee

A member of the lower chamber of the National Assembly, Representative Darlington Okereke has called on Coach Shaibu Amodu to find ways of replacing the current crop of players in the Super Eagles if Nigeria is to hoist her flag at the South Africa 2010 World Cup.

Okereke, who made the call in Abuja when Amodu appeared before the House of Representatives Committee on Sports, noted that the current players in the Eagles team lack commitment and determination to deliver the World Cup ticket to the country.

The parliamentarian who described the Super Eagles outing against Mozambique in Maputo a fortnight ago as colossal failure, said it was only the intervention of God and the understanding of the referee saved Nigeria from defeat by the Mambas of Mozambique.

"There is need to look for alternatives for the current Super Eagles players because they are not the best for Nigeria and they are not determined and committed. The match in Maputo was a colossal failure and if not for the referee's accord and God's intervention, Nigeria would have lost the match", Okereke stated.

He charged the Nigeria Football Federation and the Super Eagles coaching crew to take steps that would see Nigeria pick the ticket from the group, which has Tunisia, Mozambique and Kenya as other contenders.

"There will be wahala if Nigeria fails to qualify for the South Africa 2010 World Cup because it is something both the National Assembly and the NFF will not be able to handle", Okereke stated.

NSC releases time table for sports federations' election

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

vying for positions.

Releasing the result to newsmen yesterday in Kaduna, the zonal coordinator of NSC in charge of Zone 6, Mr. Are Ademola said the commission has fixed 20th of this month for the zonal elections of NSF.

The zonal coordinator said April 21 has been fixed for the conclusion of protests that might arise from the zonal elections and that the commis-

sion has also slated May 1 for the national elections of the sports federations in Abuja.

He said the national elections would be conducted into 20 sporting federations but that in view of the ongoing concessioning discussion, there shall be no election for 11 concessionable sports.

He said the Minister of Sports, would inaugurate the

board of the NSF on May 14 in Abuja.

He said the boards when inaugurated are expected to ensure that talents are continuously and dynamically identified and to put in place programmes that would accelerate the development of sports.

"They are also expected to ensure the selection of quality

coaches to facilitate the training and development of the athletes and the sport to high standard. The boards are to conduct marketing and fund raising activities to ensure that adequate fund is provided for the development of the sport and participation in competitions," he added.

He advised sport lovers in the country to come out and contest for the elective posts with a view of contributing to the development of sports in the country.

Hotline:
08059100030 (Text Only)

Eagles not good enough -Kpakor

By David Ngobua

Former Super Eagles player, Coach Moses Kpakor yesterday said in as much as he is still optimistic that the Eagles under Chief Coach Amodu Shaibu can still qualify for South Africa 2010, he does not believe that Nigeria has a crack squad for the world cup proper.

The former African Champion with the once famous BCC Lions FC Gboko told *Trustsports* that for more than three years, Nigeria has been using the same crop of players even as it is very clear that they are not the best the country can boast of.

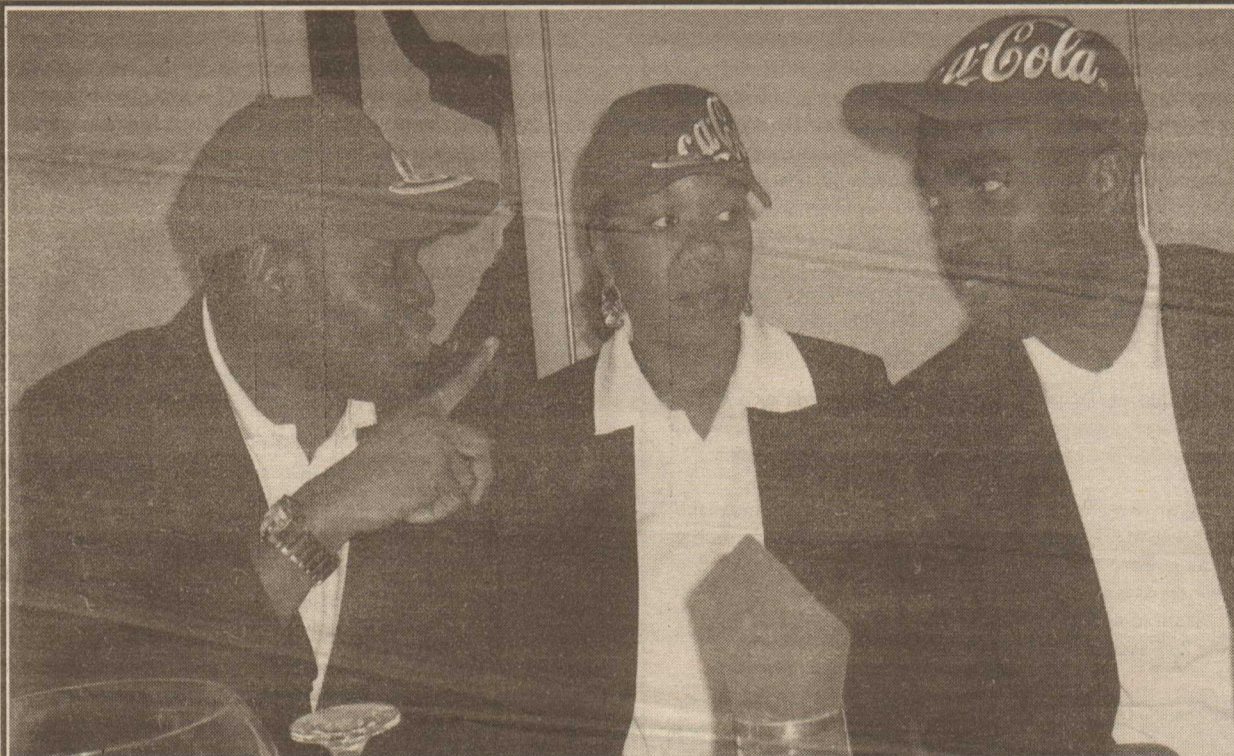
He said that even if the present Eagles manage to qualify Nigeria for the world up in South Africa, the team should be re-organized to make way for more ambitious and enterprising players to represent the country.

He explained that in as much as total overhauling of the team would be foolhardy, he does not see anything wrong in bringing in some members of the 2007 world conquering golden Eaglets and some members of the Beijing Olympics U-23 team to form the nucleus of the team to the world up.

According to him, though the need for youngsters like Chinedu Ogbuke, Dickson Etuhu and Joseph Akpala to be brought into the main stream of the team is obvious, the Nigeria Football Federation has not deemed it necessary to do so.

"For over three years, we have been using the same players without the desired results but the appropriate authorities appear not to be worried over our continuous decline. At the moment, we don't have a team but we may still qualify for the world cup".

Kpakor said that even before the commencement of the last phase of the World Cup qualifiers everybody knew that the Tunisians would give the Nigerian Eagles a good run for their money, therefore the present predicament of the national team is not a surprise to him.



L-R: Mr. Femi Adelusi (Media and Sponsorship Manager) Coca-Cola Nigeria; Wangi Mba-Uzoukwu, Marketing Manager, Coca-Cola and Clem Ugorji, Communication Manager, Coca-Cola Nigeria at the launch of the Coca-Cola Nigeria U-17 football championship in Lagos... yesterday.

Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu

Coca-Cola set to re-brand grassroots football

By Abiodun Jimoh, Lagos

Twenty-two young and talented Nigerians that distinguished themselves at the ongoing COPA Coca-Cola U-17 Football Championship across the country will represent the country at the African qualifiers billed for South Africa in June.

This was made known at a media briefing held in Lagos by Femi Adelusi, media and property manager of the Coca-Cola Nigeria, who stated that coaches are already working

scouting for players at various urban centers across the eight zones of the federation.

Adelusi affirmed that this laudable project would create an inspiration platform in which every youth would be opportune to showcase their God given talents as well as in achieving their dreams of playing professional football abroad.

While analyzing on how the

project will be achieved, Adelusi hinted that notable coaches were scouting for players under the stipulated age at eight zones in Nigeria as each zone would produce twenty-two players each hitherto converged in Lagos for finals in May. He added "from the teams that will be playing in Lagos for the finals, the winner will emerge among the eight zonal teams namely, Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Port-Harcourt, Aba, Abuja, Ilorin and Benin-City so a random selection

among all the players will be done by the coaches to eventually arrive at twenty-two players that play well".

He pointed out that it was from these eight zonal teams that the officials would select twenty-two players that would represent Nigeria in South Africa while assuring that notable coaches have been contacted to achieve this project just coach Tunde Disu, the manager/scout has been assigned to oversee the selection of players in zone D.

Abuja residents dominate registration for marathon race

Organisers of the Glo People Police Marathon have disclosed that over 20,000 completed registration forms have been received at their Abuja office and the majority of those who completed the forms reside within the Federal Capital Territory. They said the figure is an improvement on the entries for the last edition of the event held in 2008.

Peter Osamgbi, the Managing Director of Sublime Communications, the race consultants to the Nigeria Police Force, described the increase in the number of entries as an indication that the people

have embraced the call for cooperation by the Police authorities in the fight against crime.

"In the last edition, we had an overall registration figure of slightly over 15,000, so far confirmed that over 20,000 people have completed the forms for this edition. It is a clear demonstration that Nigerians are ready to team up with the Police in combating crime", Osamgbi stated.

He said the race has received bigger impetus for success with the acceptance of Globacom to sponsor the event.

Police Marathon:

Four cars, \$10,000 at stake

Four winners will each smile and drive away in a brand new car in the Glo People Police Marathon scheduled for Abuja on April 25. The four winners will emerge from the male and the female categories from among the people and the police. Mohammed Abubakar, the Chairman of the race organising committee, disclosed that the two prizes have been set aside for the first place finishers from the People and the Police respectively.

"The race is for the people and the Police and what we have done is to offer prizes for the people and the Police, explained Abubakar, who added that "the first Policeman to breast the tape will receive a KIA RIO just as the first Policewoman to arrive the finish point will get a KIA Picanto".

He said the overall top place finisher for men will receive a KIA Rio car while the female winner will receive a KIA Picanto. Second and third place finishers will receive cash prizes of \$3000 and \$2000 dollars each. Globacom is sponsoring the event with N85m.

It is the second city marathon sponsored by the telecommunication outfit that also sponsors the Glo-Lagos International Half Marathon.

Quote of the Day

There will be wahala if Nigeria fails to qualify for South Africa 2010 World Cup, because it's something both the National Assembly and the NFF will not be able to handle.

— Representative Darlington Okereke, reacting to the Super Eagles World Cup qualifier against Mozambique in Maputo. He warned Amodu to find quick replacement for the current Eagles.

INSIDE >>>

Purge in Czech team after tabloid scandal P-54

Porto expose United's frailties P-55

Sports

Woods confident of Masters glory

World number one Tiger Woods believes he can repeat his feat of a Grand Slam of majors and he intends to start with victory at the US Masters.

Woods, going for a 15th major win, tees off alongside Stewart Cink and Jeev Milkha Singh at 1852 BST on Thursday.

"Well, I know I can do it - I've done it before (in 2001)," said four-time Augusta winner Woods.

"It's just a matter of winning the right four at the right time, so hopefully it will start this week."

And asked if he expected to win at Augusta this week, the American simply said: "Always."

Defending champion Trevor Immelman will begin his campaign 11 minutes earlier while Padraig Harrington, winner of the last two majors, starts at 1534 BST with Mike Weir and Ryuji Imada.

USPGA and Open champion Harrington is halfway towards a Grand Slam but Woods has warned the Irishman of the size of his task.

"It's not going to be easy," he said. "I remember trying to do it myself and it's hard to peak four straight times."

"There are a lot of factors that go into it. Having your game come together, playing well at the right time and on top of that getting the right breaks."

"People don't realise, just one gust of wind here or there is a shot that you don't think could cost you the tournament on Thursday, but sometimes it does."

Woods is searching for his fifth Masters victory in his first major appearance since recovering from reconstructive knee surgery.

The 33-year-old underwent the operation after a brilliant play-off victory over fellow American Rocco Mediate at the US Open at Torrey Pines in June, despite playing through severe pain.

Woods underlined his prospects for a 15th major title after victory at the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill last week in only his third tournament of the year.

"The week at Bay Hill was great, to feel that rush and see how my body would react," said Woods. "After months of rehabilitation, it felt great to hit shots."

"It's nice to have a little momentum going into the Masters. The win at Bay Hill validated all the hard work after



It doesn't matter Tiger Woods said and didn't say at his Masters news conference. He will let his game do the talking.

my knee surgery."

Harrington himself has cooled talk of a hat-trick ahead of Thursday's opening round.

"It's certainly adding a bit to the story but it's gotten to the level that adding any more on doesn't make any difference in how I feel," said Harrington.

"It's a chance to win another major. It's a chance to win the Masters. All of those things bring their own pressure, (but) it doesn't make the pressure any different to turning up at any major and trying to win it."

Northern Ireland's Rory

McIlroy tees off in the last group at 1903 BST while Englishman Oliver Wilson is alongside Spaniard Sergio Garcia and Australian Stuart Appleby who tee off at 1556 BST.

And Garcia says that despite Woods' lack of match practice, he is still the player everyone should fear.

"Tiger is always the man to beat, wherever and whenever he plays. I need to regain a little bit of confidence at The Masters and then we will see if I can get it going again," he said.

"Last year I played better but

didn't putt great. I was just at the beginning of my work with Stan Utley, my short-game coach, and Augusta's greens are not the easiest when you're just starting on some new things."

"Maybe I was trying to guide the ball too much to ensure I was in the right spots off the tee. It's better to be a bit loose and that's what I'm going to try to do this year."

"If you try to change your game for Augusta, that is when you start going south. We'll see how it goes, but I'm certainly looking forward to playing it again."



Harrington is bidding for his third consecutive Grand Slam title.

ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL

ABUJA, NIGERIA

Obituary

The Chairman, Abuja Municipal Area Council, Hon. (Dr.) Zaphaniah Bitrus Jisalo and the entire management of the Area Council, announces with heavy heart, the sudden death of Hon. Yohannah D. Panayi at the early hours of Tuesday, 7th April, 2009.

Until his death, Hon. Panayi was the Speaker of the Area Council's Legislative and the Hon. Councilor representing Kabusa Ward. He was aged 39.

BURIAL ARRANGEMENT

- i. Thursday, 9th April 2009 body leaves Garki Hospital to AMAC Legislative Chambers for a mock sitting by Legislators/Hon. Councilors
- ii. Thursday, 9th April, 2009 body leaves AMAC secretariat to family compound, Pyakasa by 9:00am
- iii. Body leaves for ECWA Church Pyakasa by 10:00am
- iv. Final internment at Grave side, Pyakasa by 12:00am

Signed:
Management

Late HON. YOHANNAH D. PANAYI
16th May, 1970 - 7th April, 2009

Sports



Czech football was left reeling yesterday after the sacking not only of the under-performing coach Petr Rada but also six senior players for allegedly cavorting with prostitutes after a World Cup qualifier last week.

Purge in Czech team after tabloid scandal

Czech football was left reeling on Wednesday after the sacking not only of under-performing coach Petr Rada but also six senior players for allegedly cavorting with prostitutes after a World Cup qualifier last week.

Photographs of the players in company with several girls were published in two Czech tabloids after the Czech Republic's 2-1 home loss to Slovakia on April 1.

The scandal added to an upset caused by a lacklustre 0-0 away draw with Slovenia and the loss to the Slovaks, after which Rada fell out of favour with both media and fans.

The association, which fired the entire national team management, has not named a replacement for the 50-year-old Rada, who has won only two out of eight games since replacing Karel Bruckner after Euro 2008. It said it might know more after the next meeting on April 28.

The sacked players are Atletico Madrid defender Tomas Ujfalusi, Galatasaray striker Milan Baros, West Ham defender Radoslav Kovac, Frankfurt striker Martin Fenin, Reading midfielder Marek Matejovsky and Sochaux striker Vaclav Sverkos.

The decision does not necessarily mean a lifetime ban for the players—it will be up to the new coach to decide on their nomination in the future, the association said.

But Ujfalusi, who replaced injured Arsenal midfielder Tomas Rosicky as the Czech Republic captain, is unlikely to reappear after he said late on Tuesday he would end his international career over the scandal.

The 31-year-old said in a statement from his agent on the CTK news agency: "I give up playing for the national team based on the current situation in the Czech Football Association and in Czech media.

It is the result of the situation after the latest qualifying matches," said Ujfalusi, who scored two goals in 78 matches for the national team and appeared at the 2004 and 2008 European championships and at the 2006 World Cup.

Last week's loss to Slovakia all but doused Czech hopes of topping Group Three of the 2010 World Cup qualification. The team, fourth in its group and trailing leaders Northern Ireland by five points and Slovakia by four, is next facing Slovakia in Bratislava on September 5 in the qualification.

Early into the association meeting on Wednesday, former Manchester United, Benfica and Lazio winger Karel Poborsky stepped down as the team's technical director.

He told journalists he was "enraged by the (players') party as well. And captain Ujfalusi's decision to end his international career is unfortunate," Poborsky added.

AC Milan defender Marek Jankulovski, enraged by being mentioned as one of the players at the party which then proved untrue, said he was also contemplating quitting international football.

Ancelotti's options as Chelsea rumours swirl

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti continues to be linked in the Italian and English media with Chelsea despite saying he wants to stay at the San Siro.

The speculation stems from the fact that Milan chief executive Adriano Galliani has said the club must finish third this season for Ancelotti to definitely remain. His Milan contract also runs out in 2010, meaning his future is unclear.

Below are the possible scenarios:

STAYS AT AC MILAN

Ancelotti, Serie A's longest-serving manager having been appointed in 2001, has won two European Cups with his beloved Rossoneri but their failure to challenge in the league since claiming the title in 2004 is starting to weigh on him.

The coach is adamant he wants to stay at the San Siro but he has avoided being too demanding.

"Personally I have never asked for any kind of extension, I have a contract until June 2010 which I intend to respect," he told reporters.

With third-placed Milan four points clear of Genoa with eight

matches left, it looks unlikely that the Rossoneri will miss their target of automatic Champions League qualification.

Having said third place was the aim, it would be difficult for Galliani to change his mind and sack Ancelotti anyway.

Ancelotti does not want to appear a failure and, with at least two new players scheduled to be signed in the close season, he hopes to be able to mould a team that can again challenge at the top of the table and in Europe.



Ancelotti

A contract extension would then look more likely.

STAYS UNTIL 2010, THEN LEAVES

By sticking to his contract he can hold the moral high ground and use the year to survey his options.

Ancelotti has made no secret of his interest in coaching the Italian national team.

Assuming they qualify, Marcello Lippi will lead the Azzurri to the 2010 World Cup but the job could then become available if things go badly for Lippi or he decides to quit as he did when Italy won in 2006 (only to return to the job last year).

Ancelotti would be the standout candidate to replace him. If the Italy job was not free, recent history shows that Chelsea and Real Madrid, both seen as potential suitors in the media, get through managers quickly and an opening may arise.

LEAVES IN MAY, JOINS ANOTHER CLUB

By moving to another club immediately he is likely to gain a long-term contract and an initial feeling of job security.

Interim Chelsea coach Guus Hiddink has consistently said

he will leave in May and return to coaching Russia full-time.

Ancelotti has said that Chelsea have courted him in the past and the media believe the English club are still interested.

Given ageing Milan missed the Champions League this term and were eliminated in the UEFA Cup last 16, he cannot guarantee an improvement in fortunes by 2010 and by then the Chelsea job, and possibly the Real Madrid position, could be taken. There are other reasons why now might be a good time to go.

David Beckham going back to Los Angeles Galaxy before almost certainly returning to the Rossoneri in November will cause difficulties with team selection while Milan's Ronaldinho is looking like he will never recover his Barcelona form of old.

Spanish media reports have said prospective Real Madrid president Florentino Perez has an agreement to buy Kaka.

Galliani has said Kaka is not for sale, but Ancelotti knows Milan nearly sold the Brazilian to Manchester City in January. Inter Milan have again run

away with Serie A this season and with coach Jose Mourinho planning at least four signings to make them more competitive in the Champions League, Ancelotti may wonder how Milan can catch them with a limited budget.

Chelsea and Real have reined in spending too but not to the same degree as Milan. After eight years at one club and having managed only in Italy, he could be tempted abroad.

ANCELOTTI SACKED

If Milan stumble in the last few weeks of the season and finish fourth in Serie A, Ancelotti is likely to be sacked.

Milan have plenty of options to replace him.

Frank Rijkaard, an ex-Milan player and a success as coach of Barcelona, is free and has been linked with them in the media.

Milan's respected sporting director Leonardo has been taking his coaching badges while Cagliari coach Massimiliano Allegri has been talked up as a candidate by pundits.

"Allegri plays the game well and has what it takes to be a great coach," Galliani said recently.

FIFA makes peace with WADA on doping

FIFA reached an agreement Wednesday with the World Anti-Doping Agency in a dispute over rules for drug testing elite soccer players.

The governing body of world soccer said WADA has accepted a plan to limit the number of players who will be required to detail their whereabouts each day during the off-season.

FIFA chief medical officer Jiri Dvorak said team sports like soccer could now target for testing players defined as "at risk"—such as those recovering from injury or who previously used a banned substance.

"We have come to a common agreement," Dvorak told The Associated Press in a phone interview. "If there is any suspicion, then anybody can be tested anywhere at any time."

WADA director general David Howman said soccer and other team sports had not been given special privileges over individual sports where athletes must give details of where they can be tested for at least one hour of every day.

"There has been no difference in the way we have approached this to any other sport," Howman told the AP by phone from WADA headquarters in Montreal. "It was done because they specifically said they would appreciate it."

The peace deal was made possible after Howman offered to fly to Zurich for a meeting at FIFA headquarters, which took place Monday.

Africa's best drop down rankings

Cameroon and Nigeria, the top two African sides in Fifa's rankings, have dropped slightly in the latest tables.

Both have suffered from indifferent starts to the final phase of 2010 World Cup qualifying.

Cameroon were beaten by Togo and Nigeria were held to a draw by Mozambique.

But third-placed Ghana have climbed slightly and Togo and Gabon have shot up the global tables.

Cameroon are now 19 in the Fifa global tables, having dropped three places overall.

Nigeria are down six places to 30, but remain Africa's second-placed team.

Ghana hover one place behind the Super Eagles, having gone up three spots to 31 overall with a narrow win in their most recent qualifying match.

The big winners of this recent round of games are Togo and Gabon.

Togo benefit from their thrilling victory over Cameroon to shoot-up 26 places in the Fifa tables.

Sports

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Porto expose United's defensive frailties

Manchester United's pulsating 2-2 draw with free-running Porto on Tuesday was everything the Champions League aspires to, though United manager Alex Ferguson will wish it had been a more typical first-leg clash.

Porto deserve enormous credit for going to Old Trafford

with a real willingness to attack and they should really have won the match such was their dominance in the first half.

Even after Carlos Tevez had put United ahead five minutes from the end, Porto still refused to sit back and hope their solitary away goal would prove key.

Instead, they poured forward to grab the equaliser through

substitute Mariano, and that was the least they deserved.

United now travel to Portugal on April 15 probably needing to win, something no English team has managed in 11 previous attempts, though a high-scoring draw would also be enough to send them through.

"You have to think the last goal was one we could not afford to lose," said Ferguson. It was a

terrible goal to give away when you are 2-1 up and seeing the game out."

United, who have looked rocky at the back in recent weeks as they lost successive league games to Liverpool and Fulham and needed a stoppage-time goal to beat Aston Villa 3-2, were again all at sea in the absence of the injured Rio Ferdinand.

Johnny Evans, who has

generally been an impressive stand-in at centre back for much of the season, had a night to forget and will be relieved that his catalogue of errors did not lead to more Porto goals.

United's midfield were ineffective for long spells, producing little in attack and looking ragged in preventing Porto's counter-attacks from ripping through the home side's deep-lying defence.

It was all the more surprising coming only a few weeks after they were breaking records for consecutive clean sheets with Ferdinand and Nemanja Vidic being compared favourably with the great Old Trafford centre-back partnerships.

Goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar certainly earned his money on Tuesday, especially in the fiery opening half-hour when Porto scored through Cristian Rodriguez and could easily have had three more.

For all the problems, however, Ferguson will take heart from the steel shown by the likes of substitute Tevez and Wayne Rooney, whose 15th-minute



equaliser came after he showed a striker's instinct to gamble on Bruno Alves's back-pass, then great technique to turn the gift into a goal.

Ferguson said he was delighted to reach halftime level and, despite the late equaliser to make it 2-2, he recognised it was the least Porto deserved.

The result, and the performance, persuaded bookmakers to lengthen the odds on United retaining their European crown, with Barcelona installed as new favourites.

Porto's home record is formidable but will they will risk a repeat of such a high-energy assault on the holders in the home leg when a 0-0 or 1-1 draw would send them through?

That dilemma is a chink in the armour that United will work on and Ferguson, never more effective than when his back is against the wall, will relish the chance to claim another European land.

Messi already the best, says Laporta

Barcelona's Argentina forward Lionel Messi is already the best player in the world, according to his club president Joan Laporta.

Speaking to the Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper, Laporta claimed his Barcelona star will win the Ballon d'Or as soon as his team wins something. "It depends on the results of the team," he said. "But Messi is definitely already the best player in the world because he's a genius."

"Players like him only come around once every 30 years."

Although Messi has been dazzling Spanish audiences and

tormenting La Liga defences for several years, he has yet to be named the best player on the planet.

The consensus opinion is that for a player to win such an award, his team must also be successful.

Last year Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo finished top in both the World Player of the Year and Ballon d'Or polls and the year before it was AC Milan's Kaka—in both cases their team had won the Champions League while the year before that it was Italy's World Cup-winning captain Fabio Cannavaro who scooped the top awards.



Chelsea's Branislav Ivanovic, right, celebrates his goal with Michael Essien, centre, and Solomon Kalou, left, during their UEFA Champions League quarter-final first leg match against Liverpool at the Anfield Stadium in Liverpool, England, yesterday. Chelsea won 3-1.

Barça brilliance turns tables on Bayern

An enthralling first-half display put FC Barcelona within touching distance of the UEFA Champions League semi-finals for the third time in four seasons as FC Bayern München were brushed aside at the Camp Nou.

First-half goals from Samuel Eto'o and Thierry Henry plus two from Lionel Messi ripped through the resistance of a Bayern side who had themselves scored 12 times against Sporting Clube de Portugal in the previous round, comprehensively ending the German club's 100 per cent competitive record against Barça here. Ten years on from their final defeat by Manchester United FC in this stadium there was more misery in Barcelona for Bayern, for whom Hans Jörg Butt made only his second start of the season in goal in place of Michael Rensing. The decision to opt for experience was to no avail as the Liga leaders imposed

themselves at will with all three strikers in dazzling form.

Barça were into their stride from the first whistle and, even before Messi's ninth-minute opener, a lovely interchange of passes between Daniel Alves, Xavi Hernández and Henry allowed the latter to round Butt. Martin Demichelis cleared off the line but the respite was brief for a Bayern defence already deprived of Lucio and Daniel Van Buyten and with a calf injury restricting Philipp Lahm to a place on the bench. Within moments Andrés Iniesta dribbled past Hamit Altintop and Eto'o held off Breno before setting Messi free to slide past Butt for his seventh strike in eight UEFA Champions League matches this season.

The falling rain made the playing surface quick, but Barça's passing and movement were even slicker, and Eto'o duly made it two in the 12th minute. Iniesta and Messi combined again, the Barça No10 picking

out Eto'o's run in time to let the striker slide the ball under the advancing Butt. The carnival atmosphere was dampened slightly when Josep Guardiola was sent to the stands for his protests after Messi went down under Christian Lell's challenge, but in the 38th minute Messi reacted by adding his eighth goal of the competition – becoming its leading scorer in the process – applying the finishing touch to Henry's low cross despite the attentions of three defenders. Three became four when Messi tormented the Bayern defence again and, though he was felled by Mark van Bommel, Eto'o expertly exploited the advantage to help the ball reach Henry. Having scored Barça's 700th goal in UEFA club competition against Olympique Lyonnais on Matchday 8, Henry took the pass and rolled his own 50th UEFA Champions League strike inside the far post.

Perhaps naturally the tempo dipped slightly in the second half as the home side moved the ball around crisply and Bayern worked intensely hard to staunch the flow of goals. Nonetheless it took a wonderful save from Butt to deny Messi his hat-trick; Gerard Piqué's long crossfield pass was controlled perfectly and Lell outspurred before Messi hit a fierce left-footed shot which the keeper parried on to the crossbar and over. After Carles Puyol had denied Bayern even a consolation with a perfect tackle on Zé Roberto, substitute Seydou Keita inadvertently kept the score at 4-0 by blocking Messi's goalbound shot, although Bayern's task in Tuesday's second leg is already sufficiently daunting.

Also yesterday, a Branislav Ivanovic brace inspired Chelsea to a 3-1 win in an open and entertaining first leg of their Champions League quarter-final

tie with Liverpool at Anfield.

The Serb defender, who was only in the side due to the absence of the injured Jose Bosingwa, headed home from identical corners in each half to cancel out an early Fernando Torres opener.

Didier Drogba sealed a magnificent victory for the Blues with a 67th minute strike to put Chelsea firmly in the driving seat ahead of next week's return leg at Stamford Bridge.

Given the competition history between the two sides – including three goalless draws and three 1-0 wins in eight previous fixtures – another cagey, low-scoring affair was expected.

Thankfully, it was nothing of the sort as the two sides – both bang in form heading into the match – took the game to each other to create a free-flowing, entertaining encounter filled with incident.

Adebayor, Fabregas boost Arsenal's trophy chances

The timely return from injury of Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor and captain Cesc Fabregas might just be manager Arsene Wenger's ticket to an elusive Champions League title.

The pair combined beautifully on Tuesday as Adebayor's majestic bicycle kick secured a valuable 1-1 Champions League quarter-final draw at Villarreal, keeping alive the prospect of a semi-final with Manchester United or Porto.

Despite saying on Monday that his side were "super outsiders" Arsene Wenger remains confident in the ability of his young team to get through the return leg on April 15.

Arsenal's last trophy was the FA Cup in 2005, followed a year later by a 2-1 Champions League final defeat to Barcelona in Paris. Wenger hopes to go one better in Europe this time.

"This team has shown the whole season they are mentally very strong and when they have their backs to the wall, these young players always find an answer," Wenger told his club's website on Tuesday (www.arsenal.com).

Adebayor marked his return from a hamstring injury last weekend with a double strike against Manchester City to stretch Arsenal's unbeaten Premier League run to 17 matches.

Both goals in a 2-0 win were created by Fabregas, also making his comeback from a knee injury sustained in December.

Arsenal did well without the pair, and have lost just three times in 28 matches in all competitions, but the return of two players of the highest class is a boost at just the right time.

While their Premier League ambitions are on hold for another season, the prospect of a cup double remains as Arsenal also prepare to face Chelsea in an FA Cup semi-final on April 18.

Injuries to William Gallas and goalkeeper Manuel Almunia took some gloss off Tuesday's result but with Theo Walcott back, and Abou Diaby and Eduardo da Silva nearing fitness, the balance is certainly moving in Wenger's favour.

"With Gallas, it looks quite serious and could be (a) medial knee ligament injury. We will have to assess it... Manuel's is a re-occurrence of an ankle injury, which probably will be a couple of weeks," Wenger said after Tuesday's match.

- ADVERT - 0805 210 0453, 0805 910 0276
- MARKETING - 0805 210 0114, 0805 910 0270, 0805 910 0218
- BUSINESS - 0805 910 0210, 0805 910 0282
- NEWS ROOM - 0805 910 0241, 0805 410 2934, 0805 910 0373

SPORTS Bits

Amodu feels the heat

Nigeria coach Shuaibu Amodu admits that he is feeling the pressure following the Super Eagles 0-0 draw away to Mozambique which has left them two points adrift of Tunisia in the race to the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

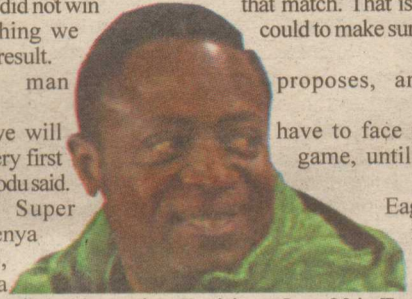
Amodu and his players have faced an unrelenting fusillade of criticism in the wake of that result, which came a day after the Carthage Eagles claimed a 2-1 road win in Kenya, and the coach concedes that the pressure is now on.

"We knew the amount of pressure we would face back home if we did not win that match. That is why we did everything we could to make sure that we got a good result."

"But man proposes, and God disposes."

"Now we will have to face pressure from the very first game," Amodu said.

The Super Eagles next engage Kenya in Abuja on June 6, before facing a potential ticket decider against Tunisia on June 20 in Tunis.



Lagos gets Ndanusa's nod to host U-17 World Cup

Chairman, National Sports Commission (NSC), Engineer Sani Ndanusa yesterday gave the Lagos sub-seat the nod as one of the six centres that would host the 2009 FIFA U-17 World Cup in October.

Ndanusa, who stated this when he received officials of the Lagos State government in Abuja, explained that Lagos has met all the requirements set by FIFA to stage the cadet soccer fiesta.

The minister said he was particularly impressed with the quality of medical facilities being put in place by the Lagos State Government for the World Cup; and urged other states to emulate Lagos State by providing facilities for the development of sports at the grassroots level.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation and Commissioner of Sports in Lagos State, Prince Ademola Adeniji-Adele said they were in Abuja to inform the minister that Lagos State IAAF Super Grand Prix and the African qualifiers for the 2010 FIVB Women's World Volleyball Championship, slated for 5-9 May and 3-7 June, 2010 respectively.

Prince Adeniji-Adele added that the decision of the Lagos State Government to host the two events was borne out of the desire to assist in the nation's sports development, as well as boost tourism in the state.



Zakopalova stuns Serena

Top-seeded Serena Williams absorbed a stunning loss in her opening match at the Andalucia Tennis Experience. Williams, the world's top-ranked player, was KO'd by Klara Zakopalova of the Czech Republic, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, yesterday.

Zakopalova, 27, converted seven break points in dispatching Williams, who lost to 19-year-old Victoria Azarenka last weekend in the final of the Sony Ericsson Open. Ranked No. 95 in the world, Zakopalova prevailed despite committing seven double-faults.

Fourth-seeded Anabel Medina Garrigues advanced to the third round with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Virginia Ruano Pascual. No. 7 Sorana-Mihaela Cirstea survived an upset bid in outlasting Andreja Klepac, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1. Elsewhere in Florida, Alona Bondarenko won 11 of the last 15 games to defeat her sister Kateryna 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the second round of The MPS Group Championships.

The 24-year-old Alona Bondarenko, who is two years older, fell behind 3-1 in the second set after losing the first. She then broke serve the remainder of the set to win. The streak included a 13-deuce game.

The Ukrainians traded games early in the third set and were tied at 3-3 before Alona Bondarenko broke twice and won the final three games.

Alona's win tied the sisters' series at 3-3. They last met in 2006.



Yar'adua's G-20 snub

"I must say that today is a sad day for me. And I think it should be for all Nigerians when 20 leaders of the leading countries in the world are meeting and Nigeria is not there. This is something we need to reflect on. We have the population, we have the capacity and ability.... what do we lack?"

-- President Umaru Yar'adua

The past few weeks have not been good for President Umaru Yar'adua. Over two weeks ago, the media reported the diplomatic bloody nose dealt a Nigerian delegation to the United States, by Mrs. Hilary Clinton, the American Secretary of State. Ojo Maduekwe, Yar'adua's Foreign Affairs Minister had led a delegation, which had Professor Jibril Aminu in tow, to lobby for a state visit to the USA, by Yar'adua. Our president needs the photo-op with President Barack Obama, to underscore the legitimacy of the regime and international acceptance in Washington.

It is obvious that our ruling regime lives in cloud cuckoo land of delusion; it takes itself too seriously, and in the process believes the world shares its opinion of itself. It is rather like the absurd man in the proverb who walks around in a ragged shirt, but believes he is wearing the most expensive silken shirt! The American Secretary of State told Nigeria's high officials to go back to Abuja and get the process of governance up to a level of acceptability to the Nigerian people. They were also reminded of the electoral challenges which dog the administration. Ojo Maduekwe's team, like rain-beaten chickens, returned home unable to secure a date for a state visit to the USA, for President Yar'adua.

The American snub was still sinking-in, when the G-20 summit came knocking last week. Once again, Yar'adua was left out in the cold! Something clearly is wrong; but the problem is not located in our stars. When Yar'adua said it was sad that Nigeria was not even given a look-in, in a gathering which brought leaders from developing as well as the advanced capitalist countries, our president asked Nigerians to reflect on the snub. We agree with him. He went further to remind us that "we have the population"; that is true at over 140million people. Mr. President said "we have the capacity and ability". Well, that is controversial. Then on a final and perhaps, sad note, he asked "what do we lack?" Now this is the biggest question indeed!

I don't know how our president has answered his own interrogation, and that might offer an insight into his mind set; but it is quite likely that his answers to the interrogations might be quite different from those that a rank-and-file citizen would offer, not to talk of the points at the top of the heads of those who organized the meeting in London. They knew "we have the population, we have the capacity and ability" and yet chose to ignore us! So the question that our president chose to end his interrogation is very poignant indeed: "what do we lack?"

The Nigerian people will answer the question without ambiguity, that we lack governance in contemporary Nigeria! Our country today resembles a less-than-air-worthy aircraft on auto-pilot, with a very inexperienced or incompetent pilot at the helm. The perpetual fear of the passengers is of a crash: what with the turbulence; the pilot's inability and the state of the aircraft! And who can deny the fact that President Yar'adua has resembled very much the pilot in this tale, while Nigeria that is practically deficient in all the indices of good governance, is very much like the aircraft that we have described? It is clear to Nigerians, but clearer to those who organized the G-20 summit, that Nigeria is not on the radar of development which makes us a compelling presence in international gatherings to find answers to the problems which face the world today.

Let's look at the basic issues; the world is still unhappy about the deformities which characterize our politics: the electoral process is not acceptable to those looking in from the outside, and they therefore question the legitimacy of our leadership. The controversial electoral reform did not gather the momentum that can instill confidence, because it seems that the government of the day is merely interested in a cosmetic venture that does not have a profound effect on the problems associated with Nigeria's electoral system. If the regime is not seen to be a reflection of the mandate of the Nigerian people the international system cannot be sure of its legitimacy as a partner. This is one of the reasons why our country has dropped from the international circuit; it has nothing to do with the fact that "we have the population". Of course, the world knows that! Is our population an active economic force able to affect the economic fortunes of the world positively? Or are we a nation of a handful of thieves, rich elite and the millions of potential refugees; '4-19ers' and the desperately poor and hopeless?

If this is the situation in our country, and for crying out loud, it is; then why shall we be seen as part of the group to find

THURSDAY COLUMN

with Is'haq Modibbo Kawu

kawumodibbo@dailytrust.com, 08059100368 (SMS only)

solution to problems that face our world? If you are a basket case or are potentially a failed state, then you endanger the health of the international economic and security systems. Our state has become a most frighteningly inefficient contraption: it cannot deliver basic infrastructure to the nation (electricity generation has dropped to about 700mwts in recent weeks); it is unable to secure the most important resource, petroleum products! Bandit groups with formal and informal connections steal about 650,000 barrels of crude oil every day, under the noses of layers of complicit security systems of the Nigerian state. And whichever sector of national life that we examine today, we see the failure of the state and the incompetence of its operatives. So when President Yar'adua asked, almost with an angry exasperation "what do we lack"? He has the answers all around him!

In a sense, I feel sorry for President Yar'adua because it is under his watch that Nigeria is becoming increasingly irrelevant on the international scale. At least under the old despot, Olusegun Obasanjo, there were regular photo opportunities with the international political jet set, which the old dictator lapped up as signs of his, and the country's acceptability. For Yar'adua, mum is the word on the international scene; and the invitation that did not arrive from the G-20, two weeks after the Washington snub of Ojo Maduekwe, tell the story of how irrelevant our country has become. Let's be clear about this, we have truly become very irrelevant on the international scene in the same way that the regime does not generate much hope amongst the Nigerian people.

President Yar'adua was said to have been a left-wing activist in the past, so he should know a thing or two about radical political economy. If he hacks back to what he learnt in his radical days, he will realise that he presides over a criminalised state that is built on corruption and systemic violence. The ruling elite prey on the state and hires criminal gangs to protect prebends; in turn, criminal groups also take their own share of criminalised economic endeavours! The state is very hollow and unable to perform its basic and historical functions, while the citizenry survives anyhow and sees the state as merely an unavoidable nuisance! This is the reality in Nigeria today, and it is no surprise that Ledum Mittee of MOSOP will say that criminal kidnap gangs have come to stay in the Niger Delta! The question that should follow is: where is the state? Our situation today would have intrigued the greatest musician Nigeria ever produced, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Our neo-colonial state is a wretched vehicle, rather like the MOLUE bus on the streets of Lagos and you know something? "OVERTAKE DON OVERTAKE OVERTAKE", as Fela once sang!!! It is no surprise that Nigeria is not welcome at serious forums while President Yar'adua's IV for the G-20 meeting did not arrive; just as we were unable to secure a photo opportunity with President Barack Obama!

Obasanjo's oligarchs fight dirty

In recent weeks, one of the interesting points of discussions in Nigeria has been the almost irreparable damage to the relationship between Aliko Dangote and Femi Otedola two of the most high-profile oligarchs of the Obasanjo regime. While that period lasted, these billionaire oligarchs, like their Russian counterparts during the regime of the alcoholic and clown, Boris Yeltsin, creamed off the best chances in Nigeria. They were inseparable and were a permanent presence in fund-raising efforts of Obasanjo and the PDP. They consolidated their wealth and even entered the Forbes' list which some people celebrated, as if it meant anything to our country that two individuals exploiting their accesses to power have become billionaires just as the Nigerian people became poorer in the eight years of the worst regime in Nigeria's history, Obasanjo's!

Well, today things have turned bitter. A presidential adviser told me that one of these individual arrives the Aso Villa regularly bearing tales about the other, including some of the most scandalous and salacious! It is clear that it is not a good time for Obasanjo's oligarchs but I am not losing sleep! Let them tear at each other for all its worth, and provide even more spectacle to the Nigerian people. They might help us into secrets of whatever they have creamed from the Nigerian people! In future, a patriotic government might take some action on behalf of the Nigerian people.

Post scripts: Achike Udenwa's economic illiteracy

Last week, the press reported that the Minister of Commerce and Industry Achike Udenwa has said that because Nigeria has embraced globalisation, we will no longer protect national industry! Amazing stuff! Where on earth did President Yar'adua pluck such an economic illiterate like Achike Udenwa from?