



We are on the **GO** to building an enduring financial institution.

ib
RC 112876
Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.
Totally Devoted to You.

STAR INTERVIEW

Nigeria is benefiting from TAC

Ambassador Daura

Pages 22 - 27

RENEW YOUR P.O. BOX/PMB TODAY!



NIGERIAN POSTAL SERVICE

NLC survives new labour Bill

The harmonised version of the controversial anti-labour Bill was presented to the Senate yesterday retaining the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), as a central labour union though it gave other trade unions the freedom to federate and form umbrella unions.

The harmonised Bill which will go to President Olusegun Obasanjo for as-

By Isa Sanusi, Senior Political Reporter

sent prohibits strikes in the essential service sectors that include health, education, aviation and water supply while retaining the freedom of workers in other sectors to go on strike on matters that constitute disputes of right.

Chairman of the National Assembly conference committee on the Bill, Senator

Bassey Ewa-Henshaw, said the Bill provides for the democratisation of the labour movement through expansion of opportunities for the registration of federation of trade unions as well as the granting of freedom to employees to decide which unions they wish to belong.

The amended Bill provides that: "No trade union or registered federation of

Contd. on Pg 2

The federal government is to pay a total N99.8 billion to 61 parastatal and agencies as monetisation fringe benefits.

This was contained in a letter dated March 8, from the permanent secretary in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Dr Timiebi Koripamo-Agary, to the Director General, Budget Office of the Federation, in the Ministry of Finance.

The letter which was made available to NAN yesterday in Abuja, stated that

Monetisation gulps N100bn

N99,882,168,397 represented the "screened version" of the figures earlier submitted by the parastatals and agencies.

It noted that the initial amount collated was put at N124.5 billion from the 61 parastatal agencies.

The letter further said that it carried out a screening and arrived at the amount based

on the Appropriation Act, 2004 and the 2005 budget prepared by the affected agencies.

It stated that the Ministry of Labour has submitted the final copy of the estimates to the Budget Office.

The letter also reminded the budget office to be mind

Contd. on Pg 2

NATIONAL CONFAB

Removal of immunity my expectation

President Olusegun Obasanjo has said that the removal of the immunity clause from the constitution is his major expectation from the national political reform conference.

Speaking at a breakfast meeting with the press in London yesterday, Obasanjo said he believes that the conference, convened in February, will remove the immunity

given to corrupt political office holders.

"I believe that it is stupidity to keep that clause. As soon as you are caught committing an offence while in office, you should be charged for that offence," he said.

The president noted that his administration has done a lot in its fight against corruption, pointing out that no administration anywhere in

the world has done so much to fight corruption than his government.

On the recovery of looted funds stashed in Britain, Obasanjo said that the federal government was still talking with the British authorities but lamented that "we are not making as much success as we expected".

"We are working with all

the relevant agencies and we believe that they can do more," he said, while expressing surprise over the difficulty in the repatriation of looted funds.

"It is annoying that these funds cannot be easily recovered even though the man who lodged them had no

known business.

"He was not a farmer nor was he engaged in any industry. He had nothing

other than the fact that he was in government and was

Contd. on Pg 2

... says NASS

sabotages privatisation

President Olusegun Obasanjo has, in a letter to the Senate, accused the National Assembly of trying to create unnecessary bottlenecks to scare away investors and undermine the whole privatisation exercise while rejecting amendments to the privatisation and commercialisation Bill.

By Isa Sanusi, Senior Political Reporter

The president noted that some of the amendments will spell doom for the entire privatisation exercise, pointing out that the amendments were clear cases of interference and encroachment into executive functions by the National Assembly.

The letter read on the floor of the Senate by the Senate President, Adolphus Wabara, yesterday indicated President Obasanjo's rejection of the Bill even as the president appealed to the senate to reconsider its position and amend the Bill by, among other things, deleting the sections considered undesirable in the overall interest of the nation to enable him (Obasanjo) assent to the Bill.

President Obasanjo said in the letter: "A situation where the National Assembly

Contd. on Pg 2



Senate President, Adolphus Wabara



Tunde Araoye here drove into the International Conference Centre, Abuja half naked to display this signboard to delegates at the National Conference... yesterday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

News

CBN approves Sterling Bank group merger

Immunity *Contd. from Pg 1*

only able to help himself," he said.

The president said that even the British attorneys hired by government to pursue the loot "did not help matters because they gave government outrageous bills for their services".

"The lawyers gave us ridiculous bills that showed they worked 18 hours a day,

including Saturdays and Sundays," he added.

Obasanjo disclosed that the government gave up to four per cent of the loot to those who helped in the recovery as an incentive.

"On the whole, we haven't really been on a wild goose chase; some of our efforts have yielded the desired results," he added.

NASS *Contd. from Pg 1*

is given a blanket power under the law to, at its discretion, review or even overturn any action taken or anything done by government in respect of a privatised or commercialised enterprise is, no doubt, capable of undermining and making mockery of the whole privatisation process. In the same vein, a situation where the National Assembly has to investigate, determine and approve before any financial assistance or subvention could be given to a commercialised enterprise by government is, to say the least, an encroachment on executive functions as it amounts to running the affairs of such commercialised enterprises by the National Assembly. This, no doubt, is against the letter and spirit of the principles of separation of powers enshrined in the 1999 constitution."

Obasanjo who in fifteen instances, cited the National Assembly's encroachment into his powers, sounded clearly that the lawmakers have no right to have a say on crucial issues that have to do with the privatisation exercise that include, determining enterprises to be privatised and confirming the appointment of chairman and non-ex-officio members of the National Council on Privatisation.

The president pointed out that amendment to section 30(3) of the Bill empowering the National Assembly to appraise actions of privatised enterprises in the over-riding public interest is "too wide and sweeping which could easily undermine and make a mockery of the whole

privatisation process as well as capable of scaring away investors from participating in the exercise."

"With all due respect, the Senate will agree with me that, a situation where an investor who might have borrowed money from a bank to invest in a privatised enterprise would have to wait for the National Assembly to amend the law establishing that enterprise to give full effect and legal framework before such an enterprise could operate in accordance with its new status is, no doubt, a serious disincentive that will scare away investors from participating in the exercise," the president explained.

President Obasanjo in the letter, rejected "non-inclusion of specific provision for the removal of members of the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) and the Director-General of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE). He then proposed six conditions that includes, 'breach of code of conduct or serious misconduct in relation to duties.

Others are, conviction for felony or any offence involving dishonesty, corruption or fraud and if the president is satisfied that it is not in the interest of the council or the interest of the public that the member should continue in office and the president removes him from office.

The president maintained that to ensure transparency in the conduct of government affairs and to enable him assent to the Bill, all undesirable sections should be deleted. The Sections are, 7(3), 12, 16, 30(2), 30(3), 11(2).

NLC *Contd. from Pg 1*

trade unions or any member thereof shall in the course of any strike action, compel any person who is not a member of its union to join any strike or in any manner whatsoever, prevent aircrafts from flying or obstruct public highways, institutions or premises of any kind for the purpose of giving effect to the strike."

The bill also allows employers to make deductions from wages of every worker who is a member of a trade union for the purpose of paying contributions to the trade union while making membership of trade unions by employees voluntary adding that: "no employee shall be forced to join any trade union or be victimised for refusing to join or remain a member."

President Olusegun Obasanjo last year sent the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill to the National Assembly

seeking the de-listing and de-registering of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and to totally ban strike action by all employees.

The Bill as presented by the President, gives powers to the Minister of Labour to determine which trade unions should federate and to make contributions by registered members of trade unions voluntary.

However, the Nigeria Labour Congress insisted that the amendment of the Bill was motivated by the desire of the federal government to ban NLC as a prelude to its planned mass sack in the federal civil service.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), faulted government's moves to suppress labour movements through the amendment while pointing out that the NLC as it operates, does not violate any international labour convention.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has so far approved two mergers in the banking sector and the first to receive this consent is the Sterling Bank Group made up of EIB International Bank Plc, Prudent Bank Plc, Magnum Trust Bank Plc, NBM Bank Ltd and Trust Bank of Africa Ltd.

The managing director of BGL Securities Ltd, one of the Issuing Houses to the Prudent Bank's N15 billion offer, Mr. Albert Okumagba, who disclosed this on the occasion of the bank's completion board meeting at Ocean View restaurant, Victoria Island, Lagos, said that this scenario posits that Prudent Bank has a good future.

It should be recalled that the CBN also gave a pre-merger consent to Standard Trust Bank Plc and United Bank of Africa (UBA), ongoing merger.

Speaking at the last banker's committee meeting, CBN's director banking supervision, Mr. Ignatius Imala, had said that the apex bank approved the merger because it would not tend to monopoly in the sub sector as the banks concerned will ultimately be about the size of the other two top banks in the system.

Okumagba said yesterday that the apex bank could easily sanction the Sterling bank merger which shows that the banks involved have something going further.

He therefore urged investors to grab the shares when it opens on March 21, 2005, saying that its an offer that should be attractive to deservicing investors.

The managing director of FBN (Merchant Banker), the other Issuing House to the offer, Mr. Adebayo Adeleke, in his comments stated that Prudent Bank Plc has excelled in the area of real estate finance and has reputable institutional investors as its core shareholders, saying

Monetisation

Contd. from Pg 1

ful of the March 31, 2005 deadline to President Olusegun Obasanjo for presentation to the National Assembly.

It noted that more submissions were still being made and that such late submissions should be directed to the budget office and not the Ministry of Labour.

It will be recalled that at a meeting with leaders of some labour unions (NUJ, RATAWU, AUPCTRE), on February 22, the federal government directed the collation of the fringe benefits and its submission to the Budget Office.

Members of the unions had earlier threatened to embark on strike for being left out of the scheme.

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

that this realities should enable it achieve its aim to raise N10 billion through a public offer and the rest by way of rights issue.

According to him, the presence of a stable board of technocrats with the credible management team should be an addendum in facing the

challenges before the bank.

As the bank specified in its prospectus, the proceeds from the offer which is expected to end on April 20, 2005, will be used to upgrade the bank's IT and automated teller machine infrastructure, branch expansion, human capital development and the development of the bank's working capital.

The expectation is that the

offer will put the bank in a strange position in the banking sector consolidation exercise.

It should be recalled that other members of the Sterling Bank Group such as EIB International Bank Plc and Magnum Trust Plc, etc have either gone to the capital market to raise funds through public offers, right issue or private placement.



The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammadu Maccido after delivering his address during the launching ceremony of the National Mosque appeal fund held at the Eagle Square, Abuja... recently.

Pix: Joe Oroye.



Governor Boni Haruna of Adamawa State and the former minister of special duty, Chief Yomi Edu during the launching of the Peter Okocha Foundation held at the Golden Gate Restaurant, Lagos... weekend.

Pix: Joe Oroye.



Senator Emmanuel Ibok Essien, Akwa-Ibom State delegate (right) discussing with Mrs. Elizabeth Pam, elder statesman from Plateau State (left) at the national political conference in Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Imminent volcanic eruption worries Reps

Worried by the looming disaster posed by the imminent volcanic eruption from Lake Nyos in the Republic of Cameroon and the danger it poses to some parts of Benue, Taraba, Adamawa and Cross River States, the House of Representatives yesterday urged the federal government to liaise with the Republic of Cameroon and relevant international agencies to find urgent and lasting solution to the impending disaster.

The House also urged the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), to be more proactive in disaster prevention just as it requested the federal ministry of environment to ascertain the scope and imminence of the explosion of the lake and furnish the House with an immediate report.

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter (Reps)

Also, the House committee on Emergency Preparedness was mandated to liaise with its Cameroon counterparts to fashion out ways in which the accumulated poisonous gas in the lake could be controlled.

Moving a motion on the impending catastrophe, Hon. Temgu Tsega, pointed out that the current volume of gas in the lake amounts to 300 million cubic meters of poisonous carbon dioxide which is over and above the volume that precipitated a similar explosion of the lake in 1986.

He also noted that about 1,800 people died in large scale volcanic eruptions in 1954, 1982, 1985 and 1986, with 843 hospitalised while there was widespread devastation of farmlands

and vegetation in affected areas due to massive emissions of dangerous gaseous substances at very high velocity.

He said that the Adamawa state government has received warning of the impending disaster from Cameroon just as NEMA and its Benue-State counterpart also warned of the imminent explosion in a newspaper publication (ThisDay, February 2, 2005) and reinforced in a letter addressed by the Benue State House of Assembly to its representatives in Abuja.

Stressing the need for urgent action on the matter, Hon. Tsega said that it is better to save the lives of people in the affected areas before the disaster strikes, adding that considering the option of seeking scientific aid through a group of foreign scientists who have said that the problem could be tackled with political will is not out of line owing to the importance and urgency of the matter.

Contributing to the motion, members including Hon Halims Agoda who seconded the motion, Hons. Adeyemi Oluwole, Tambuwwal, Mao Oluabunwa, Adeyanju, Hameed Safara, Datti Baba Ahmed, Dave Salako and Jerry Ugokwe, argued that NEMA and other related agencies in the country should be made to be more pro-active to check the curative rather than the preventive orientation of the country to disasters.



L-R: Chairman, House committee on privatisation and commercialisation, Hon. Celestine Ughanze, Hon. Chuma Nzeribe and Hon. Jeffreys Moses Owor during the Press Conference on public hearing on privatisation and commercialisation in Nigeria held at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja on Tuesday 15th, March 2005. Pbx: Felix Onighinde

Fire razes Makurdi modern market

Tragedy has again struck in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, when on Monday, its multi-billion naira modern market was razed by a mysterious fire outbreak which lasted till yesterday (Tuesday), sparing only a few structures.

As at press time, the cause of the fire outbreak remained a mystery even as the state's commissioner for commerce and industries, Barr. Joe Abaagu, said it may not be unconnected with sabotage.

The fire which began at about 8pm on Monday, spread to all corners of the multi-block facility with all except the administrative section destroyed.

Security personnel at the market said the fire was first noticed at the central line of the market spreading out to all sections before traders and other sympathizers broke in to try their hands at putting it out.

Attempt by the surging crowd to put it out was unsuccessful as all water hydrants provided at strategic points in the market were dysfunctional.

The fire department could not be seen around inspite of all efforts made by individuals to contact them, a development which made it easy for the fire to burn till about 9am yesterday when they arrived with one tanker to put it out.

Meanwhile, *Daily Trust* evacuate goods resulted in a stampede at the narrow gate of the market that night, just as several traders whose shops were not affected, were however unlucky as group of hoodlums took advantage of the situation to loot.

Commerce and industries commissioner, Joe Abaagu, who paid an assessment visit to the market, called for calm and announced that the state Security Council will hold an emergency meeting during which the way forward would be considered.

Meanwhile, former Lagos State police boss, Alhaji

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Markurdi)

Abubakar Tsav, in his reaction to newsmen, said it was unfortunate that several structures put up by past administrations have been left without maintenance and security, a development which he said has made useless all public amenities.

HIV/AIDS: World Bank Withholds Funding for Borno

The World Bank might have decided to temporarily withhold the provision of a credit facility for the fight against HIV/AIDS in Borno state pending the submission of the credentials of the newly appointed state HIV/AIDS coordinator, Ba'aba Abba Goni.

The credit facility, titled "International Development Assistance (IDA) Credit" which reaches up to 32, 000 US dollars per annum is part of the Bank's development assistance to fight the scourge of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Daily Trust reliably learnt

Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (Maiduguri)

that the temporary withholding of the World Bank's funds follows a row at the Borno State HIV/AIDS Project Coordination office of the state's Ministry of Health where the former coordinator, Hajiya Aishatu Galadima, who was removed from her position and replaced with Ba'aba Abba Goni, refused to hand over the affairs of the office to her successor.

Her refusal to hand over generated a lot of disquiet at the health ministry, and she was promptly transferred to the Ministry of Environment

to douse the tension at the HIV/AIDS Coordinating Office.

However, since she was signatory to the accounts of the HIV/AIDS Control Programme in Borno State, the World Bank, working through the Federal Ministry of Finance, decided to stop any funds disbursements to the State until the Borno State governor, Alhaji Ali Modu Sherrif, sends a letter to the bank confirming the appointment of her successor to avoid any problems with regard to funds use.

In an interview with *Daily Trust* in Maiduguri yesterday,

By Tadaferua Ujorha, Asst Editor, (Weekly)

tion in honour of late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, made these comments yesterday morning at a press briefing at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja.

Elaborating further on the matter, he opined that "the opinion poll has shown that two-thirds of Nigerians feel that the 2003 elections were partially honest. Less than half of Nigerians in 2003 felt that the elections were hon-

est." He also showed that 84% of respondents from the south-south and south-east felt that the elections were dishonest. His words, "how long can a democracy prevail if eight or nine out of ten persons feel that the elections were dishonest. If people believe they are stuck with a government they cannot do anything about, then how will such a people go forward?" He also showed that respondents in the far north where elections held to some degree, exhibited some level of belief in the political system, whereas in places like the Niger-Delta where elections hardly held, the respondents indicated a marked loss of interest in the political system."

Dr. Peter Lewis, who is an associate professor at the School of International Service, American University, Washington DC, has studied Nigeria's political development over the years and has connections with Nigeria which goes back to 1983 when he monitored the elections of that year. He applauded INEC by stressing that there were marked improvements in the functions of INEC in the 2003 elections. His words, "there were dramatic improvements in the functioning of INEC.

Basic education for all by 2015 still elusive - Prof Tahir

The executive secretary, Universal Basic Education (UBE), Professor Gidado Tahir, has expressed fear that the commission may be unable to meet the 2015 target for qualitative basic education for all because of what

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent, (Katsina)

our dream of providing free education for all with all its attendant implications in terms of increased infrastructural facilities and infrastructure.

He pointed out that the UBE Act requires the major implementers i.e. the state and local governments, to not only provide the necessary funds or apply stringent measures in the management of resources, but have the extra responsibility of forging enduring and beneficial partnership with NGO's, CBO's, FBO's who will not only bring supportive funding but give the needed technical expertise that can at all times, reflect the changing innovations and best practice worldwide.

Outlining other problems hindering the successful execution of the programme, Professor Tahir identified lack

of adequate teaching and inspectorate staff, insufficient infrastructure and instruction materials and paucity of accurate data for planning.

Tinubu wants Ngige to join AD

The Anambra state governor, Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige, has emerged a beautiful bride with no few than four political parties wooing him to join them.

The latest moves came yesterday when the Lagos state governor, Asiwaju Bola Ammed Tinubu, led the AD (Alliance for Democracy), national team to Awka where they presented a blank registration card and party manifesto to Ngige, urging him to join the party.

Tinubu in his speech declared his government and party's support for Ngige, lamenting that he has suffered untold hardships in the hands of those he described as cabals in the PDP.

By Beautrice Onuchukwu, Freelancer (Awka)

Tinubu also led the team comprising Lagos state officials, national executive council and Anambra state chapter of the AD to the lodge, and urged governor Chris Ngige to join the AD by declaring the motive of his visit to the governor.

The Lagos state governor who arrived at about 12.45pm in a black jeep with LASG 01, declared that he and members of his government have come on a solidarity visit.

He noted that with Ngige's expulsion from the PDP, the party has totally fallen into the hands of *Baracudas* who will lead the party to its final destruc-

tion. Presenting the party's documents to Ngige, the national secretary of the AD Mr. U.J. Yohanna, described Ngige as a beautiful bride and a democrat in character, he said "you are writing history. You are not purchasable."

Ngige in his response said that the struggle in Anambra state is the fight between light and darkness, assuring that light must surely triumph over evil. Already series of meetings where the decision of this dastardly plot were taken had been held in Enugu. Chief Uba had already left the country for safety with this family to give the impression that he has no hands in the latest plot.

News

Al-Mustapha's trial stalled

The trial of Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, former Chief Security Officer (CSO), to the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha, was on Monday stalled before the Ikeja division of the Lagos high court as two of the defence counsels withdrew from the case.

Although the case was fixed for both Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 March, 2005, the trial judge, Justice Kayode Oyewole adjourned further till 4th May, this year, to enable the two accused persons to get their lawyers.

The two accused persons who were not represented by lawyers at Monday's sitting are CSP Rabo Lawal, former officer incharge (OC), Mobile Police (Mopol), Aso Rock and James Danbaba, former Commissioner of Police, Lagos state.

Specifically, Barrister Abdul Fatai Alao Thomas had since stopped appearing for James Danbaba following the walk-out action on the judge by the accused person.

Al-Mustapha—former CSO to late General Sani Abacha, General Ishaya Bamaïyi, former Chief of Army Staff (COAS); Colonel Jibrin Yakubu, former Military Administrator (MILAD), Zamfara state; James Danbaba, former CP, Lagos state and CSP Rabo Lawal, OC Mopol, Aso Rock, are all being charged with the attempt on the life of Mr. Alex Ibru, the *Guardian* publisher sometimes in 1996.

It would be recalled that all the accused persons escaped contempt charges on the last

From Adelanwa Bamigboye & Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondents (Lagos)

adjourned date—February 25 when the trial judge ruled on the walk-out action of the accused persons.

The accused persons had earlier staged a walk-out on the court to protest alleged refusal of the court to grant all their applications

especially their prayers that the trial judge (Kayode Oyewole) should disqualify himself from trying them on the grounds that he was biased.

In the opinion of the court, the action of the accused persons was unbecoming and contrary to section 133 of the Criminal Code which is punishable with three (3) months imprisonment.

Union wants discontinuation of pension deductions

The National Union of Civil Engineering, Construction, Furniture and Wood Workers (NUCECFW), has urged employers in the sector to desist from making pension deductions from their salaries or face the wrath of the workers.

The Federal Government had in 2004, enacted a law to harmonise the pension schemes for private and public sector workers, replacing both with a single contributory pension scheme.

"The vital aspects of the Act are not in place," Mr Babatunde Liadi, NUCECFW's general secretary said in a statement, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria in Lagos.

Liadi said that the government is yet to put in place structures and Pension Fund Administrators, stressing that they ought to be in place before deductions were made from workers' salaries.

He faulted the Act, regretting that the National Assembly hastily enacted the law without incorporating the inputs of workers' representatives at a public hearing in Abuja.

"The NLC and indeed all Labour centres in the country had jointly and severally opposed the Act as there was no need for the government to interfere in the private sector pension scheme which was already working," he said.

Liadi also faulted the directive by some employers' associations to their members to implement the provisions of the Act when it is being challenged at a Federal high court by private sector industrial unions.

Plateau needs N10bn to reclaim mining sites

The Plateau state government is shopping for N10 billion to claim all lands devastated by past mining activities in the state, Chief Joshua Dariye, said in Jos yesterday.

He told a visiting House of Representatives Committee on Environmental Affairs that a large part of the state's farmlands have been ruined by past mining activities leaving behind large ponds and gullies.

Already, governor Dariye said the federal government has so far released N1.6 billion as ecological funds to the state to tackle the problem and solicited more assistance from the federal government to combat the devastation.

Chairman of the House Committee, Hon Dayo Oguniyi, said the committee was in Jos to look into the ecological funds released to the state and how it has been utilized, pointing out that the exercise was part of its oversight functions, and that the committee has already visited 27 other states in the country on a similar exercise.

Meanwhile Plateau state is to benefit from a free medical service to be offered by the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), under its Integrated Medical Mission.

Regional director of CBN Africa, Mr. Felix Osamoja, said at a courtesy call to governor Dariye, that Plateau state was chosen for the Medicare along with three other states in the North central zone of the country.

From Jibril Daudu, Regional Editor (Jos)

Mr. Osamoja said the CBN will partner with the Plateau state government to bring succor to the less privileged in the state through its humanitarian services which he said included the provision of potable water, women empowerment, medicare to children, especially AIDS orphans.

... state 'varsity gets first VC, registrar

The Plateau State University instruments establishing it were signed into law last week by the state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, got its pioneer vice chancellor yesterday with the appointment of Professor John Wokton Wade, to the post.

The governor also appointed Mr. Joseph Lasuk Fomwul as the first registrar of the university billed to commence lectures in October, this year.

A government statement by the permanent secretary, press and public affairs, Mr. Ezekiel Dalyop, stated that the governor appointed the two principal officers of the university in exercise of his powers as contained in the third schedule of section 13, subsection 9(1)(a) of the law, establishing the university which he signed last week.

Fire guts Al-Bashir's residence

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

The Pan-African Leadership League (PALL), a non-governmental organization (NGO), in Kaduna, has written to express sympathy with veteran journalist, Malam Abdulkarim Albashir, over the fire incident that gutted his house last week.

The statement signed by PALL executive director, Mr. Stephen Achi, made available to newsmen in Kaduna, said the fire completely destroyed his Malali residence in spite of the spirited efforts by the state and Kaduna Polytechnic fire services.

Malam Albashir who is a *Weekly Trust* columnist lost everything in the fire including a rich reference library, but no lives were lost and none of the occupants was hurt.

The statement also called on the Senate to withdraw the *House of Boycotting Governor* after the statement he made that their inefficiency necessitated the convening of the national conference.

"The Senate should refrain from actions that will portray it as a dictatorial outfit. Anybody occupying a political position under a democracy that is tolerant of criticisms does not deserve to be in that position.

"In any case, many Nigerians have negative views about the attitude of the Senate in particular which does not seem to have a mind of its own on key issues like the House of Representatives. It has not been credible in its handling of key issues and most Nigerians have come to believe that the Senate is a rubber stamp."

Commissioner, 4 others face court over N68.2m fraud

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

Suspended Kogi State commissioner of education, Chief James Akor and four others named in the N136 million scam that rocked the ministry last year, were yesterday dragged before a Lokoja high court.

Chief Akor, along with the permanent secretary in the ministry, Muhammad Koto Abdullahi, executive secretary, scholarship board, Mrs. Roseline Alikua Awodi, the accountant of the board, Mr. Zacheous Momorabe and one Margaret Oluwashola allegedly misappropriated the money meant for the bursary allowance of students of Kogi state origin in institutions of higher learning.

According to the Police First Information Report (FIR), the accused persons were in court for offences of criminal conspiracy, criminal misappropriation, theft and dishonestly receiving money not due to them among other

charges contrary to sections 97, 309, 287 and 122 respectively of the penal code.

The solicitor-general of the state, Abdul Awulu, in his application, noted that whereas the accused persons committed the offences in March, 2004 and were arrested on or about the 18th day of November of the same year, they were not charged and that it is expedient to have them tried in the interest of justice.

All the accused persons pleaded not guilty to the eight count charges and were granted bail by the presiding judge who is also the state's chief judge, Justice Umaru Eri, on the payment of the sum of

N1,000 each. The case was subsequently adjourned to 13th of June for further hearing.

The accused persons it would be recalled, were indicted by the report of the state security services which were called in by the state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris to investigate the alleged scam.

According to the report, the foursome misappropriated N68.2 million out of the N136.8 million released to them by the state government.

Following this discovery, the accused persons were suspended from office and handed over to the police for prosecution.



L-R: HRH, Alhaji Najib Hussaini Adamu, Emir of Kazaure, Alhaji Suleiman S. Baffa and Bashir Mohammed Gumel, all delegates from Jigawa State putting heads together during the sitting of the National Political Reform Conference in Abuja ...recently.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

BPE: el-Rufa'i may face Repts c'ttee again

From Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i, may again appear before an investigative panel of the House of Representatives in his capacity as the former director-general (DG), of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), to explain the failure of President Olusegun Obasanjo's poverty alleviation policy, "privatization share for share loan schemes," which is yet to take off since 2002.

The chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Privatization, Hon. Celestine Ughanze, disclosed this yesterday while briefing newsmen on the committee's investigative hearing slated to kick-off Thursday, March 17, 2005 in Abuja.

Hon. Ughanze listed the BPE which was mandated by the National Council on Privatization to implement the scheme, Denham Management Limited, a Lagos-based firm which was allegedly brought into the deal by the BPE Image Craft, Standard Trust Bank (STB) and Gulf Bank as parties to appear before the committee to explain the roles they played in the scheme before

it was scuttled.

The privatization share for share loans scheme, according to Hon. Ughanze, was one of the policies of the Obasanjo administration aimed at alleviating the sufferings of Nigerians.

In his words: "The scheme was to have made N10,000 available to any Nigerian who could not ordinarily afford to partake in the privatization exercise to do so. The federal government naira while Gulf Bank and STB were to raise six billion naira in collaboration with other interested parties for the scheme which should have benefited millions of Nigerians."

He disclosed that the involvement of "an interloper," Denham Management Limited, as consultants to the scheme raised suspicions because payments from the contract money was allegedly being made to it in dollars on the authority of the BPE without any visible performance or progress on the take-off of the scheme.

"Instead of allowing the banks (STB and Gulf), to

handle the scheme as agreed, a company (Denham) suddenly entered the picture and collected a sum total of N2 billion from the funds without delivering anything to the scheme," he said.

He said that one of the aims of the public hearing is to determine the significance of Denham in the scheme, "because there was no need for any interloper or third party in the contract. This is a scheme that would have made many Nigerians millionaires by 2010 had it been properly implemented. But Nigerians who were scuttled the scheme will be identified at this hearing."

While promising to see the matter to a reasonable conclusion to enable the House take a definite stand on the matter, Hon. Ughanze, however, decried the habit of many agencies in the country that go into contract agreements without the knowledge and approval of the ministry of justice.

"These are very serious issues," he charged, "because it is worrying and sad that people scuttle projects meant to benefit the poor and collect huge sums of money without delivering."



Today!

Road empty

Join the wise Investors

ACB International Bank Plc offers for subscription

25,000,000,000

Ordinary Shares of 50k each at 80k per share
Payable in full on application

Offer opens 2 March and closes 31 March 2005

Joint Issuing Houses



FBN Merchant Bankers Limited



WAL Bank Plc



ACB International Bank Plc

...stronger than ever

RC 453

url: [http:// www.acbibank.com](http://www.acbibank.com)

Read the prospectus and consult your stockbroker, accountant, banker, solicitor or any other professional adviser for guidance

NEWS

National Confab...

National Confab...

National Confab...

Appoint IGs through proper means —Usman Farouk

Former governor of old Northwestern state, Alhaji Usman Farouk, says that security will continue to elude the country unless government stopped violating the constitution in appointing the inspector General of Police.

Speaking at the national political reforms conference, Farouk, who is on the federal government's delegation, said the constitutional provision that says tribal leanings should not be considered in appointing the police boss was being violated.

He was not categorical on the specific Inspector-General whose appointments had tribal connection.

Farouk said a police boss is so influential and powerful that his character and affiliation would shape the behaviour of the entire force. Thus, he said, if ethnic affiliation was considered in such appointments, the force would be sleazy in civil defence.

The insecurity problem of Nigeria will continue to be with us—murders, armed robberies and other crimes—unless the head of State, Mr. President and other relevant agencies appointing the head of Police, Customs and Immigration, comply with the

Ex gov, Goni, asks FG to settle foreign debt

A Borno State delegate to the national political reform conference, Alh. Muhammadu Goni, has called on the federal government to stop playing to the gallery and pay up its foreign debts.

Goni suggested that government draws up from the oil windfall savings to defray part of the accumulated loans.

Speaking yesterday, the delegate said debts are responsibilities that must be taken care of.

"If you incurred loans, you have to pay, they are not a matter of fiction, they are facts. Our debts are not going to be written off," he said.

Goni argued that without defraying the loans Nigeria may remain stagnant.

He said since part of the conditions of debt relief was to devote funds to infrastructure, government must toe this line to indicate sincerity.

Stories By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter

provisions of the constitution of Nigeria in making the appointment.

"The constitution of Nigeria regarding the appointment of the IG and Heads of other security agencies, stipulates that no seniority or tribal leaning will play a role in the appointment of the top echelon. This is because the head of these organisations over 60 percent of the charisma of the force," he said.

Farouk, who was cut short by the conference chairman, Niki Tobi, because his time was up, gave an example with Chief Sunday Adewusi who was IG in the Second Republic as one whose appointment was not ethnic-based.



Alhaji Sa'udu Barda, Katsina delegate (l) discussing with Isaac Shaahu, Middle Belt Forum (MBF) Benue delegates (r) during the sitting of the national Political Reform Conference held in Abuja yesterday.

Ex-Generals against regional military

Two former military officers, retired General Victor Malu and Geoffrey Ejiga have said that there was nothing wrong with the set up of the Nigerian Armed forces, warning that regional military would be a misnomer.

Both Malu and Ejiga spoke yesterday in Abuja at the on going national political reform conference. They said politicians and government of the day were the bane of the military.

Malu, who was former Chief and Commander of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), said advocates of regional military were misinformed. "There is nothing wrong with the establishment and the structure of the armed forces. There is nothing wrong about how the armed forces is run I am in a position to say this comfortably. I commanded

the Nigerian Army and I did not have any dissent from any part of my command. From the one located in Sokoto in the Northwest and elsewhere. I also have the singular honour of commanding troops from 20 West African countries.

Malu said though the West African troops came from diverse backgrounds, they operated under the Nigerian command without any hitches.

The ex-army chief said though the military had overstepped its bounds in the past, there is no reason to doubt its effectiveness as a single entity for Nigeria.

Malu said he was disappointed with a delegate who canvassed for an army, navy and airforce of equal strengths, explaining that the three had their separate purviews out of the collective duty of protecting Nigeria's sovereignty.

Malu also faulted critics of

the military, saying the institution has remained the only beacon of integrity for Nigeria.

"If the armed forces of Nigeria is bad as people try to say, they are made bad by the government of the day," he said.

Ejiga who had earlier pointed out that the military reflected a good image for the country, was, however, booed by the delegates.

He accused the political class of abusing their powers over the military by deploying the armed force personnel to monitor election duties.

Ejiga said the level of military movement in elections as witnessed in the 2003 polls was unprecedented. This, he said, must not occur again. Issues concerning security also got the attention of Alhaji Habibu Aliyu and Usman Faruk among other delegates.

Aliyu, a Bauchi state

delegate, lamented the decay in the police force which he said was brought about by poor funding and neglect. He suggested the introduction of a security tax to augment government funding of the police.

Speaking on judicial reforms, Barrister Bon Nvimma said the judiciary must have its own police as an enforcement section, otherwise court pronouncements would continue to be disregarded.

He also called for separation of the office of the attorney general and that of the minister/commissioner for justice.

Mr. Douglas Acholonu faulted the indigene/settler dichotomy, advocating a citizenship in which a person that lives up to five years in a

place could be regarded as an indigene.

"Its right and proper for any Nigeria living in a place to assume indigeneship after five years of living there. No Nigerian should be a foreigner within the complex we live in today," he said.

Other who spoke harped on improved funding for agriculture through the provision of fertiliser, rural who spoke roads, insurance against seasonal disasters and prevention. The delegates include Dr. Hassan Adamu. Yerima Abdullahi and Isa Mohammed.

Oil exploration in the Lake Chad basin, Sokoto basin and Benue through also featured yesterday. Isyaku Jikan Toro and Suleiman Usman called for resumption of oil search in these areas.

Gombe delegate wants ACF, Afenifere, others scrapped

A Gombe state delegate to the national political reform conference, Alhaji Abubakar Mu'azu Hassan, has called for the dissolution of all sectional and ethnic groupings in the country as a way to hastening genuine national unity.

Hassan said ethnic and regional groups like the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Afenifere and Ohaneze, among others, were part of the problems facing a united Nigeria.

Speaking in Abuja at the on going conference, the delegate also argued that formation of such groups were informed by desperation for power by those who lost out.

"Regional groupings should be abolished. That's

the ACF, Ohaneze, Middle Belt Forum, etc. Because if you look at leaders of these groups, most of them were leaders who served in various capacities, but they didn't do anything to their communities and the society.

"Its after they lost out that they will come back and regroup so that they can form pressure groups to oppose the government or somebody that's not in government and whom they don't want to be there.

"I believe we don't want to inherit that enormity because we believe in one Nigeria and this groupings are not helping matters. So I am of the view that this conference should come up with a provision that will abolish such groups." Hassan said.



L-R chief Martin Elechi, Ebonyi state delegates, HRH, (Dr.) Agom Eze also Ebonyi state delegate and Nze Ozchukwu F. Chukwu, PDP South-East delegate discussing during the National Political Reform Conference in Abuja yesterday.

NEWS

NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB...

Abdullahi Ibrahim heads 50-member biz c'ttee

Former Minister of Justice and attorney general of the federation, Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN), has emerged chairman of a 50-member business committee of the national political reform conference.

Ibrahim, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), is leader of the Kogi state delegation to the conference. He was minister between 1998 and 1999 during the regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar.

His appointment was announced at the end of yesterday's session by chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi.

By **Habeeb I Pindiga,**
Political Reporter

Secretary of the conference, Rev. Farther Mathew Kukah, is to be secretary of the committee, while Chief Emeka Anyaoku is deputy chairman.

Members of the committee include Dr. Zaiyau Abdullahi, Ambassador Hasan Adamu, Chief RA. Adebayo, Peter Adebisi, Mammam Adoju, Senator Mike Ajegbo, Prince Bola Ajibola, Prof. Nuralkali, Chief Afe Babalola, (SAN), D. U. Basharu, Olurufunmi Bashorun, Alhaji Magaji Danbatta, Alhaji Halilu Dantiye, Barrister Oronto

Douglas and Ben Duntoye.

Others are Francesca Emanuel, Emmanuel Essien, Joy Ezeilo, Prof Jerry Gana, Chief Barnabas Gemade, Ibrahim Hassan, Audu Idris, Alhaji Mohammad Ibrahim Hassan, Prof. Joy Irukwu, Prof. Attahiru Jega, Alhaji A. Jidda, retired General Abdullahi Bagudu Mamman, Comrade Mahmud Nasir, Chief Nduka Obaigbena and John Odeyemi.

Also in the committee are retired General Samuel Ogbemudia, Bayo Ojo (SAN), Chief Femi Okunnu, Senator Femi Okunronmu, Oba Olateru Olagbegi, Olufemi Olajugba, Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire, Comrade Adams Oshiomole, Mrs. Elizabeth Pam, Chief Isaac Shaahu, Mrs. Nkoyo Toyo, Alhaji Auwal Tukur, retired General Jeremiah Useni, Chief F. T. Williams, Prof. Nuhu Yakubu and Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf.

Also yesterday, the conference decided that chairman and deputy chairman of various committees yet to be composed would be selected by the members of each of the committees.

Earlier, vote was taken on whether the secretariat will do the appointment or whether members should exercise their discretion. The vote was 182 against 70.



L-R: Dr. Enyantu Ifenne, women group delegate from Northcentral, Dr. Ignatius Ijegwa Adaji NACCIMA delegate from North central and Chief Stephen Oto, Benue state delegate exchanging views during the sitting of the National political reform conference in Abuja ...Monday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Tit bits

By **Emmanuel Bello**

When the AC's stopped

Proceedings on Monday was very tasking for delegates. The air conditioners stopped working several hours leaving the distinguished to use hand fans and papers to blow in some needed cool air. The hall became stuffy and most of the delegates expressed their discomfort in various ways: Shuffling of feet, frequent visit to the loo, moving around the aisle and silent protests. A delegate informed his colleagues that it was the sacrifice they have to make in order to "feel what majority of Nigerians are experiencing." Some one said if there was no food for the delegates, they might then "feel" what many country man are going through better.

Brisk business for photographers

Nigerians can survive against odds. For the crowd of photographers who came to the International Conference Centre, Nigeria's many ills was the farthest thing on their mind. Armed with camera of various shapes, they have captured all delegates in portrait photographs (16 x 20 frames). A delegate complained that his photos are on display everywhere at the centre. Some popularity can come effortlessly.

Tobi can be tough too

And he showed his fangs when a delegate annoyed him, protesting that his (the delegate's) name was missing on the list before the chairman. A visibly angry Tobi loudly (just too loud) ordered the man to come forward. Even a headmaster couldn't have done a better job of intimidation. The frightened distinguished just sulked away into the pews. Better not to hazzle the boss.

Well done, Muazu

The young and vibrant delegate from Gombe state spoke so fearlessly everyone feared for his safety. But thanks to OBJ whose reassuring "discuss not in fear" kept everyone buoyed on his conviction. Mu'azu said things most people won't say: ban ACF, Ohaneze etc, throw away recycled leaders; forget old and decrepit leaders and put them in an association of failed ex-leaders whose major role in the country will be advisory. Not to worry, Muazu left the hall unmolested.

Overzealous security men (and women)

Dressed in black with menacing exteriors, security operatives at the confab are a case study in the horrible days of the military junta dictatorship. It is not even easy to tell who is a secret agent from officials at the conference secretariat. They all seem detached, watching you from a distance and giving you a crawling feeling down the spine. Passing through them at the entrance is also an experience in espionage as both delegates and pressmen go through frisking and questioning. According to Shehu Sani, a delegate, we should be glad these are not the dark days when conferees will disappear after sessions the Yar'adua way, he said.

Apologies won't do

Well, the military didn't apologise after all. So says Jerry Boy (Useni) who said that soldiers who apologised at the conference did so on their own. He's probably right because some delegates were beginning to bore every one with confessions as if we were at a catholic mass. Father Kukah is in attendance, we know. But he's there not as a priest but as a scribe. So spare us all the repentance, please.

Stop recycling old leaders -Delegate urges

A delegate to the ongoing national political reform conference (NPRC), from Gombe state, Alhaji Abubakar Hassan, has advocated an end to the recycling of "past and old leaders" in the country.

Making the call in his submission on general comments on the terms of reference of the NPRC yesterday in Abuja, Hassan blamed the current problems facing the

country on "the old brigade recycling themselves in power".

"I want the conference to recommend measures that will stop the recycling of these category of persons from further usurpation of power from the youths of this country. In fact, they should be banned for life from either contesting an elective position or accepting any leadership appointment in the future," he suggested.

According to him, this category of individuals were mostly not interested in bequeathing a worthy leadership legacy to upcoming generations.

Hassan also recommended that government should establish a committee for past leaders to be advising and guiding incumbents "honestly and sincerely" in the interest of the nation.

Similarly, the youth leader suggested that government should pardon those who looted the country's treasury so as to encourage them to repatriate the money home for national development.

He said that countries including the US, Britain,

France, Germany, Spain, Japan, Sweden and the Netherlands should be prevailed upon to ban identified corrupt Nigerian leaders from visiting or engaging in any form of business activities with their citizens.

Hassan explained that the measure will discourage others from looting and transferring public funds overseas and help halt the cankerworm since there would be no safe ground across the globe for them.

We are functional at confab -AD

The Alliance for Democracy (AD), delegates to the ongoing national political reform conference (NPRC), said yesterday in Abuja that they were functional at the event.

Speaking against speculations of being expelled from the NPRC, a delegate of the party, Prince Olusegun Adesegun, announced on the floor of the conference that they were never expelled.

"I want to assure AD members worldwide that the party is not only being represented at this conference, but the two delegates have been making contributions," Adesegun said.

The party had nominated Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan, a one time minister of power and steel from Gombe state from the North and Adesegun from the South.

Adesegun emphasised that: "We were never driven out at any stage of the conference," contrary to widespread speculations that the AD has been absent.

In his contribution on general comments on the terms of reference of the NPRC, Chief Ason Bar, a retired civil servant from Benue state, called for the re-introduction of short, medium and long-term economic development plans as envisaged by the late Gen. Sani Abacha to reposition the country.

Make university education three years -Delegates

As a way to tackle the problems in the education sector, a delegate from Borno state Mohammed L. Buba, has advocated the return to the HSC system and the need to make university education three years. He said that most of the university undergraduates are not matured and thus cannot cope with the pressure of the life after school.

He also submitted that primary education should be left to the local governments while secondary schools should be run by state governments. A substantial percentage of the state funds should also be devoted to the pursuit of qualitative education, he said.

Others who spoke on the education sector reform also pointed out that higher levies charged by school authorities are also eroding the standards of learning. Mallam Abdulkareem Yahaya from Zamfara state who made the observation, said that "the high levies are stopping parents from taking their wards to unity schools. Almost daily, children come back from schools with one levy or another from school

By **Emmanuel Bello,**
Reporter

masters," he said.

In his own contribution to the issue, former ASUU president, Dr. Attahiru Jega, said that government attitude towards education is not encouraging considering that "Nigeria is the only country that provides the least financial allocation to education. It is the lowest even in the third world," he said.

Traditional institutions, agents of disunity -Shehu Sani

A civic rights activist and delegate to the national conference, Malam Shahu Sani, has described the nation's traditional institutions as agents of disunity that must be done away with.

"I strongly suggest that we abolish traditional institutions in this country. They are agents of disunity. Each time you have a military coup in this country they are the first to pay courtesy calls. Nowadays, traditional titles have become commercialised in this country," Sani said yesterday at the conference.

He claimed that if the institutions were scrapped, re-

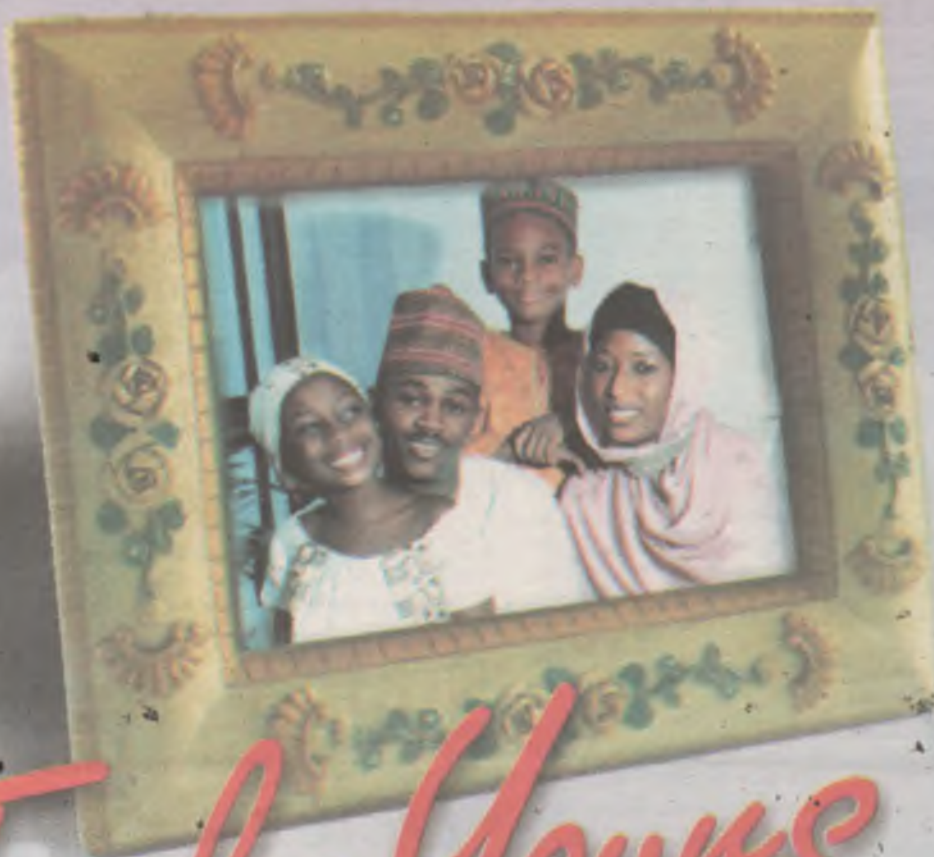
gional and ethnic groups will also not find place in the nation.

"If we will do away with traditional institutions, all these calls by Afenifere, Ohaneze Ndigbo (and Arewa Consultative Forum) will come to an end," he said.

Sani also called for compensation to families of those who lost their lives in the struggle for democracy.

He lamented the overcrowded prisons in the country and called for reforms in that sector.

The Kaduna prison, he said, was established in 1915 for 200 inmates but now contains 2000 prisoners even though it has not been extended.



Truly Yours,
for you and your children

Finally, the one you've been waiting for.

Intercity Bank Plc.

OFFER FOR SUBSCRIPTION OF

6,968,034,416

ORDINARY SHARES OF 50KOBO EACH AT

₦1.90 PER SHARE

● Offer Opens on Thursday, 03 March 2005 ● Offer Closes on Thursday, 31 March 2005

Application forms available at all branches of Intercity Bank Plc, all banks and stockbrokers nationwide

● Please consult with your Banker, Stockbroker, Accountant, Solicitor or any other Professional Adviser.

ISSUING HOUSES:



INVESTMENT BANKING & TRUST COMPANY LIMITED
INC. 121011



VETIVA

CAPITAL MANAGEMENT LIMITED
INC. 402004



Intercity Bank Plc.
totally at your service

Head Office:

1, Intercity Bank Street, Plot C 20 Mogadishu City Centre, Off Ahmadu Bello Way,

P.M.B. 2392 Kaduna. Tel: 234-62- 240344 - 7 (4 Lines). Fax: 234-62-240348.

e-mail: info@intercitybank.com website: www.intercitybank.com

Opinion

PDP: Ogbeh's successor as 'the last Imam'

By Sunny Orumen

It was the late Bola Ige who once described the PDP as an NTA Tuesday live programme anchored by Cyril Stober as a car with knocked engine. This wordsmith also described the AD (the party he belonged) as a car without a driver and the then APP as accidented car. That was before the political space was deregulated and more players came on board like the downstream sector of the oil industry. Since the political prophet spoke and more than five years later PDP has not been able to sort out its knocked engine - no assessment of damage, no repairs. The late Ige saw early enough that PDP lacked internal cohesion. If a car engine knocks, the component parts work at cross-purposes even as all of them are held together in the metal casing. That has been the story of PDP. The birth of PDP from the G 18 and later G34 conception is too familiar to be repeated here. The party is reported to be the largest in Africa and also the most unruly. The outgoing chairman acknowledged this when he once described the party as a "rally". No one successfully controls a rally. The man on the podium may shout himself hoarse while those at the fringes engage in things that catch their fancy. Why is the PDP so unable to control its members? The tendencies within the party vary as the membership. The party is an all-comers affair. Being a 'winning' party everyone wants to

belong. Also being an ideologically hollow party no one screens anyone before joining. If you are a moneybag you readily find a place in the PDP. The young Godfathers are evidence of this. PDP elected representatives have been known to be detained on suspicion of being drug barons and money launders. Just recently, PDP-led central government organized video shows to establish one of their own as a 'thief'. Yet this is the party that prides itself as taking Nigeria to its political promised land. PDP in the absence of viable opposition from outside opposes itself. With 28 governors and more than half of the senators and representatives at the national assembly, one would have expected the party to speak with one voice. But that is not to be. If the members are not planning impeachment, they are slapping one another. If others are not abducting sitting governors, they are facilitating the declaration of state of emergency in their home states. The party is an expert in heating up the Nigerian political system because as the ruling party their so-called family affair invariably becomes national headache. It's only in the PDP that wild and zany things would happen and plausible explanation given; 'family affair' is PDP's euphemism for crisis. Like the ambition of the

builders of the biblical Tower of Babel, their ambition to rule Nigerian for sixty years may not materialize after all. If anything, the party has shown that it lacks the internal cohesion and mechanism to rule Nigeria for that long especially if elections become free and fair. The architects and builders of the Tower of Babel had a gargantuan ambition to erect a structure into 'heaven' when they knew nothing about the forces that controlled the universe. God destroyed their ambition and put a language barrier amongst them and they went their separate ways. PDP is still thriving but this writer doubts if this party would manage beyond 2007. Recent happenings in the party suggest that they may go the way of the Tower of Babel. Take zoning for instance, there is no agreement. As at today, no one knows where the next presidential candidate of PDP would come from. Some say, they zoned it, others say they did not. All the geopolitical zones except the southwest are going to contest it in 2007. In fact on this issue, PDP is zoning to unzone (apology another wordsmith late K.O Mbadiwe). And as if this is not enough time bomb, the nation woke up to hear of letters between the president and chairman of his party. This writer had stated elsewhere (Sunday Sun May 2, 2004) in a short discourse 'Umar's second letter: fools set stools' that Nigerians don't write letters when

times are normal. When private letters leaked to the press (by who?), become too many, something always happens in our polity. Now the national chairman of Africa's largest party has tendered his letter of resignation. The coming months would determine the direction the rudderless PDP ship would sail. That this resignation followed the two-way letters is pregnant. The letters themselves did not only remove any shade of doubt that the PDP is a party of strange bedfellows, they go to confirm that the PDP fellows actually sleep on their bed backing themselves, the height of enmity in any happy family. Things in the PDP 'family' seem fallen apart and there is doubt that their centre would continue to hold! The ambition of PDP to turn Nigeria into a one party state would not also materialize. Except the unusual happens, other interests, alliances and parties would spring from the ashes of this party in 2007. This is why its preposterous for an ideologically hollow party like PDP to equate its interest with national interest just because they "won" elections in all the geo-political zones. When they talk about zoning in the PDP, they take it for granted that other parties do not exist. They are not only irritatingly arrogant; they behave as though the fate of Nigeria is tied to the fate of PDP. Before the 2003 elections, a chieftain of the PDP openly boasted that they

were going to capture the southwest. Capture they did safe for Lagos state. In Edo State, a gubernatorial candidate said they were a moving train ready to crush anything on their way. When they deployed their foot soldiers to the field in an 'agbero' manner, all opposition ran way for their dear lives. The rump of the ANPP that dared to confront the PDP was badly crushed as threatened. Who talks about 'capture' or 'crush' opponents in democracy if not only in the PDP? Now if we read the PDP political barometer right, the party is about to dislodge itself as no other party can dislodge it. As this article tarried at the computers, news had it that a 'new G34' was planning to meet ostensibly to discuss the PDP crisis. My opinion is that this new G34 is not necessary, except they want to replace PDP with another PDP. It's hare-brained to think that another amalgam of a group like the new G34 can foster on the people yet another party. Nigerians should not allow themselves to be conscripted into any party by any group no matter how deodorized its name. Henceforth, parties should be allowed to evolve. The old G34, the precursors of the intended G34 succeeded because every one wanted the military out of government. The fertile ground for the survival of the old G34 is no longer there now. It's the view of this writer that only parties formed by the ideologi-

cally like-minded would endure. The new G34 is a waste of time, energy and scarce resources. Their efforts would come to nought. Back to the PDP, no one can predict exactly what would happen in 2007. What is certain from the current happening in the ruling party is that the party will soon become a dinosaur in the Nigerian political space. If that happens, the ambition to rule for sixty years or more would be cut short like the impromptu resignation of the outgoing chairman. As PDP fades from the Nigerian political scene, it's difficult to say under whose chairmanship the party reached its zenith. Its graph started descending from chief Solomon Lar's tenure through chief Gemade's and assuming sharp gradient during chief Ogbeh's. Ogbeh probably wanted a sensational exit. Otherwise this eloquent speaker, knowing Obasanjo should have learnt from the African saying that you don't abuse an alligator until you have safely crossed the river. He mistook an ocean for a brook and sadly tested it with both feet. Ogbeh the scholar may have read Ibrahim Tahir's sensational novel 'The last Imam'. If he didn't, it's a must for his successor who may be the last chairman of the party called 'People Deceive People' (PDP). Dr. Sunny Orumen writes from Specialist Hospital' Bauchi, and can be reached at soakbigbe@yahoo.com

In Nigeria, incessant labour related crises continue to challenge policy makers, management and labour on the feed for the formulation of better and more imaginative approaches to the management of the production sector. The fact that labour related matters very easily assume the character of a crises, even in spite of the best intentions of the parties involved, is an indication, not only of the need for a change in perception of labour relations, but also in the manner in which such relationships are mediated. Under present circumstances, it is not conceivable that a production arrangement can be put in place anywhere that is completely devoid of disagreements between employers and employees. Indeed, this may never be possible, realizing the very nature of human existence. But it is necessary to devise approaches capable of dealing with disagreements before they become a crisis. The capacity of a socio-political and economic system to achieve this in minimum time, and with minimum loss in productivity is a direct function of the maturity of such a system. In the labour relations sphere, Nigeria's capacity to do this is limited. The structures for mediation, conciliation and arbitration are, in most cases, weak. Parties to a dispute appear to choose at will which arbitration ruling to respect, and which to ignore. This necessitates a change in perception. It is in this regard that the concept of social partnership needs to be imbibed as an alternative to the adversarial connotation of class analogy. Social partnership is a concept that regards every party in the production process as a collaborative partner in the effort to produce goods and services. Every party must be conscious of its duties and obligations and must fulfil them, just, as the needs and as-

pirations of each party must be provided for. The partnership is by no means a partnership of equals. Rather 'it is one of distinct groups with differing interests each of whose input and role is crucial in production. The partnership is social in the sense of being collaboration between organisations each comprising a number of individuals. At bottom, social partnership is a production partnership. Like other social relations as defined in the political economy sense, social partnership is a production relationship. In a more fundamental dimension, labour relations, in general, are production relations. In themselves, the character of production relations is defined by human agents or social groups. These relations by nature tend to breed conflict. It may be a conflict over perception of expectations, duties and obligations. It may even be a conflict over motives. Whereas every production relationship has tendencies for conflict, not every conflict is, and ought to be, articulated at the level of strikes, work stoppages and other such means. However, the way in which such conflicts are perceived and eventually handled defines the character of the system in place, and reflects the effectiveness of its conflict resolution mechanisms. Social partnership conceives of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. It provides a platform for the resolution of disagreements through the process of social dialogue. The International Labour Organisation provides a working definition of social dialogue to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between representatives of gov-

ernments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. In itself, exchange of information implies no real discussion or action on the issues concerned: it is simply an essential starting point towards more substantive social dialogue. Consultation is a means by which the social partners share information and engage in more in-depth dialogue about issues raised. Negotiation, on the other hand, involves collective bargaining and policy concertation, sometimes referred to as social concieration. This last aspect simply means the codetermination of public policy by governments, employers and workers' organisations, as a matter of tradition, to address all major national economic and social policy issues by seeking consensus. Traditionally, the actors involved in social dialogue are the social partners, defined as representatives from employers' and workers' organisations, with or without the involvement of government. Bipartite social dialogue refers to dialogue between the social partners while tripartite social dialogue refers to that among the social partners and the government. In the bipartite form, government may be indirectly involved, coming in as facilitator, mediator, regulator and law, enforcer. Dialogue may take place at the national, regional, sectoral or enterprise level. Social dialogue is strongly encouraged and recommended to countries by the International Labour Organisation. As a protagonist, the government is encouraged to engage in active social dialogue with its own employees, i.e. public sector workers, by respecting the Principles

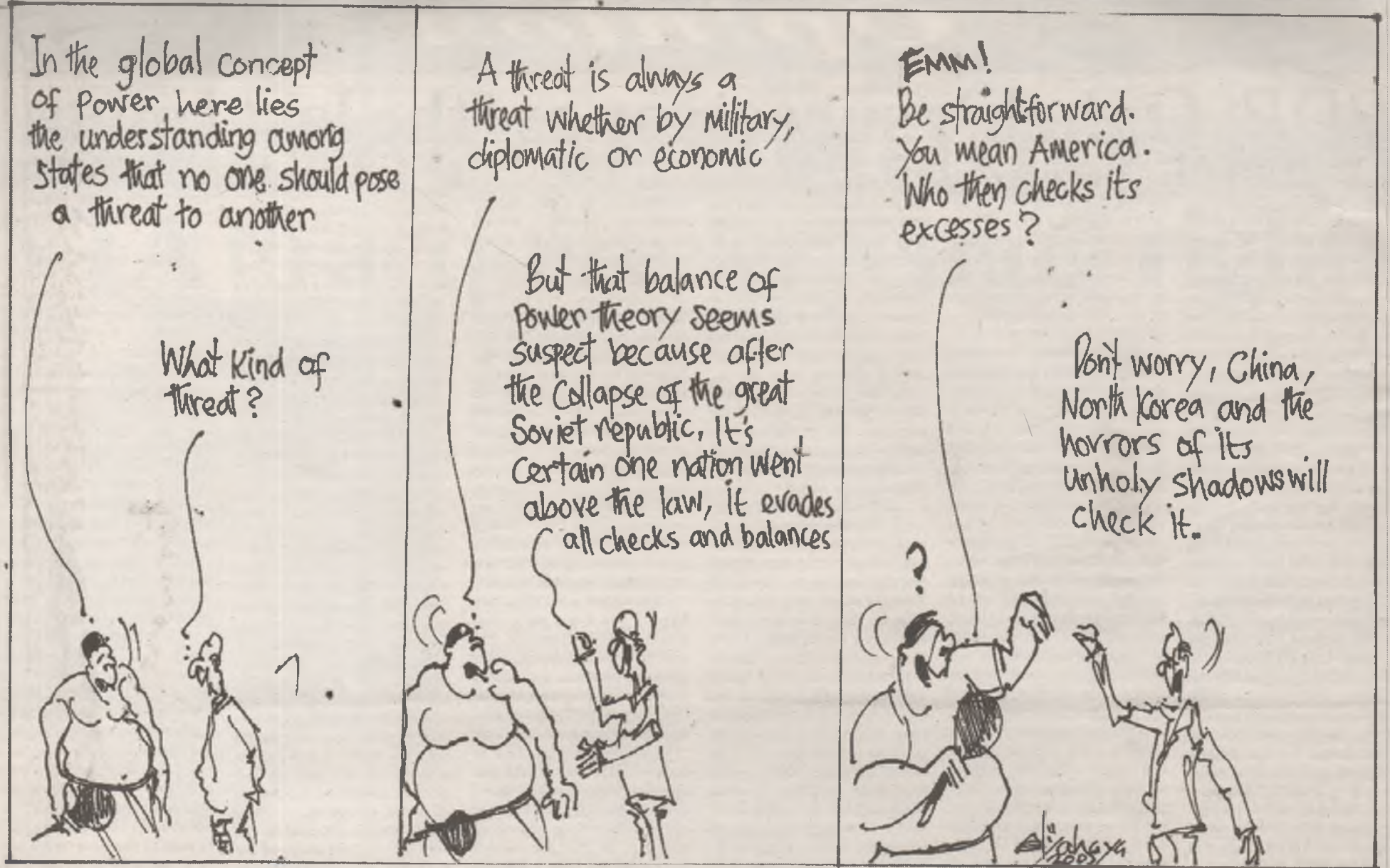
of labour Relations (Public Service) Convention; 1978 (No.151). By doing so, it not only promotes bipartite, social dialogue in the public sector but also helps establish a culture of dialogue. It is important for, the Nigerian government to recognize workers' and employers' organisations as viable partners capable of making valuable contributions to economic and social policy formulation. If the government is unwilling or reluctant to share its power, and it cannot protect the fundamental principles mentioned above, social dialogue cannot flourish. The country stands to gain a great deal from institutionalising the process of social dialogue. Social dialogue can promote economic and social progress and facilitate policy reforms, which are sustainable economically and socially. It can replace adversarial and confrontational relationship between labour and management and bring them to the negotiation table to talk about their common interests. By taking account of the views of stakeholders in a society, it is a democratic and legitimate way of policy making. It may be useful and effective during economic crises and periods of transition to ease social tensions and economic hardship. Among the government ministries, the promotion of tripartite or bipartite social dialogue is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Productivity. Its role is stipulated in Article 5 (1) of the Labour administration Convention, 1978. In fostering tripartite and bipartite social dialogue the labour ministry should ensure that social partners enjoy freedom of association so that employers and workers are able to state their views independently.

For industrial peace to be enhanced, it is imperative for the Federal Government to demonstrate commitment to national social dialogue. Such commitment is very important indeed. This is for the simple reason that government's responsibility includes setting and implementing economic policies, which have wider social implications. Of particular relevance here are policies aimed at combating inflation, maintaining economic growth, restoring the balance of payments and reducing unemployment. Effective dialogue with the social partners may help government stave off the worst consequences of social unrest arising from disaffection over these measures. Social partners, i.e. workers' and employers', organisations, should transcend the narrow question of wage increase and think more in broader terms. For effective participation, Nigeria's labour leadership especially, should enhance their understanding of broad economic and social policy issues. Effective social dialogue requires social partners to be able to engage in in-depth discussions on various macro and micro economic issues, which go far beyond traditional work-related issues. Certainly, against the background of frequent labour disputes, there is the need for all parties in the labour sector in Nigeria to re-assess their approach. For a harmonious relationship with labour, government and other employers should re-evaluate their perception of labour. It does not encourage industrial peace to view labour as a group of professional agitators, conceits and saboteurs whose sole reason for existence is to paralyse the economy by confronting employers over trifles. Neither does it help the process

of social dialogue for labour to be perceived as constituting an opposition party or movement, intent on either supplanting government, or on creating their conditions for the supplanting of government. Of course, there may well be certain neo-communist tendencies within labour. But now this must be the lunatic fringe, and cannot be said to represent, in any way or form, the dominant current within the labour movement. With this in mind, government and other employers should not be averse to a viable labour force, conscious, not only of its obligations, but also of its expectations. For social dialogue to proceed in any meaningful way, labour must purge itself of the extremely simplistic tendency to regard every step by government and other employers as exploitative, and oppressive, or armed at destroying labour. Social partnership makes no provision for such extreme ideological hangovers like exploitation. Every partner is a beneficiary of the "relationship. Where grievances arise, they should be tabled for dialogue. Labour should also avoid attitudes that may be construed as competing with government for loyalty of the public. This may lead to mistrust of labour intentions. Nigeria is still going through difficulties associated with every formative stage. Some of the country's structures and institutions, where they exist, are weak and poorly developed. Others are still undergoing the process of formulation. As a matter of fact, the country is still a work in progress. Hon. Solomon U. Agidani (Represents Apa/Agatu Federal Constituency in the National Assembly.

A vote for social dialogue

By Solomon U. Agidani



YOUR LETTERS

MASSOB as storm in a tea cup

The Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra has of late been in the news with its apparent quest to secede from the Nigerian federation. They have come up with the defunct Biafra's currencies, flags and a standing armless military. Of concern is that political office-holders who will take the mantle of leadership of the resurfacing republic have been selected on exile.

To make their ambition more realistic, they have/or claim to have offices in the US, the UK and other developed countries. And to make it more authentic, the organisation says it has a link with the presumed world liberator, George Bush of the US. That buttressed why his re-election was celebrated in the south-east, and among the engineers of Biafra, as it could have been in Texas State in America. According to them, Nigeria is the next country for Bush to 'disentangle' in his quest to bring freedom to the world.

At any rate, there is a forum to think that MASSOB is a gamble. And that is to ask the fundamental questions: is the movement the mouthpiece of a greater number of south-easterners? Or, how is the movement encompassing among Igbos in the diaspora.

To my mind, MASSOB is a conglomerate of politically and economically frustrated southeasterners. Without mincing words, the arrow head of Biafra is Dim Emeka Odemegwu Ojukwu: thank God he is still hale and hearty.

Up until now, the Ikemba, as he is called, is still a mentor to many south-easterners, more especially the youths. He deserves it because of his pragmatic antecedents: consider his being the possible youngest person to go to cell after slapping a colonial teacher; consider his being a son of a millionaire but vowed not to be under his direct control - that was why he chose to read history, instead of law his father dictated to him; even after graduation, he refused to work in offices his father wanted him, including in the colonial administration, rather he joined the army where his father would have little influence upon him. That is the little of Ojukwu.

On the issue of Biafra, Ojukwu's stance is like on the fence. Although he at times makes remarks in the support of MASSOB, he is more a Nigerian. If he is pro-Biafra indeed, why is he much interested in becoming Nigeria's president? And why does he preach true federalism which is the thrust of his *Beaue FAm Involved?*

Apart from Ojukwu, why is it that none of the Igbos or south-easterners favoured by the current democratic dispensation is a card carrying member of the organisation? Against this backdrop, MASSOB should rather be seen as a movement reacting to maladministration: both at the federal and state levels. That is the political angle.

The economic aspect is poverty. My first encounter with some of the members of

MASSOB was early this year when they accosted me to obtain the identity card of the 'resurfacing republic' at an exorbitant cost. In their words, 'it is to identify those who fought the last battle'. My investigation revealed that the champions of the course are unemployed youths, mostly graduates, who 'have fought in every battalion and consoled no soul'; as such they try to make a living out of the 'confused' moment.

But who thinks that secession of Biafra will right the wrongs of Igbo race, and the south-easterners generally? A moment of introspection shows vividly that every state in the defunct Biafran Republic is out of kilter. Assuming Biafra is regained, it will be militia all through. Who will be the unanimous president or governors who have not saved enough vendettas to avenge for years before tangible development starts to take place? And who will accept defeat after elections which will never be free and fair?

All said and done, cry for sovereignty across the nation, not only Biafra, is a cry for good governance: free education, not increment of hostel accommodation; em-ployment, not retrenchment and graphical empowerment; and free and fair elections, so that every body could have a say. It is still safer to remain one Nigeria, than casting our faith in the wind: after all, a known devil is better than an unknown angel.

Chinedu Aroh, 77, Bana Street, Chika, Airport Road, Abuja.

I read with excitement the declaration made by the Presidential Adviser on Legal and Constitutional Matters, Chief Ojo Maduekwe in the *Vanguard* edition of Monday January 31 2005 titled '2007: No dark horse as President'.

To me as a person, a dark horse is better than a known horse in the Nigerian political environment. Known horses are those who have perfected the art of robbing the emasculated citizens of their country, those who sing of democratic dividends when lining up developmental infrastructures in their geo-political zone; those who crush tribal militias in other geo-political zones while encouraging their own tribal militias to unleash terror on others; those who see their constituency as limited to their tribe by buying

Re: 2007: No dark horse as President

up the economy with their ill-gotten wealth; those who rule by precepts and not by examples: the unteachable who arrogate absolute knowledge to themselves and above all, the lawless who obey the law only when the courts rule in their favour.

The Niger Bridge, one of the legacies bequeathed to Nigerians by the Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa administration long before General Olusegun Obasanjo was commissioned into the Nigerian Army, is vibrating and collapsing. Did I hear the honorable Minister of Works, Senator Ogunsewe very well? He told Nigerians that it will cost about N50 billion to rehabilitate the bridge and that the country did not have such resources now unless the

project was privatized. No mention was made of the second Niger Bridge which has been in the cooler for decades.

In the so-called egalitarian society such as ours, it's pleasing to watch the President announcing the establishment of a US\$70 billion Liquefied Natural Gas project in Ogun State, his own home state which has no deposit of gas. This is in addition to another LNG project for Ondo earlier announced by NNPC Group Managing Director, Eng. Funsho Kupolokun.

How would the Federal Government finance its own quota to the above gigantic projects when there is no money to rehabilitate Niger Bridge?

The only inference one would draw here is that the proceeds of the disappeared MT African Pride (African Disgrace) and other vessels arrested for oil bunkering will be ploughed back to execute these world-class projects initiated by Nigeria's Petroleum Minister and Commander in Chief.

My humble advice to Nigerians, therefore, is that in their search for a successor for General Olusegun Obasanjo, they should look for a genuine detribalized Nigerian, a dark horse who will be willing to learn and heed to reasonable advice. In our quest for a successor, General Obasanjo should not be allowed to nominate one for.

Johnson Emegbusom
No. 47, Conakry Street,
Wuse Zone 4, Abuja

NEPA, please give Miringa transformer

Please allow me space in your widely read Newspaper to appeal to NEPA in Maiduguri district and Biu Local government Zonal Headquarters, to come to the rescue of Miringa town with an additional transformer, in order to enhance the current power supply in the town.

The area has been experiencing low voltage and power fluctuation for a long period of time, at least for the past three to four years now and this has a negative effect on the area.

Here, the need is to alleviate the suffering of the people, by providing them with an additional

transformer. I believe if this opportunity has been provided, they will be happy, and also the rate of unemployment will drastically reduce, because Miringa is a very large town where we have a lot of enterprises managed by the youths but they have been discouraged due to the power failure.

Musa Salihu Kachallah
Gwarinpa Village,
Gwarinpa Estate, Abuja.

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

AGRIC NEWS

Farmers urged to benefit from community plantation scheme

Farmers have been called upon to consider community plantation development scheme initiated by various governments, as a fast approach towards increased food production.

The director of Agriculture in the Akwa Ibom state

From Edet Ekanem,
Correspondent Uyo

Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Patrick B. Effiong, made the call yesterday at the presentation of awards of excellence to the best farmers of 31 local government areas of Akwa Ibom state held at

the state's library complex in Uyo.

The director, who also served as a guest speaker at the occasion, said the community plantation development scheme is such a valuable scheme that can generate vital export oriented

cash crops as well as revenue to the farmer as on individual and the country as a whole.

He said the involvement of youth in the scheme will assist them to be gainfully employed, stressing that youth restiveness will decrease when production is in a full gear.

Mr. Effiong noted that in Akwa Ibom state, for instance, since the inception of the scheme by the state government, 293 communities in 30 local government areas across the state planted 1,500 hectares of oil palm with Ibiono Ibom local government area having the highest participation.

He further stated that 15 communities in 8 local areas planted 142 hectares of rubber with the local government area having the highest participation, while 28 communities in 5 local government areas planted 86 hectares of cocoa with Ini LGA having the highest participation.

He said following the successful implementation of the scheme in the state, many communities have been attracted to the programme with a total application for 400 hectares of oil palm from different communities in 24 local government areas; 317 hectares of rubber from communities in 9 local government areas and 220 hectares of cocoa from communities in 7 local government areas.

The director called on communities that have unencumbered land to benefit from government's assistance for operations like clearing and felling, planting of oil palm seedlings, cocoa seedlings and slumps e.t.c. with free fertilizers and sprays against any outbreak of pests.

A speech delivered by Dr. Solomon Abasiokong, Rector, Akwa Ibom state College of Agriculture, Obio Akpa, on the theme: "The Role of Youths in Agricultural

Development in Nigeria", maintained that with the physical characteristics of youths and their behavioural pattern to the realistic nature of agriculture, success will be achieved.

Dr. Abasiokong argued that the youths should consider themselves as qualified for supply of specialised workforce, acquisition and application of new skills and technologies required for today's agriculture, research and future development in agriculture to cope with expanding population and bringing about agricultural industrial development in Nigeria.

Earlier in his address, the Akwa Ibom state chairman, Youth in Agriculture, Prince Michael Etim Ekanem, said since the inception of the organisation in 2003, it has not only widened the economic base of Akwa Ibom state through mechanised farming as opposed to the primitive practices applied by aged, but has also supported government's effort.



Millet brings bountiful harvest to entrepreneurial farmers in Northern Nigeria.

Nigeria's rice importation drops

As Nigeria recorded reduction in rice importation, 52 varieties of the crop had been developed for various ecological zones to boost production.

Agriculture Minister Adamu Bello told newsmen in Abuja at the weekend that the education in importation meant that rice production was growing in the country.

The presidential initiative on food security targeted that rice importation should drop in December, he said.

He explained that 1.2 million metric tons was imported down from 2 million metric tons imported three years ago.

"The Presidential

Committee on rice production has developed 52 varieties of rice for various ecological zones," he said.

Bello explained that the federal government has decided that mechanisation should be central in its agriculture policy.

"Government is buying tractors in bulk and selling to farmers at 25 per cent discount," he said.

Agriculture generated 40 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the minister said.

Other initiatives of the government for food security were the development of fisheries, dairies, beef and vegetable oil.



Thousands of cassava-farming families in rural areas in Nigeria have seen a big yielding differences in using new technology.

Adamawa set to boost cocoa production

The National Cocoa Development Committee (NCDC) is set to enhance production in Adamawa, says Chief Mike Oghiadomhe, the chairman of its sub-committee on sensitisation.

Oghiadomhe, who is also the Edo State deputy governor, explained that the committee would focus on Adamawa in terms of training and support for cocoa

farmers.

"My sub-committee will do everything possible to give the best training to cocoa farmers in the state to enhance their production capacity," he announced in Yola.

Oghiadomhe asked the targeted farmers to embrace cocoa production as a means of improving their incomes.

He lauded the federal

government for its zeal to develop cocoa farming, noting that the Adamawa government needed to play a complementary role.

The NCDC's 2005 training sessions, currently taking place in Yola, is aimed at giving farmers the skills for preparing seedlings, cocoa processing and ways of accessing funds for cocoa production.



Empowering local farmers with improved seedlings and new technology will enhance food safety and security in Nigeria.



At last! today's banking the simple and effective way.

Action. Performance. Results. These are some of the key values that drive us. Our approach is simple. Deliver the best service with minimal fuss. Our recipe? A large dose of concern and the warmest of smiles. Welcome.

Pacific Bank Limited
Seaview House
Plot 1704, Adetokunbo Ademola Street,
P.O. Box 75152, Victoria Island,
Lagos, Nigeria.

Tel: 01-2622440-4. Fax: 01-2613302
Swift Code: PAIFNGLA
Website: www.pacificbankng.com
E-mail: businessdevelopment@pacificbankng.com

Branches available nationwide



PACIFIC BANK
RC. 148332

Centered Around You.

Reconciling Our People

in Yelwa, Shendam L.G.A



- (A)** Governor Joshua Dariye with Imam Mohammed Nurayn Ashafa - Coordinator Interfaith Nigeria
- (B)** Governor Joshua Dariye with Bishop Joseph Bagobini of Kafanchan Diocese
- (C)** Plateau CAN Chairman, Rev. Ishaya Pam During an Address
- (D)** Mallam Mohammed, leader of the Hausa Community in Yelwa reads the Apology letter to the Long Goemai
- (E)** Governor Joshua Dariye unveiling the Peace Affirmative Plaque
- (F)** Cross Section of Crowd of People at the Occasion
- (G)** Left Half - R-L Governor Joshua Dariye, Hon. Kevin Kwaptoe - Chairman Shendam L.G.C., Imam Ashafa, Right Half - L-R Pastor James Wuye, Hon. Simon Lalong Speaker - Plateau State House of Assembly, and Bishop Joseph Bagobini Catholic Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese

Trust International

Africa

UN urges Ethiopia, Eritrea over border impasse

The UN Security Council urged Eritrea and Ethiopia to end a long deadlock over their disputed boundary and let an independent commission get the job done of marking it out.

A resolution adopted unanimously by the 15-nation council renewed a call to both sides "to cooperate fully and promptly with the Boundary Commission and to create the necessary conditions for demarcation to proceed expeditiously."

The resolution also extended for six more months, until Sept. 15, the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in the region, which patrols a 15-mile-(25-km)-wide buffer zone set up along the 600-mile frontier separating the north-east African neighbors.

Under a December 2000 peace deal ending a two-year border war, Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to accept the commission's eventual conclusions on where the border should lie.

The commission issued its findings in April 2002 and Eritrea fully accepted them. But the process of marking out the new boundary on the ground broke down after Ethiopia objected that the western town of Badme was in Eritrean territory.

The war between the two

neighbours, which has killed more than 70,000 people, began in May 1998 when Ethiopia accused Eritrea of invading Badme.

In November Ethiopia finally accepted the ruling in principle but said it wanted dialogue on how to implement it in the estimated 15 percent of the border that is contentious.

Diplomats from major powers said negotiations would go against both countries' promise to be bound by the ruling.

The UN resolution expressed concern over Ethiopia's recent deployment of troops in the buffer zone as well as its ongoing rejection of "significant parts" of the boundary.

It also expressed disappointment in Eritrea's refusal to deal with the UN special envoy for Ethiopia and Eritrea, former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, whose efforts it said "represent a concrete opportunity for both parties to move the peace process forward."



Eritrean ambassador to Nigeria, Daniel Yohannes

Uganda warns Somali warlords

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has told Somali warlords that peacekeeping troops will be deployed with or without their permission.

Museveni was speaking at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) workshop aimed at drawing deployment plans for the peace support mission.

"We have to deploy whether they (warlords) agree or not. They are holding nine million people hostage, how many years have we lost in Somalia? It is either 14 or 15 and this must stop," Museveni said in an impassioned appeal at Entebbe Resort Hotel yesterday.

Defence officials and ministers from several East African countries are meeting in Entebbe to map out the Somalia peacekeeping mission which Uganda's UPDF is proposing to be part of.

"Here in Uganda we have had a lot of problems we fought with Sudan and Mobutu and never called the United Nations to help us; we solved all these problems ourselves," he said.

Museveni slammed the UN and European Union as failures in solving African problems.

"I do not remember any positive change in Africa brought about by the UN or Europe," said Museveni.

"I have no speech but I'm speaking from my experience it's a shame for one of the ancient races to suffer for so long while Africa is looking on," he added.

Museveni who is currently the IGAD chairman seemed let down by the speed and draw backs in the seven-day meeting called for a positive solution for the Somalia.

"I want to talk to the Somali transitional government I'm told they are also there confused," he said.

Countries from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have expressed the will to send stabilising troops to the war-torn Somalia but seem still bogged down a mandate and sources of funding. Ministers and defense experts were last evening slated to sign a communiqué but had not by press time. The communiqué will include the deployment plan, troop contributing countries and size of the mission.

The AU has authorised IGAD countries: Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti to send an interim force to Mogadishu to help Somalia's transitional government relocate there from exile.

Some Somali clans and Islamic court leaders have vowed to resist any foreign troops. Some protestors said they would resist forces from Ethiopia and Djibouti.

Warlords in the country are divided on the deployment, which has already met fierce opposition from the Somali Islamic cleric.

Somalia plunged into chaos after the fall of President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. Since last October, Somalia has adopted political institutions president, government, and parliament but the latter remain in Nairobi for security reasons.

Sudan criticises

US over sanctions

The Sudan has cast doubts on US commitment to peace, criticising renews sanctions imposed on it and championed by the US through the United Nations Security Council.

According to a statement signed by Salih Elkronki of the Sudanese embassy in Abuja, after president Bush's constructive engagement policy which led to great success for the America diplomacy in Sudan, US anti-terrorism partnership with Sudan and efforts to quell the conflict between the government of Sudan and the Southern rebels, US has not delivered on its promises of lifting the unilateral economic and trade sanctions on Sudan.

"Sudanese people have been waiting for the US to deliver on its promises of lifting the unilateral economic and trade sanctions, normalising bilateral relations and rallying the international community to help reconstruction of the country that has been haunted by war ... unfortunately, the US is so busy these days instead to impose even harsher package of sanctions through the UN security council on the very eve of the implementation of

Elkanah Chawai, Reporter
(Foreign Desk)

the peace agreement," the statement stated.

"The efforts led by the US to impose new sanctions on Sudan make one wonder whether this is recipe for peace making or peace sabotage," it continued.

The statement said that the international community has never exceeded 50 per cent of the real needs of humanitarian aid to Sudan, adding that more funds is needed especially for the deployment of the African Union troops mandated by the security council to bring about peace of which only one third of the force has been deployed.

It added that AU troops are capable of keeping peace in Sudan if funds are available and rejected any foreign intervention in Sudan.

"We strongly believe that all those who committed crimes against humanity should face justice with no room for impunity. Nevertheless, justice to millions of Sudanese should occupy the front seat because it represents the only prerequisite to peace in Darfur," the statement added.

World court hears DR Congo's first case

Judges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague held their first hearing yesterday.

The session focused on the inquiry into war crimes allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The hearing is the first time the judges are to consider formally a specific war crimes investigation.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the world's first permanent tribunal for trying cases involving genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The court came into existence nearly three years ago, despite strong opposition from the US Washington said it fears its troops could become the target of politically motivated prosecutions.

Judges at Tuesday's session plan to discuss issues related to the protection of victims and witnesses and the preservation of evidence.

The chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, opened the first official investigation last year into alleged mass killings, rapes and torture in the DRC.

Last week, he challenged the judges' authority to hold this hearing.

But they dismissed his objections to a request to hand over confidential documents, which he said would threaten the impartiality of the court.

The procedural hearing will be held in closed session with no members of the press or public allowed to attend.

It is expected that this so-called status conference will set the tone for hearings in

other investigations, such as the ongoing inquiry into alleged atrocities in Uganda.

...gives ultimatum to rebels

The United Nations has given rebel militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo's north-eastern Ituri region two weeks to give up their weapons.

MONUC head William Lacy Swing did not say what action would be taken against militias if they failed to comply.

The UN force has stepped up its operations in Ituri since nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed by militia-men last month.

More than 50,000 people have died in ethnic violence there since 1999.

"They have two weeks to disarm. After that, we will see," said Mr Swing, after visiting peacekeepers in the area.

Two weeks ago peacekeepers killed at least 50 militia members in a fierce battle.

"We will continue to work with those that we think we can work with. But we will take out those that are refusing to cooperate," a senior UN official told Reuters news agency.

The UN mission has 16,700 soldiers, making it the largest peacekeeping mission in the world.

MONUC has faced criticism for doing too little, too late to end the conflict in eastern DR Congo.

Some UN peacekeepers have also been caught up in a sexual scandal - accused of sexually exploiting refugees in their care.

180,000 died in Darfur-UN

At least 180,000 people may have died in Sudan's Darfur region over the past 18 months, according to the United Nations' top emergency relief official.

Jan Egeland said the figure refers to victims of illness and malnutrition and excludes those who have been killed in the ethnic violence.

The UN previously gave an estimate of 70,000 non-conflict deaths.

Pro-government militia are accused of killing and raping villagers and driving two million from their homes.

The UN has not put a figure on violent deaths in the region.

An average of 10,000 people have died each month over the past year-and-a-half from disease and other preventable causes, the emergency relief chief said.

"It could be just as well more than 200,000 [over 18 months] but I think 10,000 a month... is a reasonable figure," Mr Egeland told AFP news agency.

Last year, the World Health Organisation said it believed 10,000 people had died each month from March to October, mostly from disease and some from random violence in camps.

Amnesty International's best estimate for how many may have died from violence since the conflict began - taking into account attacks on hundreds of villages - was 50,000 as of last month.

Landmines affect one million

Mozambicans-Reports

About 914,000 Mozambicans, in 267 settlements, are still affected by the threat of anti-personnel land mines, according to the government's National Demining Institute (IND).

In its plan of demining priorities for 2005, the IND noted that the most heavily mined areas are in the south of the country. There are 551 areas suspected of containing minefields: of these 140 (over 25 per cent) are in the southern province of Inhambane.

The second most heavily mined province is Maputo with 99 probable minefields, followed by the central province of Manica with 57. Niassa, in the far north, only has 19 areas believed to be mined.

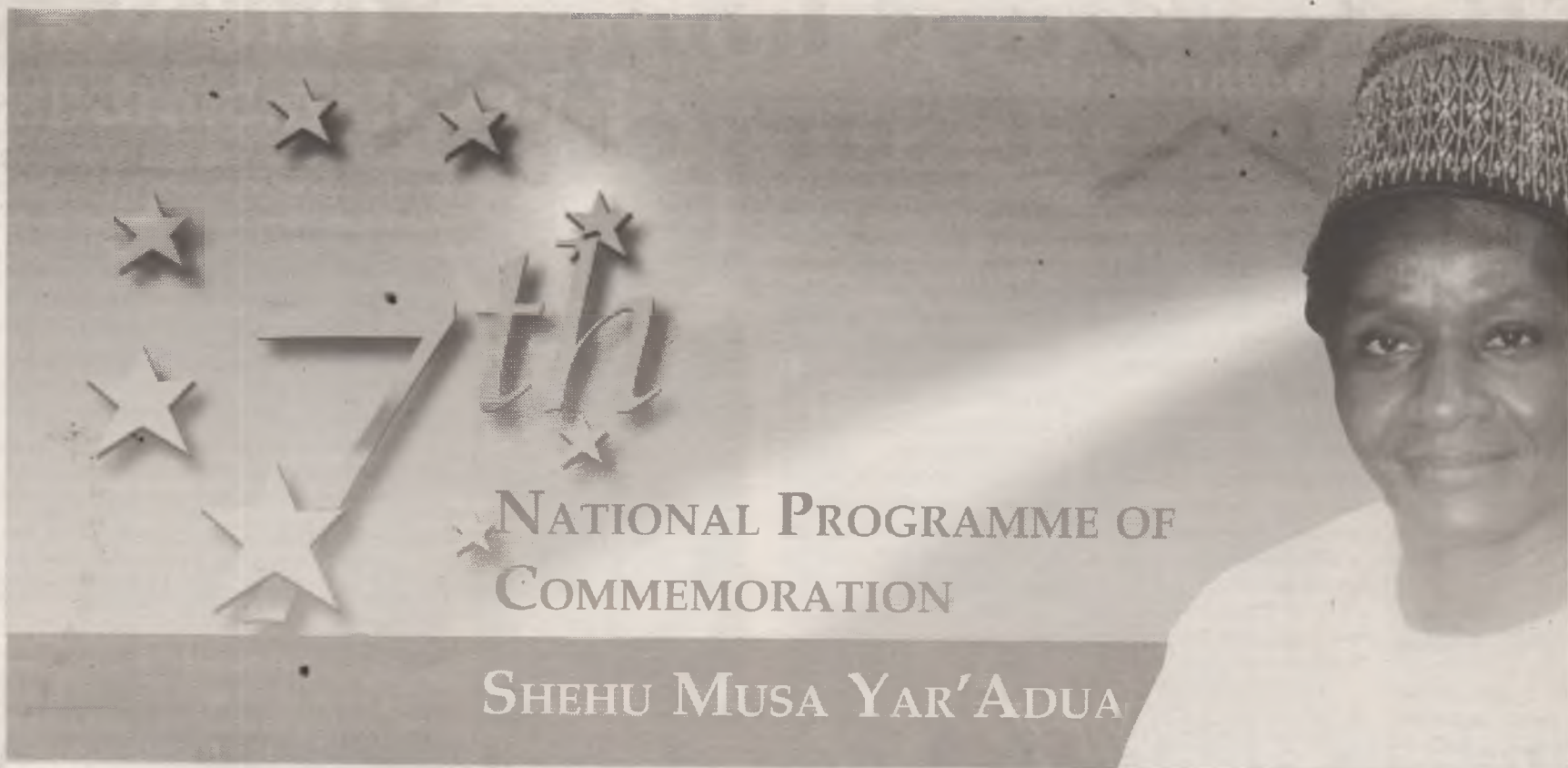
It is impossible to say how many mines are still buried in Mozambique. At the end of the war of destabilisation in 1992, neither the government army nor the Renamo rebels were able to present detailed maps of where they had laid mines.

Furthermore, mines from earlier conflicts still pose a threat - last year many of the mines removed from Mueda and Nangade districts, near the Tanzanian border, had been laid by the Portuguese army during the war for Mozambican independence in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Nobody knows exactly how many mines were buried in Mozambique. The guess of "two million", used regularly in the 1990s, is clearly a gross exaggeration. Last year, 12.1 million square metres were cleared, and 18,539 mines were removed and destroyed (plus 2,712 other items of unexploded ordnance).

Under the Ottawa treaty outlawing anti-personnel mines, Mozambique has until 2009 to complete demining operations, and become a country free of land mines.

The areas suspected of containing mines come to a total of 246.19 million square metres. At the current pace this area cannot all be cleared by 2009.



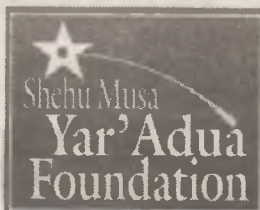
Electoral Reform: Building Confidence for Our Future

Yar'Adua Memorial Forum Roundtable Sessions:			
Electoral Participation / Competitive Rigging Thursday, March 17 2.00 - 4.00	Integrity of the Party System Thursday, March 17 2.00 - 4.00	Political Violence Friday, March 18 9.00 - 11.00	In partnership with the Center for Democracy & Election Management American University
Electoral Law / Campaign Finance Friday, March 18 9.00 - 11.00	Election Administration: Organizing the 2007 Election Friday, March 18 11.00 - 1.00	Election Monitoring Friday, March 18 11.00 - 1.00	

Venue: Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre

Date: March 17, 2005 (Opening Plenary) March 19, 2005 (Programme of Commemoration)

Time: 10.00 am



Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre One Memorial Drive, Abuja, Nigeria Tel: 234 9 524 0021-2 Fax: 234 9 524 0023

TRUSTEES: President Olusegun Obasanjo (Chairman), Vice President Atiku Abubakar (Vice Chairman), Governor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Alhaji M.T. Usman, Mr. Yomi Edu, Hajia Binta S. Yar'Adua, Murtala S. Yar'Adua (Treasurer) Jamilah W. Farris (Director General)

Trust International

World Report

Clinton goes home after heart surgery

Former US President Bill Clinton has left hospital, four days after a follow-up operation to his quadruple heart bypass surgery six months ago.

Mr. Clinton, 58, had fluid and scar tissue removed under general anaesthetic at a New York hospital.

He will continue his recovery at home, a spokesman for New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Centre said.

Mr. Clinton said he hoped to return to work within about a month.

His wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, accompa-

nied him from the hospital to his home in Chappaqua, about 40 miles (65km) north of New York.

"I'm glad to be home and look forward to getting back to work," Mr. Clinton said.

The former president said he, Mrs. Clinton and their daughter Chelsea were "very grateful to the medical team that cared for me at the hospital, and we deeply appreciate all the prayers and good wishes we've received in recent days".

The Clintons said they were grateful for people's messages of support.

In a complication arising in only a fraction of cases,

scar tissue had formed as a result of fluid build-up, causing a compression of the left lung and some discomfort to Mr. Clinton.

Doctors at the hospital said the four-hour procedure had not been "medically urgent" and Mr. Clinton's activities had not contributed to his condition.

He is expected to make a full recovery and had already started to walk around his hospital room, his office said on Monday.

The former president underwent quadruple bypass surgery in September after complaining of suffering pains in his chest and

breathing difficulties.

Doctors said he had been in imminent danger of a major heart attack before that operation.



Mr. Bill Clinton, former US president

Odd World

Parliament deliberate on ant invasion

Along with such weighty issues as an anti-secession law and a leadership transition, China's parliament also weighed the threat of invasion — by red ants.

Hong Kong has been battling to stop the spread of the ants, whose fiery sting can be fatal to humans, since they were first found in the southern territory in January.

Then the insects were found to have moved north into the neighboring province of Guangdong.

"Prompt, effective measures should be taken to stop hazardous red fire ants from making inroads into north China where the national capital of Beijing is located," *Xinhua* news agency quoted a delegate to parliament as saying on Sunday.

Zhang Zhongning proposed thorough border checks to keep the ants from marching into the heart of Beijing.

"The fire ants can bring huge damage to cropland and electrical wires," said Zhang, a scientist from the Institute of Zoology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The Agriculture Ministry lists fire ants as one of 85 destructive pests that have prompted import quarantine checks.

Zhang called for quarantine controls to be tightened to resist the invasion.

"The pests are likely to survive in south, east, central and southwestern China and some areas in North China," he said.

The red fire ant, which originated in South America, has defied efforts to stamp it out in Australia and the United States.

Pay with your fingerprint at the supermarket

Customers of a German supermarket chain will soon be able to pay for their shopping by placing their finger on a scanner at the check-out, saving the time spent scrabbling for coins or cards.

An Edeka store in the southwest German town of Ruelzheim has piloted the technology since November and now the company plans to equip its stores across the region.

"All customers need do is register once with their identity card and bank details, then they can shop straight away," said store manager Roland Fitterer.

The scanner compares the shopper's fingerprint with those stored in its database along with account details.

Edeka bosses said they were confident the system could not be abused.

Police cart away Chiluba's cloths, shoes

Ex-Zambian president Frederick Chiluba has hit out angrily after hundreds of his shirts, suits and shoes were seized from a warehouse at the weekend.

The former head of state, with a taste for expensive designer suits, said the raid in Lusaka was a calculated attempt to "disgrace and humiliate" him.

Police suspect the clothes were bought using government funds and believe the ex-president hid them at the warehouse.

But Mr. Chiluba said his new home was too small for all his belongings.

"What they have done is to bring my underpants out to the general public," Mr. Chiluba told reporters.

Mr. Chiluba said anti-graft investigators were persecuting him. "It is sad that the fight against corruption is being reduced to discussing suits, shirts, ties and shoes. Zambians know me and know that I have always dressed very well from the 1960s," he said. "They also want to bring me into ridicule and make the case look like it is similar to [Imelda] Marcos of the Philippines," he added.

The BBC correspondent said this is the latest of several seizures of properties that the former president has gone through.

Motor vehicles and buildings both in Zambia and Europe have already been seized in the past.

His handpicked successor, President Levy Mwanawasa, has been pursuing an anti-corruption drive against Mr. Chiluba's former government.

Mr. Mwanawasa said that he would grant a presidential pardon to Mr. Chiluba if he admitted the allegations of corruption and returned 75% of the cash he allegedly stole.

Mr. Chiluba has consistently denied corruption charges, saying they are politically motivated.

Mussolini's granddaughter on hunger strike

The granddaughter of Italian wartime dictator Benito Mussolini went on hunger strike on Monday after being barred from next month's regional elections over signature forgeries.

Alessandra Mussolini, founder of the far-right Social Alternative movement, is appealing the ban in a Rome court.

More than 800 signatures on her petition to stand in the election for president of Lazio region have been declared false. The list allegedly includes names of the dead and others whose existence was dubious, such as people who gave their birth date as Feb. 31.

Mussolini abandoned the right-wing National Alliance party after its leader, and current foreign minister, Gianfranco Fini paid a visit to Israel and publicly condemned her grandfather. Fini's gesture symbolically cut the party's ties to fascism.

Mussolini, a former aspiring actress and model who defends her grandfather, accused the sitting president of the Lazio region, Francesco Storace of the National Alliance, of engineering the forgery scandal.

To draw attention to her case, Mussolini stopped eating, although she admitted she was unprepared for the ordeal which lay ahead. "I had stomach pain yesterday, so I didn't really eat enough beforehand," she told Reuters. "I'm anxious, nervous over this scandal."

Mussolini said she would stay on hunger strike until a decision is made on her appeal, expected later this week.

Storace shrugged off accusations that he was behind her disqualification. "Who's she against on this hunger-strike? Those who figured out the tricks and irregularities," Storace said in an interview with left-leaning newspaper *la Repubblica*.

Jackson boy denies being abused

The teenage boy who has accused Michael Jackson of sex abuse has admitted telling a former teacher he had never been molested by the US singer.

Fifteen-year-old Gavin Arvizo returned to the stand for cross-examination by Mr Jackson's lawyers on Monday.

Last week the court in Santa Maria, California, heard the boy's account of how the alleged abuse took place.

The singer, who denies all charges, was in court for the first time since his late arrival last week with back pain.

During intensive cross-examination by Mr. Jackson's lead lawyer, Thomas Mesereau, Gavin conceded he had told a former teacher that nothing inappropriate had happened between him and the singer.

Apparently reading from a transcript of the interview, Mr. Mesereau quoted the teacher, Jeffrey Alpert, as saying: "Look at me, look at me... I can't help you unless you tell me the truth - did any of this happen?"

Gavin acknowledged from the witness stand his answer at the time - apparently just after a 2003 documentary which sparked the investigation into Mr. Jackson - had been "no".

"I told Mr. Alpert he [Michael Jackson] didn't do anything to me," the teenager said.

Mr. Mesereau drew attention to numerous disciplinary problems the teenager had had at John

Burroughs Middle School, where Mr. Alpert was the dean.

Gavin admitted he had been disruptive, rarely did

triggered a threat of arrest by the judge when he arrived late, wearing pyjamas and slippers.

In a statement, Mr.

back problem after tripping and falling over while getting dressed.

Later on Thursday, Gavin Arvizo described how the alleged abuse took place in the singer's bedroom at his Neverland ranch in 2003.

The teenager said he and Mr Jackson were in bed together and that, after asking the boy lots of questions about sex, Mr. Jackson had put his hand down Gavin's pyjama bottoms and touched him.

He also described consuming various kinds of alcoholic drinks - including vodka, wine and brandy - with the star.

On Friday, the court heard legal arguments in which prosecutors sought access to Mr. Jackson's financial records, claiming he has debts of \$300m (£156m) and faces liabilities of \$400m (£208m) by the end of the year.

Mr. Jackson denies 10 charges including child abuse and false imprisonment. If found guilty, he could face a 21-year prison sentence.



Michael Jackson

homework and regularly argued with his teachers.

The BBC correspondent in Santa Maria said Mr. Mesereau spent the day trying to highlight apparent discrepancies in Gavin's evidence.

In what were often testy exchanges, the boy denied changing his story to police about the timing of the alleged abuses, correspondent says.

Mr. Jackson arrived 15 minutes early for proceedings on Monday, wearing a red coat with a black arm band.

On Thursday, the singer

Jackson's defence said he had been taken to a hospital for treatment for a severe

'Russia offered \$10m to Maskhadov killer'

Russia's security service said it paid a \$10m (£5.2m) bounty for information that led to the killing of Chechen rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov.

The service "was approached by citizens who gave the necessary data" on

his whereabouts, a spokesman told the AFP news agency.

Maskhadov was killed last week in Chechnya, when Russian troops located a bunker where he was hiding.

Russia offered a \$10m reward for his capture in 2004.

Trust International

Middle East & Asia

Egyptian president holds talks in Syria

The presidents of Egypt and Syria have been meeting for unscheduled talks in Damascus, amid intense pressure on Syria over its role in Lebanon.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Syria's Bashar al-Assad at a hilltop palace overlooking the Syrian capital.

They met a day after an estimated 800,000 people gathered in Beirut to protest at Syrian influence in Lebanon.

Damascus has promised the UN a full timetable for the withdrawal of its 14,000 troops and intelligence agents.

"The talks are expected to focus on Lebanon and tackle other regional issues including Iraq and the Middle East [peace process]," an unnamed diplomat told Reuters.

Mr Mubarak has said publicly he is in favour of a

Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

Troops have begun the first stage of withdrawal, pulling back to Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

Meanwhile military intelligence officers left two offices in the north, in the town of Amyoun in Koura region and Deir Ammar on the coast, the Associated Press news agency reported.

Monday's demonstration in Beirut surpassed recent pro-Syrian rallies organised by the Hezbollah movement, and is thought to be the biggest in Lebanese history.

The BBC correspondent in Beirut said the crowds turned the city centre into a sea of red, white and green - the

colours of Lebanon's national flag.

The rally came a month after the death of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, blamed by many opposition supporters on Syria or the Syrian-backed Lebanese leadership.

Demonstrators packed Martyrs Square, near where Hariri died in a car bomb, and the crowd spilled over into nearby streets.

The sea of people fell silent at 12:55 pm the exact time Hariri was killed four weeks ago.

Unlike previous anti-Syrian rallies, Sunni Muslims came out in force to join Druze and Christians to commemorate the loss of their leader.

The White House has admitted the difficulty it's facing in gathering good intelligence in Iran, yet, it maintains that the Islamic Republic's behavior was "suspicious enough" to step up the pressure over its nuclear activities.

"Intelligence in Iran is hard to come by. It is a very closed society. They keep their secrets very well," White House national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, told CNN's "Late Edition."

Hadley was asked if, given the US intelligence failures in pre-war Iraq, he was convinced that US intelligence this time in Iran was good enough to determine that it was trying to covertly develop a nuclear weapons program.

On "Fox News Sunday," Hadley also noted that the Iranian government is against taking comfort in the US President George W. Bush's decision to back the European Union in offering

US admits difficulties of Iran intelligence

the Islamic Republic economic incentives to persuade it halt all activities related to nuclear enrichment.

Meanwhile, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the decision is aimed at sending Tehran a clear message that it's facing a united trans-Atlantic front.

The US offer aims to join the Europeans in a united front; in exchange, the EU agreed to support the US in referring Iran before the UN

Security Council if talks fail.

Iran rejected Bush's offer as "insignificant", saying that the price will be much higher to get it to give up nuclear programme, and that has the right to pursue it under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"That offer ... is an assault on Iranian pride," said Amir Mohebian, political editor of *Resalat* newspaper. "Some US politicians say: 'If we don't attack you, it's a favour.'"

Australian Media criticised over treatment of Muslims

More than 150 people attended a lecture given by University of Technology Sydney journalism professor Peter Manning at Melbourne University, tackling the Australian media's treatment of Arabs and Muslims.

Professor Manning has conducted a comprehensive study of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph's* representation of Arabs and

Muslims in the year before and after the September 11 attacks on the United States of America. He said that both papers painted "a portrait of sustained fear".

In his study, published under the title "Dog whistle politics and Journalism", Professor Manning discussed 12,000 newspaper articles, noting the media has portrayed the Arabs and the Muslims as violent, ungrateful and barely human.

Pakistan 'lost' Bin Laden trail

Pakistani forces had their best chance of capturing Osama Bin Laden last year, but they lost the trail, President Pervez Musharraf has told the BBC.

Gen Musharraf said the intelligence services had their strongest indication about the al-Qaeda leader's whereabouts eight to 10 months ago.

He said the "dragnet had closed" along the border with Afghanistan, but Bin Laden fled.

Bin Laden last appeared on video just before the US election in November.

He appeared in good health in the video, in which he threatened fresh attacks on the US, whoever was elected, but it was not clear when it was recorded.

Bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, are widely believed to have been hiding in the mountains along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border since US-backed forces toppled Afghanistan's Taliban regime in late 2001.

President Musharraf told the BBC his forces got their clearest trace of Bin Laden after the Pakistani army launched an offensive in the tribal region last year.

"There was a time when the dragnet had closed and we thought we knew roughly the area where he possibly could be. That was, I think, some time back, not very long... maybe about eight to 10 months back," he said.

"But after that, this is such a game, this intelligence, that they escape. They can move and then you lose contact."

Bin Laden's group is blamed for thousands of deaths in the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US and other attacks around the world.

The Pakistani army has faced its strongest resistance in its operations against al-Qaeda in the restive border regions of North and South Waziristan.

President Musharraf said he was sure Pakistan's most wanted militant, Abdullah Mehsud, was killed in North Waziristan several days ago.



Excellent results follow excellent work

The evidence of our progress at NUB International Bank Limited is clearly shown by our impressive results.

Results that can only come from excellent work.

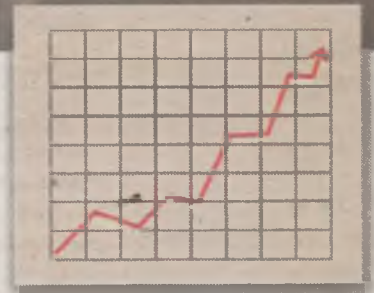
Join us to be part of this success story.



NUB International Bank Ltd. ...we never stop serving you

www.nubank.com

Head Office: Plot 554, Adenokumbo Adenola Crescent, P.M.B 5095, Wuse II, Abuja. Tel: 09 - 5237051, 6700651



Business Trust

US Congress to probe

World Bank accounting error

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air		
Lagos - Abuja	07:20	15:15
		13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.	11:00
		13:15
		17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50	
Abuja - Maid	17:00	
Lagos - Yola	1:00p.m.	
Abuja - Yola	14:30	
Yola - Abuja	15:30	
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.	
Chanchangi Airlines		
Lagos - Abuj	8:15a.m.	11:00a.m.
		12:10p.m.
		4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.	
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.	
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.	
IRS Airlines		
CBQ - Abuja	8.00 a.m.	
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.	
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.	
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.	
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.	
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.	
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.	
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.	
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.	
Abuja - CB	5:15p.m.	
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.	
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.	
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.	
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.	
EAS Airlines		
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.	11:45a.m.
		5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.	
Jos - Lagos	2:30p.m.	
Dasab Airlines		
Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.	
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.	
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.	
Lagos - Kano	2:30p.m.	
Kano - Lagos	4:30p.m.	
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.	
ADC Airline		
Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.	12:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.	
Lagos - Calabar	11:15 a.m.	
Calabar - Lagos	7:20 a.m.	
P/H - Lagos	9:45 a.m.	
Lagos - sokoto	8:55a.m.	
Sokoto - Lagos	11:55a.m.	

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

A US congressional committee said it would open a new inquiry into allegations of accounting errors at the World Bank relating to the fate of certain ex-employees who denounced the problem.

"Inaccuracies in the World Bank accounts would be problematic in and of themselves, but I am also troubled by the way the

World Bank management may have handled these issues," joint economic committee chairman Jim Saxton said in a statement.

"We will assess the facts, and determine the validity of

these allegations," Saxton concluded.

World Bank spokesman David Theis, refuting the new allegations, said that World Bank accounting controls were "state of the art."

"We have investigated the allegations made by this former staff member and found them to be completely false."

A source close to the

World Bank said that the allegations dated back from 1997.

One of them charged that problems in the accounting system led to errors that cost the bank tens of millions of dollars, to the detriment of certain aid programs to developing countries.

Several ex-employees who denounced the problem have complained of problems

due to them having raised the alarm.

Of prime concern was the sale of bonds that led to losses worth 60 million dollars, the source said.

The joint committee will question people linked to the dossier, going back several years on a number of allegations. The new inquiry could take several weeks or even months, the source said.

Oil prices surge above \$55, ahead OPEC meeting

Crude oil futures prices rose above \$55 a barrel yesterday, as resistance surfaced to Saudi Arabia's call for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to

increase production quotas.

Light, sweet crude for April delivery rose 21 cents to \$55.16 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midday in Europe. Heating oil prices rose less than a cent to \$1.5370 a gallon.

Brent crude rose 23 cents to \$53.89 on London's International Petroleum Exchange.

The record close set on Nymex last October was \$55.17, though prices would have to surpass \$90 per barrel to meet the inflation-adjusted peak set in 1980.

The Saudi oil minister, Ali Naimi, urged OPEC ministers Monday to boost the cartel's official output ceiling by half a million barrels a day to 27.5 million barrels a day. Saudi Arabia is OPEC's largest producer-exporter.

Naimi said current price levels were "unjustified" by the supply and demand outlook, while making clear that he saw the need for more oil to be supplied by OPEC in the second half of the year.

"Notwithstanding the uncertainty prevalent in assumptions about future supply and demand levels, projections show an increase in demand in the latter part of the year, which would require additional crude oil to satisfy," Naimi said.

But yesterday, Libya's oil minister said most members were opposed.

"There's mostly a consensus not to increase 500,000 barrels a day at this time," Libyan Oil Minister Fathi bin Shatwan told reporters ahead of Wednesday's formal policymaking session of the ministerial meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Other officials also dismissed the Saudi proposal. Iranian oil minister Bijan Namdar Zangeneh said that OPEC members are already pumping about 700,000 barrels a day above their official ceiling, and that the Saudi proposal is probably intended to legitimize some of that overproduction.

Nigeria's top oil official, Edmund Dakouru, called the Saudi proposal "purely cosmetic."

OPEC isn't likely to agree on an increase in supply at this week's meeting, because it expects a 1.8 million barrel-a-day surplus in April, Indonesia's Oil Minister, Purnomo Yusgiantoro said Monday.

CBN clears N55bn in Katsina zone

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent (Katsina)

The Katsina state Clearing House of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) currency centre, Katsina, has recorded a significant increase in the quantum monetary transactions for the year 2004, even as it cleared 42,970 cheques worth N54.807 billion compared to 48,234 worth N38,889 billion cleared in the year 2003.

Disclosing this during the year 2004 annual dinner/customers forum in Katsina, the currency officer, Alhaji Farouk Galko, said although the volume of cheques cleared reduced by 5264 representing a 10.9 percent decrease, the value of cheques however increased by N15.918 billion representing 40.93 percent increase.

Also in the same year, the record of its cash transactions has indicated an insurable cash of N5.4 billion largely in mint issued to commercial banks while the sum of N2.1 billion was deposited with the CBN by the commercial banks.

Mr Galko who emphasised the need to increase the use of cheques in business transactions by people in the state also disclosed that the sum of N235.8 million was issued while N131 million was deposited through the CBN's banking hall in the state.

Describing the year 2004 as an eventful one which carries on many reforms and changes in the banking sector, the currency officer assured of the immediate commencement of the Nigerian Automatic Clearing System (NACS) in the state.

He said the Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) where bank's customers can transfer large sums of money from one bank to another without necessarily passing through clearing system, is expected to pick up by September 2005.



Alhaji Aliyu Alkali Group Managing Director, Northern Nigerian Development Company Limited and Director NAL Bank Plc (left), discussing with Alhaji Sarki Abdullahi Ibrahim another Director, NAL Bank Plc at the bank's investment forum in Lagos ...recently. Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Why SMEs fail to perform - SMEDAN

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

Poor capacities in knowledge, skills, management and general attitude to business have constituted a major bottleneck to meaningful performance of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country, the Director General Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Mrs Dupe Adelaja has disclosed.

She said the SMEs have failed to perform especially in terms of productivity, profitability, quality and sustainability of output which has made SMEDAN place considerable emphasis on the establishment of business support centres (BSCs) to give such technical supports to MSMEs in the country.

Speaking at the formal flag-off of a special study of the existing and leading clusters of SMEs in Nigeria, the SMEDAN boss said the objective of the BSC programme is to offer learning, mentoring, counselling and information sharing opportunities to the MSMEs under one roof.

She said the BSCs will be able to access vital model business plans as well as information on matters such as raw materials, markets and production equipments.

"We have come to the inevitable conclusion that the first set of BSCs to be established should include those to be cited around the existing clusters.

"This move, we believe, will help to fill a vital gap, thereby accelerating the level of productivity as well as the operating returns to the MSME operators at these clusters," she added.

The new clusters cited by SMEDAN includes the Aba

clothing/footwear, Nnewi auto parts, Otiogbo computers, Abeokuta/Oshogbo Tie and dye and Kano leather.

The project coordinator, Professor Oyeboji Oye-yinka said the study is a very serious attempt of reshaping the clusters in the country so as to prepare them for global challenges.

NCAA to audit airlines

Against the backdrop of complaints that some domestic airlines operating in the country are running at a loss, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has concluded plans to carry out a comprehensive audit of all the airlines to know their financial status.

The media assistant to NCAA director general, Mr Sam Adurogboye who disclosed this during an exclusive interview with *Business Trust* in Lagos stated that the audit will enable NCAA to know which airlines to monitor closely.

According to him, NCAA may not compel airlines that are not making profit to pack up, adding however that the oversight on such airline will be more rigorous saying safety is the major responsibility of all airline operators.

Adurogboye added that the tendency is there for an airline that is not making profit to cut corner on maint-

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

enance of aircraft.

His words: "If your insurance has expired, you automatically ground yourself, that is what the rule says and NCAA is going to enforce that, but where you refuse to ground yourself and we have to do it, then we have to sanction you the more."

Adurogboye explained that the audit will involve looking into the totality of airlines all over again, such as the fleet, personnel, insurance, offices adding that the audit will afford NCAA to know airlines that can survive and stand on their own.

"We want to know airlines that are not financially healthy, their status, to look at their books and know whether they are making profit or not. NCAA is the only one empowered to do so," he said.

Business Trust

Maritime



Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Japaul Oil and Maritime Service Plc, Mr. Paul Abiodun Jegede (right) during the completion board meeting of Japaul IPO recently in Lagos.

NCS Ibadan surpasses revenue target

The Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) Osun/Oyo area command, Ibadan has exceeded its revenue target for the year 2004 by the sum of N1,147,690,476.94, the Customs Area Comptroller (CAC), Mohammed M. has said.

According to him, the revenue target for the year 2004 was N2,241,112,289.10, while the revenue generated between January and December 2004 was N3,388,866,394.07.

A break-down of the figure shows that excise duty collected amounted to N3,386,004,285.04, import duty N644,481.00 and fees N2,154,000.00 while was put at N63,529.03, altogether N3,388,866,294.07.

In 2003, a total revenue of N1,940,043,716.91 was collected, which when compared to the 2004 figures shows a difference of N1,488,759,049.13 or 75 per cent of the figure of 2004.

Similarly, a total of 21 seizures were made in 2004 which included vehicles and general goods with duty paid value (DPV) of N30,502,265.40.

In 2003, there were only 9 seizures made and the duty paid value (DPV) was N7,376,747.75. The difference for the seizure is 12 and the DPV is N23,125,517.65.

Japaul proposes 15k dividends to shareholders

Japaul Oil and Maritime Services Plc, the first maritime company operating in the oil and gas sector to be listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), is proposing to pay 15k per share to the existing shareholders of the company for the year ended December 2004 as dividends.

In a statement signed by Mr. Jegede Paul, MD/CEO, Japaul Plc, a copy of which was made available to *Business Trust*, said that the turnover of the company for year 2004 is N535 million with profit after tax of N138million.

He said that the company shall be reserving N100million to the wealth of both incoming and existing shareholders.

In his opinion, it is evident that the present shareholders are willing to share their wealth with the incoming shareholders by proposing N48million as dividend from N138million profit made.

"This is not the case with some other companies that are in the same state of

transition from limited liability company to a public liability company", the statement said.

According to the statement, the performance of

the company was impressive if compared to some other companies.

It said further that: "We are committed to building up the wealth of our shareholders."

It stressed that the dividend the company is

paying to its existing shareholders is the least it can ever pay, adding that the projection for dividend payment for year 2005 and 2006 will not be less than 25k and 30k per share respectively.

NPA launches aerial surveillance helicopter

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has launched an aerial surveillance helicopter in an attempt to ensure that Nigeria's water channels are free from illegal activities, potential dangers and any obstruction to free traffic of vessels and trade between the country and the rest of the world.

In a keynote address he delivered, the Minister of State in the federal ministry of transport, Engineer Musa Inua Mohammed said at the official launching ceremony which took place at the Lagos Port Complex (LPC) in Lagos, that the launching was a public manifestation of the determination of the federal government to carry out the tenets of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code.

He said that the launching of the surveillance helicopter was better appreciated from the perspective of the ongoing transport sector reforms, which include the concessioning of the Nigerian ports for efficiency, faster turn around time of vessels and speedy evacuation of cargo with the overall effect of the more

modern port management system.

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

...pays allowances to estate residents

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has commenced the payment of three years housing allowances, in advance, to its staff living in the Tin-Can Island Port Estate.

The measure is to enable the workers move out and secure accommodation elsewhere so as to leave the estate to private port investors.

The Assistant General Manager, Public Affairs of NPA, Mr Abiodun Borha, who disclosed this in Lagos, added that no staff living in the estate would be given a quit notice without proper planning.

According to Borha, the movement of the workers out of the estate is to be made as painless as possible.

The Secretary of the Estate Residents' Association, Mr Smart Mohammed confirmed to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that he received a cheque for his three-year housing allowance, but declined to disclose what the sum total was.

Mohammed explained that almost all the 100 residents of the estate had received their cheques.



Ndi Okereke-Onyike, NSE boss



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA TENDER NOTICE NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N40,000,000,000 will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 24/03/2005.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Issues Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 22/03/2005.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N10,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorized Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Wednesday, 23/03/2005. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Thursday, 24/03/2005. Payment in full for the amount of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the issue date 24/03/2005. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

ISSUES OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBUSQUARE
LAGOS

Business Trust

Aviation

NCAT to acquire N40 million radar

The Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria has concluded plans to acquire a modern radar worth N40 million by October 2005, to replace the unserviceable one in the institution.

Chinny A. Enechukwu, head of Radar Department, NCAT who disclosed this in an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust* over the weekend in Zaria, noted that radar is a vital equipment needed for training of students at the institution.

According to him, radar is a device that utilises electromagnetic waves to determine the location of a target in space, in relation to a known or fixed location.

Radar is also employed for the controlling of aircraft movement on ground, during take off landing within air routes or airways and for long-range and high altitude guidance of aircraft. It is also used for weather detection.

Enechukwu applauded the federal government over the decision to embark on the total radar coverage of the nation's airspace saying the project will ensure the security of our airspace as well as ensuring more efficient and economic use of the airspace.

He noted that patches airspace covered by the six radar stations in Nigeria are in Lagos, Kano, Abuja, Enugu, Port Harcourt and Kaduna airports.

He explained that Nigeria is in a zone with large weather build-up stressing that total radar coverage will facilitate easy movement of aircraft while any unauthorised aircraft will be easily detected.

He however urged the federal government to make

Stories from Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

available enough spare parts and personnel to man the radar coverage stressing that the inventors of the equipment can hold the country to ransom if enough spare parts are not procured.

Enechukwu warned further that the rate at which the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) sacks its personnel may also affect the effectiveness of the project noting that NAMA trains and sacks its personnel too frequently.

He lamented that the country has very few air traffic controllers, hinting further that when NCAT recently advertised vacant positions for traffic controllers, only eight personnel applied saying "only five out of the eight that applied were

short listed and three out of them are NAMA retired air traffic controllers, and we can only engage them on contract basis."

He appealed to the federal government to close the gap in the salaries of NCAT staff and other aviation parastatals noting that the disparity in the emolument of NCAT and other parastatals always discourages people to work in NCAT.

NCAT, according to him, is fast becoming an international aviation training institution apart from being the only aviation training institution in the country.

He disclosed further that about 20 air traffic controllers from French speaking African countries such as Chad, Mali, Senegal and Gabon are currently in NCAT to learn air traffic management in English language.

Forum charges airlines on consumer protection

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) consumer protection unit recently held a forum tagged the "aviation consumer interactive forum" to sensitise stakeholders in the aviation industry on consumers' rights and responsibilities, as well as the obligations of service providers.

The forum, which was chaired by Dr (Mrs) Dora Akunyili, the Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) was attended by all stakeholders including industry practitioners, aviation service providers including representatives of airlines, travel agencies, airport security, passengers and members of the public.

The forum provided an opportunity for interaction among the travelling public, the service providers and the

regulating authority.

Dr Akunyili reminded NCAA to include in its consumer protection unit, the issue of over booking, flight cancellation without apology and sanction airlines appropriately.

She lamented that some airlines cancel flight because of low turn out of passengers while such airlines will announce that they cancelled the flight due to operational difficulties.

The NAFDAC boss further declared that domestic airlines should not serve foreign juices on local routes since foreign juices have been banned by the federal government.

She advised NCAA to check food served by airlines

on board narrating an incident where pilgrims were served with bad food which caused them to have diarrhoea.

The director general of NCAA, Engineer Fidelis Onyeyiri however assured that the authority will make its bye-laws public, to sanction defaulters.

However, the forum agreed that airlines should establish consumer protection units at their respective offices to instantly handle consumer complaints.

That there is need for more collaboration between NCAA and other government agencies at the nation's airports towards improving the quality of service at these airports.



...naturally, the gains are evergreen

Experience evergreen gains, naturally

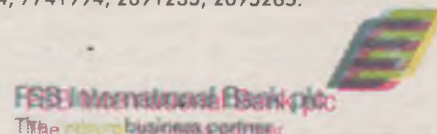


Ever-fruitful benefits for you.

THE PACKAGE:

- Minimum opening deposit of N50,000 only
- Minimum daily balance of N20,000
- Allows lodgments and withdrawals from any FSB branch
- Ability to use this product as security for loan
- Ability to pay in cheques
- Payments can be made to third parties with withdrawal vouchers that look like cheque slips
- 1% bonus interest in any month without withdrawal

For further details please call: (01) 7741714, 7741994, 2691235, 2695285.



HEAD OFFICE: 23, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, P.M.B. 12572, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel: 01-2690576-8, 2690739-45, Fax: 2690397, Telex: 28749 FSBINT NG. E-Mail: FSB.customerservice@fbsbint.com. Website: www.fbsbint.com
BRANCHES: Ikeja • Abuja • Port-Harcourt • Idumota • Kaduna (South) • Kaduna (North) • Onitsha I • Onitsha II • Kano • Apapa • Ikoyi • Maiduguri • Aba • Balogun • Victoria Island • ASPAMDA Trade Fair Complex
NAHCO Complex • Matori • Intel Camp (Port - Harcourt) • NNPC Headquarters • Tin - Can

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.81	2,000	1,620.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	30	16.67	480,169	8,331,357.10
PRESCO PLC.	4	9.49	20,142	191,147.58
Sector Totals	35		502,311	8,524,124.68
AIRLINES				
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC.	6	1.00	55,900	55,900.00
Sector Totals	6		55,900	55,900.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	11	1.87	102,804	191,923.48
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	7	4.14	40,021	165,686.94
Sector Totals	18		142,825	357,610.42
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	4	3.42	9,386	32,100.12
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	16	6.63	115,102	763,126.26
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	2	3.41	7,029,017	23,968,947.97
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	325,000	1,267,500.00
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	1	1.92	10,000	19,200.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	3	2.26	15,000	33,900.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	522	23.00	2,428,601	55,665,151.69
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	69	1.26	1,354,194	1,675,252.39
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	305	10.39	2,124,233	21,402,389.20
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	14	0.37	2,826,400	1,045,768.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	30	0.56	1,107,478	607,403.40
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	50	1.58	4,185,003	6,484,664.54
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	4	7.81	44,724	349,294.44
LIBERTY MERCHANT BANK	2	0.80	2,000	1,600.00
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.61	500	305.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	15	1.20	2,921,079	3,507,294.80
NAL BANK PLC.	3	2.80	3,018	8,450.40
OCEANIC BANK PLC	10	4.03	571,181	2,301,859.43
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	4	1.43	238,900	341,977.00
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	5	7.41	302,000	2,237,820.00
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	14	1.43	788,319	1,151,296.17
TRADE BANK PLC.	1	1.35	1,000	1,350.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	20	10.00	65,400	654,000.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	362	18.96	1,677,261	31,414,017.20
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	8	0.71	153,162	106,357.82
WEMA BANK PLC.	5	3.93	543,172	2,134,665.96
ZENITH BANK PLC	259	13.39	2,147,549	28,446,279.44
Sector Totals	1,731		30,988,679	185,621,971.23
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	185	77.00	475,351	36,856,567.99
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	4	0.90	10,100	9,090.00
JOS INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	2	3.80	2,000	7,600.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	483	34.86	1,767,877	63,963,792.14
Sector Totals	674		2,255,328	100,837,050.13
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	192	23.00	1,340,128	30,386,515.04
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	5	4.20	82,356	345,895.20
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC.	1	6.20	2,000	12,400.00
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	19	10.35	166,978	1,728,222.30
Sector Totals	217		1,591,462	32,473,032.54
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	3	4.89	2,923	14,293.47
CAP PLC.	11	6.10	24,617	148,362.75
D. N. MEYER PLC.	5	4.60	34,104	156,861.12
IPWA PLC.	1	0.50	1,250	625.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	9	3.81	30,693	116,889.08
Sector Totals	29		93,587	437,031.42
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	2	1.00	3,000	3,000.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	14	4.01	154,842	643,195.56
CHELLARAMS PLC.	1	1.71	100	171.00
JOHN HOLT PLC.	5	0.58	47,629	27,624.82
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	189	15.00	1,371,016	20,647,442.35
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	78	11.19	233,386	2,632,277.07
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	2	1.04	1,250	1,300.00
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	71	14.17	205,789	2,916,030.13
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	13	0.90	129,365	118,061.14
Sector Totals	375		2,146,377	26,989,102.07
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	1	0.90	2,000	1,800.00
G. CAPPALC.	1	2.23	2,500	5,575.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	4	16.00	3,426	54,816.00
Sector Totals	6		7,926	62,191.00
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	3	0.64	15,000	9,600.00
Sector Totals	3		15,000	9,600.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	27	21.72	42,783	925,617.45
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	179	49.98	385,081	19,292,147.02
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	71	16.61	1,028,807	17,088,484.27
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	89	48.75	280,450	13,802,340.52
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	79	139.00	88,523	12,343,981.97
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	1	15.00	1,500	22,500.00
Sector Totals	446		1,827,144	63,475,071.23
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC.	3	0.89	130,000	115,700.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	11	3.12	58,545	182,652.60
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	8	4.80	47,600	230,510.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	16	3.40	138,567	465,405.33
PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	3	4.09	11,606	47,468.54
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	21	8.05	100,560	817,571.29
Sector Totals	62		486,878	1,859,307.76
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.96	40,782	39,150.72
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	3	3.00	20,300	60,900.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	24	3.08	99,570	303,836.02
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	1	1.90	1,000	1,900.00
Sector Totals	31		161,652	405,786.74
INSURANCE				
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	8	1.70	428,922	712,466.52
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	4	1.40	450,000	629,000.00
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	4	1.19	223,900	276,603.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	9	2.99	61,179	174,385.07
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	1	1.97	1,670	3,289.90
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	2	2.90	69,332	201,153.94
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	8	0.65	359,100	221,145.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	8	0.82	68,766	56,030.46
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	5	2.50	27,604	69,010.00
Sector Totals	49		1,690,473	2,343,083.89
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	6	1.35	12,500	16,875.00
Sector Totals	6		12,500	16,875.00
PACKAGING				
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	4	3.87	8,734	33,800.58
WEST AFRICAN GLASS INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	0.54	2,000	1,080.00
Sector Totals	5		10,734	34,880.58
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	1	0.72	30,000	21,600.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	156	55.47	631,473	35,105,117.60
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	9	2.04	346,200	706,248.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	48	174.00	44,942	7,898,989.83
CONOIL PLC.	94	100.00	112,109	11,394,168.71
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	27	158.50	29,446	4,605,163.52
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	56	171.49	55,213	9,432,578.65
OANDO PLC.	221	91.00	478,053	42,823,270.59
Sector Totals	612		1,727,436	111,987,136.90
REALESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	38	8.10	335,765	2,741,766.99
Sector Totals	38		335,765	2,741,766.99
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	18	2.00	109,482	219,986.50
Sector Totals	18		109,482	219,986.50
Overall Totals		4,361	44,161,459	538,451,509.08

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
LEVBROS	1,371,016.00	20,647,442.35	189
UBN	1,677,261.00	31,414,017.20	362
NB	1,767,877.00	63,963,792.14	483
GUARANTY	2,124,233.00	21,402,389.20	305
ZENITHBANK	2,147,549.00	28,446,279.44	259
FIRSTBANK	2,428,601.00	55,665,151.69	522
GULFBANK	2,826,400.00	1,045,768.00	14
MANNYBANK	2,921,079.00	3,507,294.80	15
INLANDBANK	4,185,003.00	6,484,664.54	50
ATLANTICBK	7,029,017.00	23,968,947.97	2

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
TEXACO	157.00	158.50	+1.50
UNIPETROL	90.00	91.00	+1.00
GUARANTY	9.90	10.39	+0.49
PRESCO	9.04	9.49	+0.45
TOTAL	171.05	171.49	+0.44
ASHAKACEM	22.70	23.00	+0.30
UBN	18.80	18.96	+0.16
PFIZER	3.25	3.40	+0.15
NIGERINS	2.85	2.99	+0.14
EVANSMED	2.98	3.12	+0.14

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NB	36.69	34.86	-1.83
NBC	50.00	48.75	-1.25
CADBURY	51.00	49.98	-1.02
NOLCHEM	101.00	100.00	-1.00
NESTLE	139.99	139.00	-0.99
GUINNESS	77.97	77.00	-0.97
AP	55.95	55.47	-0.48
OKOMUOIL	16.94	16.67	-0.27
LEVBROS	15.23	15.00	-0.23
OCEANIC	4.24	4.03	-0.21

Dollar steady ahead of capital flow data

The dollar held steady against most major currencies yesterday ahead of US capital flow data that will show how well the United States is financing its massive current account deficit.

Traders were also awaiting the ZEW institute's German investor confidence index, due at 5 a.m. yesterday for the first clues on euro zone confidence in March, and US retail sales.

US Treasury International Capital (TIC) data for January was due at 9 a.m. yesterday. Net capital inflows to US assets eased to \$61.3 billion in December barely covering the trade deficit from a revised \$89.3 billion in November.

"We'd need to see a number of \$60 billion plus to continue the dollar's resilience," said Jeremy Stretch, senior market strategist at Rabobank.

"There's some hope the retail sales report will be on the upside of expectations I think that's helping," he added.

The gaping US current account deficit has been a major factor behind the dollar's three-year decline.

By 3:45 a.m. EST, the dollar was little changed from late New York levels at \$1.3367 against the euro.

It had gained around 0.6 percent against the euro on Monday after having hit a two-month low of around \$1.3480 late last week when data showed the U.S. trade gap widened in January to \$58.3 billion, the second-largest monthly deficit on record.

Against the yen, the dollar stood at 104.74 yen, down slightly on the day.

Germany's ZEW index, due to be released at 1000 GMT is expected to show a slight dip to 34.0 in March from 35.9 in February.

"There is a risk that a downbeat number will see euro/dollar trade to the downside," said Stretch.

The US currency rallied on Monday from last week's two-month low against the euro partly as investors took profits on the belief that a dollar sell-off on weak US trade data on Friday may have been overdone.

Investors had also jumped on the dollar as 10-year US bond yields rose to a 7 1/2 month high around 4.58 percent on Monday, implying higher interest rates in the future.

Higher interest rates generally attract more capital from overseas, which leads to increased demand for the dollar.

"You don't get both rising Treasury yields and a fall in the dollar at the same time very often," said Toshihiro Azuma, forex manager at Sumitomo Trust and Banking Corp in Tokyo.

"So investors jumped on this opportunity."

Nigeria is benefiting from

Ambassador Mamman M. Daura, the Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Technical Aid Corps scheme (TAC), is among the few experienced diplomats in Nigeria. Having served for eight years as Ambassador of Nigeria to Uganda, in the recent past, Daura had also served in Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Belgium and Cameroon. Daura, a graduate of Maryland University, has also served in different capacities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this interview with Jibrin Abubakar of our foreign desk, the Sarkin Yaki of Daura explains the role of TAC in reshaping the image of the country in the global village, and much else. Excerpts:

How would you describe the achievements of the Technical Aids Corps since its inception?

The successful achievements of the Technical Aid Corps Scheme could be gauged from its durability and wide acceptance by a large number of recipient countries as well as its cognate recognition by many International organisations such as the Commonwealth, the United Nations Volunteer Service and numerous International Development Agencies, particularly in Europe, Asia and North America. It is essential to note that the TAC Scheme has been a very visible component of our foreign policy since its establishment 18 years ago. It would be recalled that prior to the setting up of the programme, Nigeria's Technical Assistance to ACP countries was largely uncoordinated and cash based, which did not have the desired impact particularly on the beneficiary countries.

As the need arose for a more coordinated and durable Programme of development assistance to friendly African, Caribbean and Pacific states, the Technical Aid Corps Scheme was set up in 1987. To date, more than 28 countries in the three Regions have benefited from the services of over two thousand Nigerian volunteer professionals in the fields of medicine, education, engineering, law, nursing etc. Some of the beneficiary countries are Fiji, Commonwealth of Dominica, Belize, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Seychelles, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Equatorial Guinea.

The success of the Scheme can also be gauged by the level of recognition it has so far received from many International Organizations. In 2003, an MOU between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Di-

rectorate was signed to forge a closer cooperation and partnership to enable the Commonwealth Manpower Development programme and the TAC Scheme work together in providing professional manpower assistance to needy members

the receiving States.

As of now, it would be difficult to say precisely how many applications we have so far received for the forthcoming interview slated for March/April this year, because of the large number of applications

What are some of the constraints of the TAC?

I must admit that there are no constraints as such in the implementation of the Scheme. This is particularly because of the fact that the Federal Government is very consistent in the pursuit of its policy of mutual cooperation, understanding and self-reliance between Nigeria and the ACP countries in consonance with her leadership role in Africa.

What are the factors that led to the establishment of TAC?

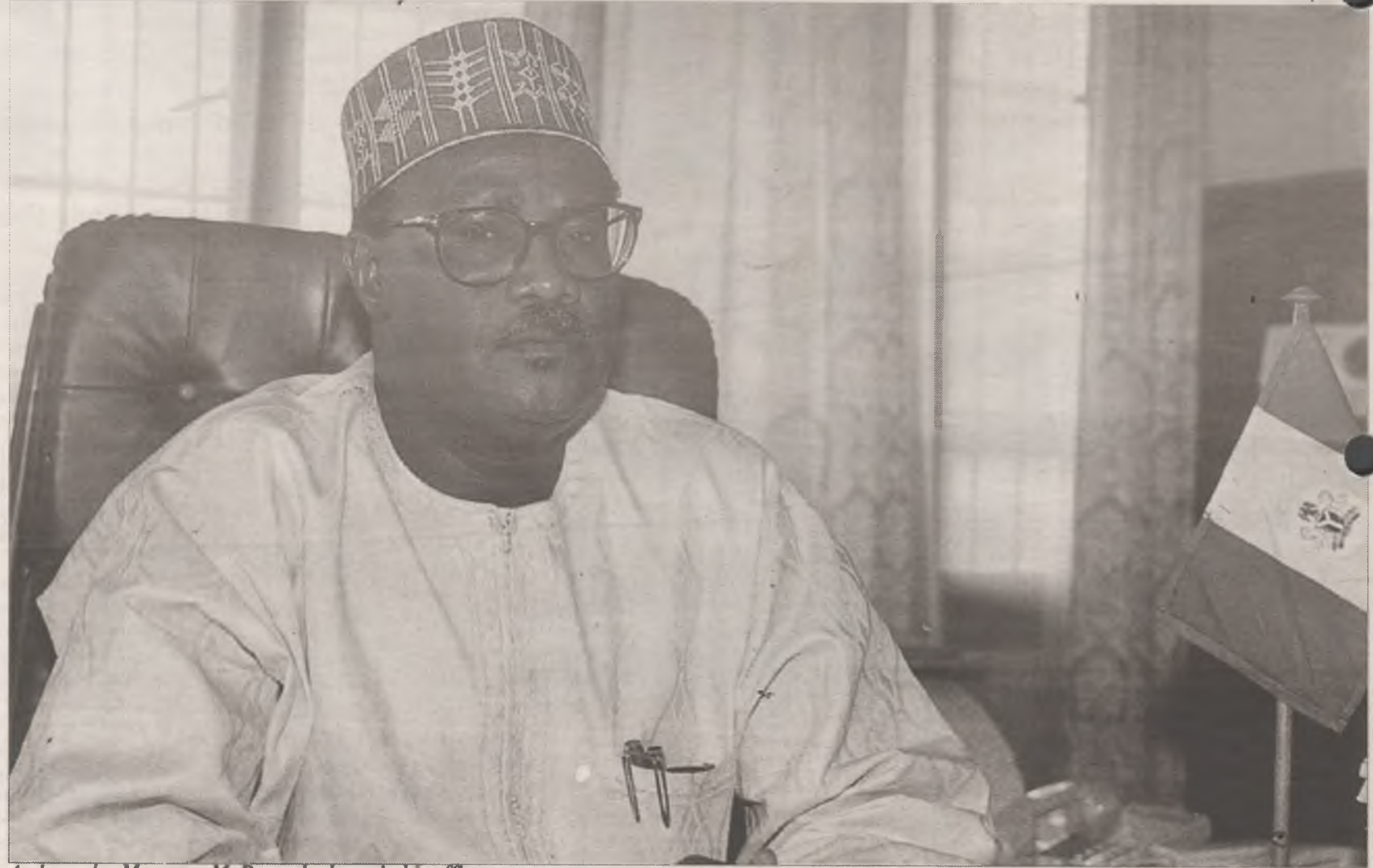
Government's commitment to contribute to the development of needy countries in African, Caribbean and Pacific Regions (ACP), necessitated the setting up of the Technical

aid Corps Scheme. I must admit that there are no constraints as such in the implementation of the Scheme. This is particularly because of the fact that the Federal Government is very consistent in the pursuit of its policy of mutual cooperation, understanding and self-reliance between Nigeria and the ACP countries in consonance with her leadership role in Africa.

I wish to seize this opportunity to emphasise that these objectives are being fully realised through the effective participation of our volunteers in physical socio-economic development of the countries concerned. As I have earlier reiterated, the unprecedented phenomenal expansion of the Programme in the past 10 years clearly attests to its utility value as an effective bridge in South-

coordinating have certain responsibilities historically bestowed on her. Nigeria's global rating demands that she be very proactive in strengthening cooperation, understanding and self-reliance at the sub-regional, regional international settings. It should, therefore, be stressed that while the Scheme was designed to assist needy ACP countries certain benefits can also accrue to the country.

Two former volunteers retained by Shelter Afrique in Nairobi, Kenya were instrumental in the decision of the organization to fund the construction of low-cost housing units in Akwa Ibom State. Also, ex-volunteers have returned home with new or improved



Ambassador Mamman M. Daura looks on in his office.

of the Organization. Similar links with other organizations are in the offing.

Can you give us details about the nature of applications received by TAC?

A statistical overview of the Programme since the establishment of the Scheme in 1987 clearly shows a progressive biennial increase in the number of volunteers deployed to various beneficiary countries. This particular trend is a clear testimony to the growing popularity of the TAC Scheme among Nigerians and

received and the need to sort them out on state by state basis. I must however say that response to our advertisement by Nigerian professionals has been overwhelming.

It also pertinent to note that the TAC programme has witnessed its most phenomenal growth during the present democratic dispensation. This flows naturally from the country's rising profile in international affairs due principally to the pro-active foreign policy of President Obasanjo's administration.

Aid Corps Scheme.

The Scheme was established in 1987 purposely to provide development assistance to ACP countries through deployment of experienced Nigerian professionals particularly in the fields of medicine, education, engineering, nursing etc. The deployment is for a period of two years.

The goals and objectives of setting up the scheme include: sharing of Nigeria's technical know-how and expertise; providing assistance on the basis of assessed and per-

South cooperation.

What do Nigerian stand to gain from the scheme?

I wish to say without any iota of doubt that Nigeria stands to gain tremendously from running the Scheme, which, as I have repeatedly said, has become an effective bridge in promoting and consolidating South-South Cooperation for which we have all along been taking a leading role.

I wish to reiterate the fact that Nigeria is a big player in the international stage and ac-

skills and exposure for the benefit of the country. Many volunteers have also been re-

Precisely, 915 volunteers were deployed to about 25 countries. A gracious approach was taken by President Obasanjo. 25 professionals were each selected for deployment and 15 f



PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE MODIFICATION OF THE DOMESTIC TERMINAL BUILDING OF THE NNAMDI AZIKIWE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ABUJA

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria in accordance with Due Process rules and regulations hereby invites interested reputable consultancy firms or consortiums for pre-qualification consideration in the provision of consultancy services to FAAN on the modification of the domestic terminal building of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

- ▶ Architectural
- ▶ Civil & Structural Engineering
- ▶ Mechanical & Electrical Engineering
- ▶ Quantity Surveying
- ▶ Project Management

PRE-QUALIFICATION EXERCISE

In order to be considered for participation in the pre-qualification process, interested firms are required to submit the following:

- ▶ Evidence of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- ▶ Evidence of registration with professional bodies
- ▶ Evidence of registration with FAAN
- ▶ Tax clearance for the last 3 years.
- ▶ Firm's profile
- ▶ Organizational structure, including names and resumes of key personnel.
- ▶ Evidence of projects executed.
- ▶ Letter of reference from firm's bank

Please ensure that your submission is in accordance with the format above.

All submissions should be well detailed, as the contents would be accordingly evaluated and only short listed firms would be considered

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

All Pre-Qualification documents are to be submitted in two copies and neatly bound in binders (A4 size) and placed in separate sealed brown envelopes marked as follows: **CONFIDENTIAL " PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE MODIFICATION OF THE DOMESTIC TERMINAL BUILDING OF THE NNAMDI AZIKIWE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ABUJA"** and submitted to the office of The Secretary, Tenders Board, FAAN Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos, not later than fourteen days(2weeks) from the date of this notice, while all submissions will be opened on the same date, at 12noon.

NB.

- ▶ All expenses incurred and associated with the preparation of any pre-qualification response shall be borne by the prospective firm making the response.
- ▶ Notwithstanding the submission of the pre-qualification information, FAAN is neither committed nor obliged to include any firm on any shortlist or to appoint any firm.
- ▶ FAAN reserves the right to reject any/or all pre-qualification submissions.
- ▶ FAAN will not enter into correspondence with any firm or individual on why a firm was pre-qualified or not pre-qualified
- ▶ This public notice of "Invitation to Pre-qualify" shall not be construed as a commitment on the part of FAAN, nor shall it entitle the submitting firm to make any claim whatsoever and or seek any indemnity from FAAN by virtue of such firm having responded to this publication.

Signed
Management



BAUCHI STATE GOVERNMENT WELCOMES AN ELDER STATESMAN

Your visit to Bauchi State today is a testimony of your love for the actualization of the transformational agenda of the Government for its people. You have always been associated with positive ideas aimed at Reforming and Promoting the well-fare and growth of the Nigerian Nation. Certainly, you are an Icon of Patriotism and leadership in Nigeria.

We therefore, wish to on behalf of His Excellency, Alhaji (Dr.)

Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu

(*Walin Bauchi*), the Governor of Bauchi State, the Executive Government and the good people of the State welcome you to Bauchi on the auspicious occasion of two day official visit to commission development projects executed by the State Government for the benefit of the people.

Signed

IBRAHIM ZAILANI

Hon. Commissioner of Information
Chairman, Publicity Sub-Committee



His Excellency, Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, GCFR
Former President, Federal Republic of Nigeria



His Excellency,
Alhaji (Dr.) Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu (Walin Bauchi),
Executive Governor, Bauchi State,

Catch all the fun at the 2005

MALTINA ARGUNGU FISHING FESTIVAL

16th - 19th March, 2005

*Share the fun.
Share the nourishment.*





NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY (NOA) EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

By

ALH. IDI FARUK DIRECTOR-GENERAL, NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY (NOA)

**BEING THE 2005 ANNUAL LECTURE ORGANISED BY THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS
(NAPSS). UNIVERSITY OF JOS CHAPTER, PLATEAU STATE,
ON THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2005.**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organisers of this occasion for giving me the opportunity to address the important topic of education, particularly in the context of the Nigerian society.

As you are aware, the primary concerns of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) have to do with orientation, the moulding and remoulding of attitudes for which education is a key factor.

2. We are humans essentially by virtue of the processes of socialisation, education and various life experiences. Education is unquestionably one of those distinctive activities that make the difference between animals and human beings. It imbues the human infant with the potentials to evolve into a sentient, rational and autonomous person. In contrast, animals lack the potentials to grow into higher conscious beings. It is through education that human beings become conscious of their environment, and it is through learning that we develop a moral sense of what is right and wrong as well as make choices between different courses of actions. In other words, it is only through education that we can actualize the human potentials in us.

3. Education takes place in a variety of forms – socialization through the family, formal and informal learning in institutions and practical experiences. All this is done in the context of our interaction with the social environment. It is in this regard that the NOA is interested in education. As an instrument of socialisation, education teaches us to uphold and promote the positive values of society, and in conjunction with other institutions such as the family, laws and religion, it prepares the citizen to uphold the core social values of society. NOA is particularly concerned with the role of education as it affects people's attitudes in our quest for national development.

4. Development has a dual component, involving both mental and material or physical aspects. Mental development is literally the pool of intellectual ideas that are fundamental to the management of physical development. Such ideas are propagated through education. A nation can only grow to the extent of the depth of ideas that drive its development vision. Education is, therefore, of strategic importance in any system that aspires to attain sustainable development.

5. Let me point out that there are different types of education based on diverse philosophical foundations. I am particularly interested in education for self-reliance, which refers to the acquisition of ideas, abilities and skills that empower us to be self-supporting, either as individuals or as a society. This is the kind of education that should be the dream of our country. Unfortunately, however, the pattern of education adopted in Nigeria since the dawn of independence has been a total departure from the ideal.

6. The world economy is rapidly changing, with knowledge and skill supplanting physical capital as the main sources of national growth and development. Consequently, the structure of education is also changing in a process driven by information and communication technology, with an increasing contribution from small and medium scale enterprises. The emphasis is now on employment generation and self-reliance.

7. These realities and social dynamics have resulted in general reforms in higher education in many countries of the world. Most university curricula are changing in design and orientation to address the current and future needs of the learner and of society. In Nigeria, our universities need to produce graduates that can adopt to the constantly and rapidly changing needs of the labour market.

8. However, a pragmatic and realist educational infrastructure is not one of the easiest things to accomplish, particularly in a country whose educational system is an offshoot of colonial conquest. Nor is it easy changing the goals and objectives of an established educational system, given the volume of resources needed to fund the retooling of existing institutions to meet desired forms. To achieve education for self-reliance, every one of us must be innovative – the teachers, students, government, parents and the open society.

9. For a long time, the structure of our educational system in this country has not been responsive to the entrepreneurial needs of modern living. Nigeria, therefore, needs to adopt a pragmatic entrepreneurial approach to teaching and learning so as to reduce the number of unemployed young men and women who have for years been queuing for formal employment. Since there are very few vacancies in government establishments to absorb these unemployed youths, there is an urgent need to be innovative in creating alternatives.

10. Necessity is the mother of invention, which is why some of our youths are beginning to respond to the challenges of our time. It is encouraging that many young Nigerians,

are adopting the alternative of establishing private tutorial classes and holding preparatory clinics for admission seekers. Through this creative response to the challenges of unemployment, these young men and women become self-employed by deploying their skills in preparing candidates for admission into tertiary institutions.

11. It is delighting to note that the National Universities Commission (NUC) is in the process of introducing, entrepreneurial courses for final year students in our universities. The new commitment is for Nigerian universities to produce more knowledgeable, skilled and entrepreneurial graduates who are self-reliant and capable of meeting the needs of present-day industry. I hope that this innovation will be implemented as soon as possible so that the products of our universities can meet the realities and challenges of modern living. I suggest that the NUC should take cognisance of existing institutional structures for youth empowerment and job creation to ensure a strategic connection between the new curricula and the practical society into which their products are thrown after graduation.

12. Other institutional coordinating agencies such as the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should emulate the NUC in introducing entrepreneurial courses in polytechnics and colleges of education to inculcate the spirit of self-reliance in their products.

13. Given the vast informal economy that exists in Nigeria, self-employment on a small or medium scale is always an option. Today, we have banks and institutions which organise micro-credit facilities as a way of empowering the populace. For example, New African Bank Plc, has what it calls an "Asset Acquisition Account" which requires a small contribution of between 15 - 30% of the cost of an asset to be procured by a visionary entrepreneur who acquires it and pays for it over a period of time. This not only enables the entrepreneur to make income, but he eventually owns the asset. This, I believe, is better than waiting for non-existing government jobs.

14. Raising the necessary capital, even the 15 - 30% mentioned above, to start any small-scale business is difficult. However, where there is a will, there will always be a way. With prayer and hardwork, nothing is impossible. For example, the thrift collection system also known as 'adashe' or 'esusu' enables a member to raise capital far above his contribution with minimal interest to start a business.

15. Furthermore, Government also offers certain opportunities for self-employment through schemes such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). There are other schemes to explore, including the Agricultural Loans, Youth Empowerment, Small and Medium Scale enterprises, which enable beneficiaries to set up their own businesses.

16. It is a fact that most of the big time investors in Nigeria today never took up government employment at any point in their life. In the developed world, there are successful men and women of visions and ideas who believe in their abilities to bring their dream to fruition – Bill Gates, Michael Dell, Warren Buffet, Richard Branson, to mention a few. Phillip Emeagwali is one of the Nigerian equivalents of these success stories. Such men succeed because they do not accept failures.

17. Successful businessmen are highly motivated people who are never daunted by failures. As Dale Carnegie rightly observed

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed no hope".

For such motivated achievers, every failure is perceived as a valuable knowledge of how not to approach a venture.

18. Finally, it is my humble view that self-reliant education prepares young people to develop independent minds and realize their full potentials. It is the kind of education that enables the human person to be fully creative and to develop. Positive attitudes towards their civic duties. I pray fervently that when you graduate from your various courses, you will be inspired to embrace the richness of the informal economy, secure your independence and develop into a fulfilled human person, materially, socially and spiritually.

19. I thank you all for listening.

SIGNED

ALH. IDI FARUK

Director-General

National Orientation Agency (NOA)

TAC – Ambassador Daura

ained by recipient countries as advisers/managers in their various services and are therefore continuing to promote cooperation and understanding between us and those countries. Besides, many ex-volunteers have been employed by International Agencies such as UN Volunteer Service because of the visible impact they had made in carrying out their respective assignments in their various countries of deployment.

Lastly, it is worth noting that Nigeria needs friends on the international arena and there is no doubt that the TAC programme is playing a big role in garnering such friends for us. It is therefore, advisable that we continue to offer technical assistance to needy countries in order not to jeopardize our long term strategic interests. In a fast-changing international political landscape this is not the time to be retrospective.

How many volunteers are you engaging in the current biennium?

Precisely, 915 volunteers were selected for deployment to about 20 countries, following the gracious approval of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Professionals from different fields were each selected from the 36 states of the Federation and 15 from Federal Capital Territory.

How many agreements have you signed with international organisations in relation to the scheme?

The Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2003 between Nigerian and the Commonwealth Organization has many provisions, three of which are to provide specific TAC volunteers to needy Commonwealth member countries by the Directorate with substantial funding from the Commonwealth Manpower Development Assistance programme; to increase the data

of Nigerian professionals on the Secretarial Data Base of professionals from member countries with the aim of giving more opportunities to Nigerian professionals for recruitment and deployment to other member countries by the Secretariat of the organisation; and cooperation in implementing the Secretariat's justice improve policy, aimed at assisting some West African States with the provision of Nigerian judges for the countries concerned.

What are the criteria used in sending volunteer to these countries?

The basic criteria of eligibility for participation in the programme are Nigerian citizenship, possession of a university degree or its equivalent or professional qualification in specialized fields. The prospective candidates must also possess a 3-year post-NYSC working experience. Prospective volunteers who are selected on the basis of equality of states go through a process of interview and orientation before being considered prima facie qualified for deployment. Final selection for deployment depends on clearance by the recipient countries. It should be stressed that the TAC Directorate has no control over who is eventually deployed as this responsibility resides with the recipient countries.

What are the responsibilities or obligation of the receiving countries?

In line with the provision of the Country Agreement between Nigeria and individual beneficiary countries, each receiving state has the explicit obligation of providing free and reasonably furnished accommodation for volunteers; provision of free health care; and provision of transportation to and from places of deployment. Many recipient countries do extend more privileges and facilities to our vol-

unteers outside those obligations outlined in the Country Agreement. This is often in appreciation of the contribution of TAC volunteers to their respective socio-economic development.

What would you say about the behaviour of the volunteers abroad?

Over the years, TAC volunteers have built positions of distinctive recognition in their countries of deployment. Many of them have been retained in the countries of deployment because of their diligence, devotion to duty, professional excellence and competence.

A medical TAC volunteer received official commendation in Sierra-Leone for his pioneering effort in setting up a primary healthcare Centre. Another TAC doctor who served in Jamaica received an official commendation for the vital role he played in the control of typhoid fever epidemic in a prominent area of the country. TAC volunteers who served in Belize were granted Residence Permit in recognition of their commendable services in that country.

The Seychellois Government has retained a TAC volunteer who served in their apex bank as a Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Economic Planning.

Just recently, a volunteer who served in the 2002/2004 biennium, Mr. Kuta, was appointed to develop the Tourism Management Course he designed in Sierra-Leone. Mr. Kuta who served at the Milton Margi college of Education and Technology designed a Tourism Management Course which has been accredited by the National Council for Technical Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) in Sierra-Leone.

So, the TAC volunteers have always performed very well and have thus behaved well.

How much money does the federal government sink into the project every two years?

Because of the inter lapping nature of the Programme, more especially the fact that each proceeding biennium goes a little into the next service period, it would be difficult for me to give the precise cost of executing the Scheme.



TAC volunteer, Odiachi-Okwuchi L C, Teaching Students at the Jumina University school of Nursing, Ethiopia.



TAC doctor with colleagues during a major operation in a hospital in Zambia



Anyishi S. Garba Kuta TAC - volunteer lecturing at MNICE and T Sierra Leone.

unteers were selected for deployment to about 20 countries, following the approval of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Professionals from different fields were each selected from the 36 states of the Federation and 15 from Federal Capital Territory.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Erosion cuts off 3 Enugu communities

Gully erosion has cut off three communities in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State.

The affected communities are Egushiri-Amala, Umuitodo-Obolonkwo and Ulonimagu.

Chairman of the council, Chief Fabian Ugwu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Obollo-Afor, the council headquarters today that though no lives had been lost, the people were suffering untold hardship.

He said Egushiri-Amala people now had to pass through some villages in Benue to reach the rest of the council area due to the erosion menace.

Ugwu said the communities had the highest number of cashew plantations in the old Nsukka zone, stressing that since they were cut off, Cashew harvested from their farms had been rotting away.

He also said families in the

affected communities had been forced to relocate to new homes, due to the encroachment of erosion to their homes and farm lands.

The chairman commended the federal and Enugu state governments for tackling another erosion site at Obollo-Eke, adding that with the rate of work at the site, the gully there would be controlled.

"We are, however, appealing to the federal government to assist us in



Gov Naamani Chimaraoke

checking the erosion that is threatening the three communities.

"We are afraid that if the rainy season sets in, the situation will get worse," Ugwu added.

Duke warns against bush burning

Against the backdrop of the state's tourism projections' governor Donald Duke of Cross River State has warned against the dangers of bush burning in the state.

Duke who was speaking at the commissioning of the Alege rural electrification project in Obudu local government area said he ordered the people of the area to put a stop to it as its consequences are devastating.

According to the governor, "the mindless exercise of bush burning loosens the earth leading to loss of fertility with time, exposes the soil to erosion as well as destroys the biodiversity of an area."

He explained that with great tourism potential, the Obudu Ranch Resort and others located within the central and northern parts of the state, the cable car project at the ranch and with the envisaged three million tourists to the area annually by 2010 it was necessary for the people to seriously discourage the culture of burning bushes.

Duke said that the people should evolve what he called controlled burning because it is not a place earmarked for farming.

He therefore charged the commission to make good use of the electricity being provided them to establish themselves and protect the installations from theft and vandalism.

In a remark, State commissioner for public

The President Olusegun Obasanjo has expressed joy with the increased interest of the private sector in the development of the nation's mortgage financing sector.

This was made known in a press release issued to Daily Trust and signed by

Obasanjo welcomes increased private sector interest in mortgage financing

By Michael Paul, (Intern)

Musa Aduwak for the Senior Special Assistant (Media) to the president.

President Obasanjo while receiving the report of the Presidential committee on mortgage financing at the State House said there were now "reasonably cheap funds available which can be used for property development," and advised interested investors to take advantage of these funds.

The president who said his government is on an "Economic reform process"

said it was necessary to reform the sector, especially the relevant current laws.

President Obasanjo also promised that government would study the report and implement accepted recommendations by the committee.

Earlier on, Housing and Urban Development minister, Chief Mrs. Mobolaji Osomo had said the committee took a careful and comprehensive look at the whole mortgage financing sector, including relevant institutions and their role in the growth of the sector.

FCDA to construct four multi-level car parks

A contract agreement for the construction of four multi-level car parks to ease the plight of Abuja residents and reorganise the city's parking system has been signed.

This contact agreement is coming in line with the F.C.T's minister's effort to make Abuja the nation's dream city.

In a press release made available to Daily Trust, the proposed sites for the development of the multi-level car parks include: Garki, Area 10 (Old UTC complex) Garki, Area 1, Garki Area II (FCDA/HQ) and Wuse Zone 4.

The Wuse zone 4 sites was however removed from the list among to development control problems.

It will be recalled that in May 2004, the minister of the F.C.T. Mallam Nasir el-Rufai gave AIPDC (Abuja investment & property Development Company) the mandate to handle the proposed development under the public private partnership (PPP) initiative of his administration.

The private sector is given the responsibility to initiate designs, fund the construction, and operate the facilities (or

infrastructures) for an agreed term before reverting back to the government.

In this regard, a competitive bidding process was held. After which two (2) companies namely: Minfa limited "Design & Build (D&B) limited were selected as the preferred bidders, out of the twenty-one (21) companies that expressed interests.

Minfa Limited is to develop Garki Area 1, while D&B limited is to develop Garki Area 10 & 11.

The FCT minister was represented by the F.C.T transport secretary at the signing ceremony.

FCT commences 2nd stage of cadastral land registry

The FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai has signed the contract with the management of Julius Berger Plc for the commencement of the second stage of the computerisation of the cadastral and law registry for phases III and IV of the F.C.T.

According to a press release issued to Daily Trust

the contract signed last Thursday covers the satellite towns and all the area councils. It is also for the development of Geo-spatial Data and infrastructural development in the capital city.

The contract, according to Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai is expected to last for a period of thirty (30) months.



Special adviser to the president on National Assembly Matters, Senator Florence Ita-giwa (r), chairman senate committee on environment, Senator Martins Yellowe (m) and chairman House Committee on environment, Hon. Emeka Atuma during the National Summit on environmental management in Nigeria held in Abuja...recently.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Conservation foundation deplors state of zoos

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) has called for the closure of zoological gardens, due to their "deplorable condition."

"Zoos have become a metaphor for institutional neglect and deterioration in Nigeria, and monuments of all shades of degradation," declared the foundation in a statement.

"No government, established at all tiers, has known the abysmal degradation being witnessed in zoos in Nigeria, be it the zoo in the University of Ibadan, Calabar, Jos, Owerri

or Ogba in Benin, the story is the same," it stated.

It noted that in the past, zoos were well managed because of their immense value to education and recreation, but over time, government interest had waned as attested to by decreased funding.

Apart from the poor condition of zoos, they subject confined animals to suffering and render them dangerous, the statement noted that zoos in Nigeria had been identified in the international trafficking in wildlife.

"The state of affairs in

Nigerian zoos neither finds justification under the International Convention on Biodiversity, nor the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES)," it said.

It said that management of nature should be taken more seriously as they are demonstrative of man's harmonious existence with nature.

"It is much cheaper to conserve nature than to imprison animals under unspeakable torture and torment and at huge cost to the nation," the statement added.

FISABILILLĀHI



NATIONAL MOSQUE, ABUJA

Donate generously, *Fisabilillahi*, to the cause of Allah (SWT) in aid of the rehabilitation of the National Mosque, Abuja
 Forward your donation today to the nearest branch of
NUB International Bank Limited in favour of
NATIONAL MOSQUE REHABILITATION APPEAL FUND
 (Account No. 1003 020 192-001)



NUB International Bank Limited
...we never stop serving you

Head Office: Plot 554, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, P.M.B. 5095, Wuse II, Abuja. Tel: 09-5237051

ABUJA BRANCH:

Plot 554, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja. Tel: 09-5239488, 5237050

KADUNA MAIN BRANCH:

Yakubu Gowon Way, Near Central Bank of Nigeria, Kaduna. Tel: 062-249143, 249152. Fax: 062-245507

KATSINA BRANCH:

NICON Building, IBB Way, Katsina. Tel: 065-432109, Fax: 065-430264

SABON-TASHA BRANCH:

26, Kachia Road, Sabon-Tasha, Kaduna. Tel: 062-512112, Fax: 062-512122

PORT-HARCOURT BRANCH:

Niger Insurance House, 9 Port Harcourt-Aba Express Road, Rumuomasi, Port-Harcourt. Tel: 084-238843, 239978

KADUNA MARKET BRANCH:

Sheik Abubakar Gumi Main market, Kaduna. Tel: 062-244953, Fax: 062-244955

MINNA BRANCH:

2, Muzzu Mohammed Road, Opposite Central Post Office, Minna. Tel: 066-223871, 233933

GARKI BRANCH:

Victory Plaza, Gimbiya Street, Area 11, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 09-3147450, 3147291

VICTORIA ISLAND BRANCH:

Plot 273A, Ajose Adeogun Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. Tel: 01-2703479

FUNTUA BRANCH:

7, Katsina Road, Funtua, Katsina State. Tel/fax: 069-770546

APAPA BRANCH:

Nasco Building, 29 Burma Road, Apapa, Lagos. Tel: 01-5874290, Fax: 01-5874091, 5874276

ZARIA BRANCH:

4B, Main Street, Zaria. Tel: 069-332936, Fax: 069-333858-9

KACHIA BRANCH:

Beside Kachia Police Station, Kachia, Kaduna State.

ONITSHA BRANCH:

1, New market Road, Onitsha. Tel/Fax: 046-411522

KANO BRANCH:

7, Bompai Road, Kano. Tel: 064-640103

DAMATURU BRANCH:

Bukar Abba Ibrahim way, Damaturu. Tel: 074-522764, 522765

IKEJA BRANCH:

23, Toyin Street, Ikeja Lagos. Tel: 01-2701795

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Nigerians query sale of FG properties

In what appears to be confusion and what some have labelled ethnic agenda, the federal government announced its decision to, in phases, sell its properties spread across the country, amid controversy and condemnation from Nigerians.

Property and Environment Editor, Nasir Imam, here examines the issues that are causing ripples among civil servants and occupants of such houses.

On 28 June 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurated a commission of inquiry headed by General Oluwole Rotimi (rtd), for the investigation of federal government properties to deal with the issue of mass alienation of its landed property by state governments, private organisation and individuals.

When the government received the report of the Rotimi commission of inquiry on 22nd March 2001, it promptly considered it and issued a white paper containing its views and directives.

On 21st August 2001, government constituted a committee to implement the white paper, and this committee submitted a progress report which was considered by the federal government on the 2nd April 2003.

Meanwhile, government had come out with circular dated June 27, 2003 with reference no. SGF/19/5.47/C.1/11/371 from the office of the secretary of the government of the federation titled "monetisation of fringe benefits in the federal public services."

The circular started with a preamble thus "over the years, the government expenses has continued to escalate. The burden of providing basic amenities for public officers has contributed significant to the continuous increase in government returning expenditure, leaving very little for capital development.

On residential accommodation, the circular read, "provision of residential accommodation for political, public and judicial officers have been nominated at 100 per cent of annual basic salary to be paid, annually to enable the officer to rent houses of their choice."

"However, in order to avoid exerting severe strain on officers presently occupying government quarters, in the first year of the monetisation exercise, their residential accommodation allowance (100 per cent of annual basic salary) will be converted to rent for the quarters they occupy."

"Government residential houses across the country will be sold by public auction at the end of the first year of monetisation after proper valuation. Public officers occupying such houses will be given the first option to purchase the house but at the price of the highest bidder.

It was at this stage that the federal government, among other things, approved the sale of selected landed

properties in Lagos through competitive bidding after valuation has been carried out.

By 15th March, 2004, the implementation committee had placed advertisement in some national dailies, inviting bids for the sale of some of its properties in Lagos. So it was not surprising that.

The properties include the 1004 estate, Victoria Island, federal secretariat, Phase I and II, Ikoyi, Bar Beach Towers, Victoria Island, Eric Moore Towers, Surulere, Mulliner Tower, Ikoyi, Awolowo road towers, Ikoyi and Alagbon Towers, Ikoyi, all situated in Lagos.

Bidding closed on Thursday 15th April 2004 while opening of bids took place publicly a day after, 16th April 2004.

UACN properties development company plc emerged the preferred bidder for the 1004 estate by staking N4.5 billion to beat two other contenders for the government.

However, two other properties of the federal government in Lagos had no bid. These are the federal secretariat phases I and II, and the Bar Beach Towers on Victoria Island.

Investigation revealed that the refusal of bidders to ask for the federal secretariat in Ikoyi might be unconnected with the fire incident that gutted the edifice at that time.

The Dock management Nigeria Limited, which was the sole bidder for Eric Moore Towers, emerged the preferred bidder putting down N40.11 million for the property.

For Alagbon Towers, the Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) emerged the preferred bidder, outbidding two others, with a bid of N1.2 billion.

A subsidiary of Union Bank Nig. Plc Union Homes savings and loan Ltd won the bid for the Awolowo road towers with a price of N501 million, while it also emerged as the preferred bidder for the mulliner towers with an offer of N575 million.

However, the planned sale of the 1004 flats has generated a lot of controversy between the government and the occupants, mostly civil servants who said the offer by UACN was too low.

Investigation revealed that an unconfirmed value of the housing estate has been put of over N32.5 billion which means that if

estate surveyors were properly commissioned to value the 1004 estate, the value would be between N30-N40 billion.

It was gathered that nowhere in the world has property been offered for sale through bidding as the process has always been to find out the real value and a



Chief (Mrs.) Mobolaji Osomo, Minister of Housing and Urban Development

price attached which would be negotiable.

Mrs. Umma Mohammed, Vice Chairman of 1004 Housing Estate Residents Association, at that time, said the government decision to sell the estate was a contradiction of its policy of "housing for all by the year 2020."

Mohammed pleaded with the government to begin the implementation of the policy by selling the estates to those residing in the estates.

"Let the policy take immediate effect and not wait until 1,388 families living at present in federal government's estates in Lagos are rendered homeless," she said.

While pleading caution, other professionals warned that the sale of government properties could portend danger for both the economy and the future of coming generations in our country.

Frontline Nigerian accountant, Mr. Akintola Williams, at a business forum at the time, urged government to encourage mortgage firms to focus more on medium and long term loans to enable young people own their own homes.

UACN property development company plc, Chief Executive, Mr. Steve Mayaki, also criticised the sale of the high-rise properties in Lagos, saying it would be counterproductive and create future facility management problems to the buyers, as the properties are inter-lined with infrastructure.

Another professional, Alhaji Adetola Shote, also said that the houses should be managed to ensure that may Nigerian become home owners, instead of making more millionaires out of the properties.

Mr. Abdul Kohol, chairman of the 1004 housing estate association, who is leading the opposition of the sale, said it negates federal government's monetisation policy which states that "government quarters will be sold to civil servants who will pay for them with their monetisation accommodation allowance."

The association had earlier sought a court injunction against federal government's move with the support of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), apex body of organised labour in Nigeria in the fight against the sale of the estates.

Minister of housing and urban development, Chief Mrs. Mobolaji Osomo, in far away USA at that time, said that because government lack enough funds, the only alternative open to it is to go through the disposal exercise through the mortgage industry.

"Nigerians are implored to pick interest in mortgage industry, efforts are on high gear to educate them in this regard prior to that time the whole concept was there but execution was nothing to write home about," the minister said.

The high-rise properties, which are block of apartments would be sold as entire estates or entire blocks while consideration for sitting tenants would be made only in single unit occupier buildings that would be considered in the next phase of the exercise.

Early February this year, the implementation committee, announced fresh tenders for the valuation of federal government landed property in Lagos.

This move by government nullifies an earlier plan to retain the estate survey firms that took part in the inventory carried out in 1998 under the mandate of the Brig-Gen. Rotimi (rtd) commission of inquiry.

Available data indicates that 5,417 residential housing units and 102 other buildings existing in Lagos.

Minister of housing and urban development, Chief (Mrs) Mobolaji Osomo said "to be able to obtain independent valuation, the committee has decided to use the services of 32 estate valuers, earlier engaged in 1998, to revalue these property.

But Prof. P.T. Ahire, the committee secretary, said the tender call is to ensure transparency and accountability as the value of the affected property should be known before its disposal.

Meanwhile, the federal government, on March 2 2005, announced that it would raise an estimated N300 billion from the sale of 30,000 houses built by government ministries, agencies, and departments located in different parts of the country.

The federal executive council, which decided on outright sale of the houses, says beneficiaries of the scheme would be civil servants, public servants and the Nigerian public.

FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, who briefed news- men after the FEC meeting,

said that out of the 30,000 houses, 25,000 built by the federal capital development authority were located in Abuja.

The minister explained that two categories of houses have been identified for sale under the scheme which is to be financed through the floating of a bond on the floor of the Stock Exchange by the federal government.

The two categories, he said, include houses occupied by civil servants and those occupied by political appointees.

"For the houses to be sold to civil servants, the valuation will be based on the current replacement cost of the building as determined by the FCDA or our professional valuers excluding the cost of land and infrastructure," the minister said.

On the houses occupied by political appointees, el-Rufai said such participants will participate in an open bidding and given the right of first refusal.

"When the bids are open, the highest price offered by the bidders would be offered to the occupants of the house. The houses will be sold with the current occupant having the right of first refusal to purchase within 30 days of offer. The right to purchase is neither transferable nor assignable," he said.

Already, he said, government has commenced discussions with banks to work out the financing structure of the sale.

Almost immediately, the implementation committee published names of legal occupants of its high-rise buildings in Lagos who have been relocated to houses in Abesan Lagos, and Gwarinpa, Abuja.

The housing and urban development ministry have started issuing letters of relocation to occupants of its estates in Lagos affected by the sale to estates that were not affected.

Chairman of the 1004 residents association, Mr. Abdul Kohol, however in an interview, said the measure adopted by government was most unfair.

Kohol wondered why government did not come up with a more transparent and proper procedure in relocating residents of the estate instead of adopting a divide and rule tactics.

He said information at the disposal of the association had it that most of those who were relocated were working with government agencies which had completely complied with the monetisation policy.

Kohol urged government to come up with details of the entire process so that others would know their fates especially if it was being done in phases.

Chairman of the Nigeria Civil Service union, FCT chapter, Emmanuel Igiri also expresses the opinion trade union on government's decision to sell its houses is

not addressing the problem of workers because there is no money to buy the houses at current market prices.

"Civil servants have been paying through their rent subsidy. The amount so far paid as rent should form part of the payment for the houses if government is sincere in its decision to sell them.

Comrade Fajana Godwin of the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation, Civil Servants, Technical and Recreation Service Employees (AUPCTRE) also said that the expectation was that government would have retained the buildings to serve as government quarters rented out at a very fair and affordable rates to workers like it used to be before the introduction of rent subsidy.

Real Estate Developers, however commended the government over the sale, saying that the development would boost the nation's property market.

Vice-president of the Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Brig-Gen Danladi Zakari (rtd) who made the commendation, said that money accruing from the sale should be channelled into the National Housing Fund in order to provide loans for Nigerians to build or purchase their own houses.

According to him, present occupants who cannot meet the stipulated prices of the government houses would come to private developers, thereby creating more business for them.

Another respondent, who spoke on condition of anonymity, however differs saying that the decision to sell the houses to a section of the country because they are the one's in power."

He also said that government have not explained why some houses have been exempted for sale example are the houses of the senate president and speaker, House of Representatives, including government quarters occupied by the army and police.

"It is said that after over 30 years in public service, this is how government will reward us contrary to what we were made to believe, there was no offer to us to buy the houses, no consideration. Just a letter of eviction and a 7 day deadline to pack out.

"To sell the estates to any other person other than the occupiers at the price of the highest bidder by the same government for whom they have toiled all these years shows betrayal of trust and bad faith, in fact it is just a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

"The brandishing of alternative allocation somewhere in a hurriedly prepared estate or an out-of-the-reach estate, is not only ridiculous but also difficult to comprehend."

Meanwhile, government has fixed April 25, 2005; for opening of bids for the federal secretariat, Ikoyi, Bar Beach Towers, Victoria Island, and the federal government special guest house, Victoria Island, Lagos.



SOCIETE GENERALE BANK (NIGERIA) LTD.

RC: 19868

NOTICE

In view of the progress made in our ongoing restructuring programme, there is the need to conduct a Deposit Audit Exercise. Thus, the following Notice is for the information of all customers of Societe Generale Bank (Nigeria) Ltd (SGBN).

We request all our customers to submit details of their deposits held by the bank at any of the following locations of Red Star Express Ltd.

Abuja: 787 Malumfashi Close, Area 11	Ado-Ekiti: 50, Allosun St.	Akure: 49 Oba Adesida Rd.	Asaba: 306 Nnebisi Rd.
Damaturu: Maiduguri Rd. (opp. Govt House)	Gombe: 77, Hospital Rd. Jekadi Farin	Gusau: Zaria Rd. (opposite NEPA)	Ibadan: 72, Fajuyi Rd. Adamasinaba
Ibadan: SW8/1407 Ajeigbe Area	Ilorin: 223, Ibrahim Taiwo Rd.	Kano: 12, Bompal Rd.	Lagos: 70, International Airport Rd.
Lagos: 60, Toyin St. Ikeja	Lagos: 40, Burma Rd. Apapa	Lagos: 5, Idowu Taylor St. Victoria Island	Lagos: 11, Keffi St. Ikoyi
Lokoja: 90, IBB Way.	Maiduguri: 11, Kashim Ibrahim Way.	Onitsha: 47, New Market Rd.	Port Harcourt: 192, Stadium Rd.
Port Harcourt: 206, Aba Rd.	Sokoto: 29, Gusau Rd.	Uyo: 1, Wellington Bassey Way.	Warri: 100, Effurun / Sapele Rd.
	Yenagoa: Km. 5 Mblama Yenagoa Rd.	Yola: 35, Galadima Aminu Rd.	

Please present deposit details in the format as specified below:

1. BRANCH: _____
2. ACCOUNT NAME: _____
3. ACCOUNT TYPE: SAVINGS CURRENT FIXED DEPOSIT ATM VALUCARD
4. ACCOUNT NUMBER: _____
5. BALANCE AS AT 31ST JULY 2003: _____
6. CURRENT ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE: _____
7. SIGNATURE (AS IT APPEARS ON THE MANDATE SUBMITTED TO THE BANK): _____

Please prepare one set of details for each type of account held.

Customers are requested to kindly attach photocopies of the following:

- (A) Last bank statement received (if available);
- (B) Where applicable, evidence of deposits/withdrawals made during the period 1ST August 2003 - 28TH February 2005.

NOTE: For corporate accounts, the aforementioned information must be typed on the company's letterheaded paper and signed by authorised signatories as contained in the mandate submitted to SGBN.

This information should be addressed to the Head, Reconciliation Committee, Societe Generale Bank (Nigeria) Ltd and submitted to any of the above mentioned offices of Red Star Express Ltd. by 31ST March 2005 for onward transmission to our head office.

Please note that the staff of Red Star Express Ltd. are only authorised to receive the information. All enquiries should be directed to:

Dapo Idowu: 01-8932106 Sly Enekwe: 01-8932105 Oblora Amobi: 01-2662443

Thank you for your cooperation.

SIGNED
MANAGEMENT

CORPORATE HEAD OFFICE: Sarah House, 13 Martins Street, Lagos

BRANCHES: ABUJA - ADO EKITI - AKURE - APAPA - ASABA - BODIJA - CALABAR - DALEKO - DAMATURU - GOMBE - GUSAU - IBADAN - IDUMOTA - IKEJA - ILORIN - ITAKPE - KADUNA NORTH - KADUNA SOUTH - KANTIN KWARI - KANO - LAGOS - LOKOJA - MAIDUGURI - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - OFFIN CANAL - ONITSHA - ONNE - SOKOTO - STATION ROAD - TWIN CAN ISLAND - TRANS AMADI (PORT HARCOURT) - TWON BRASS - UYO - VICTORIA ISLAND - WARRI - YENAGOA - YOLA

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

FMBN denies truncating new housing policy

The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) has denied the allegation that its board of directors is truncating the new National Housing Policy.

A statement from FMBN, signed by its public relations manager, Dauda A. Yusuf, denied the publication in one of the daily newspapers (not Daily Trust) in which the correspondent misled the public on information bordering on our official procedures for approving and disbursing NHF loans to applicants.

The statement said NHF is a strategic initiative adopted by government to provide cheap funds to finance development of mass affordable and decent housing and is collected from a mandatory deduction of 2.5% of the salaries/income of

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

contributors, be they in government or private sector employment or self employed.

The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN), the statement said, is mandated to collect and manage the NHF in the interest of the contributors. This informs the Bank's policy of negotiation and agreement on the final sale price of houses to be financed by FMBN and built by Estate Developers, for onward sale to contributors to the National Housing Fund.

"In order to ensure the stability of the approved sale price, the Bank grants the loan at 10% interest to the developer, and not 15% as claimed in the write-up while the estate

development is to be completed within 18 to 24 months, with a moratorium period of six months." The bank's agreement with estate developers clearly states that no additional charges shall be imposed on the contributor/mortgagors except those already agreed upon as between FMBN and the Estate developers and or the PMI that serves as the marketer of the estate, FMBN said.

The management of FMBN considers it a disservice to the owners of the fund (i.e NHF contributors) whose monies were used to build these estates, to be over priced beyond their reach.

The statement added that the allegation that the Bank is a place where money goes in and does not come out is clearly a contradiction of the writer's acceptance that the Bank approves loans for Housing development and acquisition. As a matter of fact 90% of the loans ever approved were done within the last 2 years, under the present management of the Bank, chaired by Prof. Akin Mabogunie. Out of a total NHF collection of N14.8 billion the Bank has approved and disbursed the sum of N8.85 billion as at December 2004, for the construction of over 22,000 housing units nationwide.

colleagues to act responsibly in all situations, saying that they must always be guided by the ethics of the profession.

He said that proficiency and the willingness to serve were the criteria used in selecting members of the various committees.

NSE task governments on engineers

Federal and state governments have been told to patronise Nigerian engineers to develop indigenous technology.

Mr Kashim Ali, the Vice President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) made the call in Lagos while inaugurating three committees of the society.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the committees inaugurated included programme and publicity, appointment, promotion and disciplinary, as well as that of planning.

In an interview with NAN, Ali urged governments at all levels to trust local engineers, and empower them.

According to him, "no foreigner, no matter the level of good will can love this nation more than Nigerians."

Ali urged the governments to learn from the example of the Works Minister, Chief Adeseye Ogunlewe by making use of indigenous engineers to develop indigenous technology for the country.

"We could do a lot for ourselves in this country if only we could believe in ourselves," he said.

Ali urged members of the committees to be steadfast and show commitment in whatever assignment they were given.

He enjoined his

NPA pays port residents three years housing allowances to leave

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has commenced the payment of three years housing allowance in advance to its staff living in the Tin-Can Island Port Estate.

The measure is to enable the workers to move out and secure accommodation elsewhere so as to leave the estate to private port investors.

The Assistant General Manager, Public Affairs of NPA, Mr Abiodun Borha, who disclosed this in Lagos on Thursday, added that no staff living in the estate would be given a quit notice without proper planning.

According to Borha, the movement of the workers out of the estate is to be made as painless as possible.

The Secretary of the Estate Resident

Association, Mr Smart Mohammed confirmed to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that he received a cheque for his three-year housing allowance two days earlier but declined to disclose what the sum total was.

Mohammed explained that almost all the 100 residents of the estate had received their cheques.

He described the NPA management as 'sympathetic' and expressed appreciation for the gesture.

Iran to allocate \$50m for rebuilding Afghanistan

The Iranian government has decided to allocate 50 million U.S. dollars for Afghanistan's reconstruction projects in 2005, said a Afghan official.

"Iran intends to spend 50 million U.S. dollars on various reconstruction projects in Afghanistan throughout 2005," Afghan Finance Anwarul Haq

Property of the Week



The Dumez House: Taking a cue from the construction giant Julius Berger Plc, most construction companies are building befitting head office buildings in the FCT. Picture above shows the DUMEZ House which accommodates the Italian construction company, DUMEZ Nigeria Ltd. Situated on four spacious floors, the recently completed Dumez house is located within the central area along the airport road, Abuja, and is finished in creamy marble and tinted glass.

FG spends N3.7b on 4 bridges

The federal government has awarded a N3.7 billion contract for building four bridges across River Matan Fada at Argungu, says the Minister of State for Works, Alhaji Sale Shehu.

Shehu announced this in Birnin Kebbi, during a recent visit to Kebbi State deputy governor, Alhaji Suleiman Argungu.

He said the Federal Executive Council had approved the revocation of a previous contract for the job, due to non-performance by the contractor involved Stirling Nig Ltd.

According to Shehu: "President Obasanjo has directed that N600 million be drawn from the Ecological Fund and another N1 billion from the FERMA account, to be given to the contractor, as mobilisation fee, owing to the importance of the project.

"The president had promised people of the area that the project would go ahead to ease communication and transport links between the country and Niamey, the Niger Republic capital."

Shehu further noted that, "the sum of N1.5 billion has been provided in this year's budget for the job to proceed."

He said he was confident that the contractor, Messrs Dantata and Sawoe would "complete the bridges within the stipulated contract

period, given their track record on previous contracts."

In his response, Emir of Argungu lauded the federal government for re-awarding the contract.

...to link roads in bitumen, gas producing areas

Works Minister, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe has assured that all tourist destinations, agricultural, bitumen and gas producing areas are to be linked by good Federal roads.

Adeseye said this was one of the initiatives of President Olusegun Obasanjo to boost the economy and increase national revenue from non-oil and gas sources.

The Minister gave the assurances while responding to an address by the Owa of Idanreland, the Arubiefin IV Oba Frederick Aroloye J.P. OFR, who led a delegation to his Mabushi, Abuja office to ask for the construction of a Federal road on Akure - Idanre - Ofusu road to link the Ondo State Capital through Idanreland with the Benin - Shagamu Dual carriage expressway at Ofusu in Edo State.

He disclosed that President Olusegun Obasanjo had set up a very high-owered committee on cocoa initiative with 9 States

"In fact, the completion of those bridges will definitely bring succour to our people, who annually lose their goods and lives trying to cross the river on canoes," he added.

From Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

as members and headed by the Deputy-Governor of Ekiti State.

According to the minister, this was in furtherance of Mr. President's policy to reduce the nation's dependence on oil and gas for national revenue.

He disclosed that before the advent of this administration, 90 percent of our national income came from oil and gas, but has now reduced to about 87 percent.

He said the Federal Government would commence the design of the Akure - Idanre - Ofusu road to ensure the evacuation of their cocoa and other agricultural products and facilitate movement of tourists to the beautiful and tourist attracting hills and landscape of Idanreland in Idanre Local Government of Ondo State.

Earlier in his address, the Owa of Idanreland, Oba Fredrick Aroloye commended the Works Minister for his matured handling of political and social aspects of his national assignment as well as his firmness and dexterity in handling the various road construction projects.

The Oba noted that the Minister had made immense fast-track contributions to national development since he assumed office.

He thanked the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo for setting up the cocoa initiative and urged that a monitoring unit should be constituted to ensure judicious and direct disbursement of funds to peasant cocoa farmers.

ABUJA TRUST

SSS, el-Rufai parley on security

As part of familiarisation and fostering a good working relationship between the Department of State Security Service (SSS) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the state directors of the service in the North Central zone paid a courtesy call on the FCT minister, Malam Nasir el-Rufai.

The seven-member delegation led by Alhaji Ibrahim L. Mashi, who is also the Plateau State SSS director told the minister that they were in the FCT to deliberate on security affecting the North Central zone which comprises FCT, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau Kogi, Kwara and Niger States.

Speaking on behalf of the delegates, Alhaji Mashi said that the liaison has become necessary as a result of the common security problem within the zone.

While thanking the FCT minister for his support and cooperation to the FCT department of the service, the team leader further called for a common security response from the zone while pledging that the service will explore all avenues to achieve security in the zone.

Recently, the directors on behalf of the FCT minister,

the executive secretary of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Engr. Muhammad Sani Alhassan commended the state directors of the SSS in the North Central zone for the choice of Abuja for their quarterly meeting particularly at a time when Abuja was being positioned as a conference and tourist city.

While appreciating security as a very important component of development of any nation, Engr. Muhammad promised that the FCT will cooperate with the service in its demand for a common security approach.

Issues to be discussed at the two day quarterly meeting include identifying common problems and strategies, spread of cultism, armed robbery, and the energising public response to incidences of police brutality as occurred in Benue State recently.



Traders packing out their wares from Area 1 Shopping Complex as the deadline given to them by the Abuja Municipal area council (AMAC) expired on Monday. Pix: NAN

Vendor arraigned over stolen copies of Daily Trust

A newspaper vendor, one Kayode Adeleke of Dagba Village, Area I Abuja has been arraigned before an Abuja Chief Magistrate sitting in Jabi, for allegedly receiving about 284 stolen Daily Trust newspapers valued at the

sum of N210,000 from one Audu Adamu of Heritage House, Wuse Abuja, now at large.

According to Sgt Edet Emmanuel, the police prosecutor, on February 22 this year at about 5:30 a.m., the accused person was arrested with 284 copies of Daily Trust newspaper valued at about N210,000 at Dagba Village, Abuja which he allegedly claimed to have received from one Audu Adamu of Heritage House, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja, now at large.

Sergeant Emmanuel told the court that the accused during investigation confessed that he has been a perpetual receiver of the said newspapers for about two years now.

The prosecution further informed the court that the accused was charged with receiving stolen properties punishable under section 317 of the penal code law of Nigeria. The accused person pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The defence counsel, Barrister Chris Onwugbowu, prayed for bail arguing that the accused had been in police custody for three weeks before being granted bail by the police.

The presiding magistrate, Idayata Akanni granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with two sureties in like sum. She adjourned the case to March 30, 2005 for hearing.

ACOMORAN sacks own chairman

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, Stinger (Abuja)

The national executive council of Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Owners and Riders Association of Nigeria (ACOMORAN) has terminated the appointment of its FCT caretaker committee chairman, Mr. Farouk Nasir, following a vote of no confidence passed against him by majority of the members of the executive committee.

A statement signed by the national secretary of the association, Alhaji Muhammad Sani Hassan, said the national executive council after interviewing the former caretaker committee chairman along with other members approved the removal of the FCT caretaker chairman while the state coordinator, Alhaji Abubakar Sidi, was directed to take charge of the administration of the association pending the appointment of another chairman.

Chief praises clean up exercise

The chief of Aleiyita, a suburb of Abuja along airport road, Malam Ibrahim Aleiyita, has praised the clean up exercise embarked upon by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) in the village. He made this remark

last week in his palace while speaking with Abuja Trust.

Malam Ibrahim said that the development has given the town a new look as most places formerly littered with rubbish are now clean.

Magistrate remands two over stolen car

An Abuja Chief Magistrate has remanded two men, Madu Sunday of N0 5 Ezedigbo Street, Omogba-Obasi, Anambra State and Oyekere Kingsley of Apo Mechanic Village, Abuja for allegedly stealing a Mercedes Benz car.

The offence is contrary to section 97 289 of penal code law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

According to the FIR, the accused criminally conspired and stole a Mercedes Benz 230E salon with registration No. C 471 ABC belonging to one Elder Ogan E. Okeydo, of plot CF-08 Apo Village. The FIR further revealed that the car was subsequently found in the accused procession.

The accused pleaded not guilty to the charge and the case was fixed for hearing March 30, 2005.

In a related development one Sha'aibu Alabi appeared before the chief magistrate for alleged cheating which is contrary to section 322 of the penal code law.

The FIR revealed that the accused allegedly deceived and collected the sum of N476,500 from one Christian Okafor of Area 11, Garki

The chief called for the digging of more open pits in satellite towns for proper waste disposal and control.

He however decried the lack of water in the area saying that the only borehole in the area has stopped working.

Area One traders sue el-Rufai

Area One Trades Association, Garki yesterday filed a legal suit against FCT minister and chairman of Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Malam Nasir el-Rufai at the Federal High Court, Abuja over the proposed demolition of Area One shopping centre.

The traders are praying the court for an interlocutory injunction restraining the minister and his agents jointly from ejecting the members of the plaintiff from Area 1 shopping centre or implementing the content of the quit notice dated February 22, 2005 pending the determination of the substantive suit.

They are also seeking for interlocutory injunction restraining the defendants or anyone acting for them from resolving or threatening to revoke the market shops allocations granted to the individual members of the traders associations pending the determination of the case.

Listed as defendants in the suit are the executive chairman (AMAC), Abuja Municipal area council, the Federal Capital Development Authority and the minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

In the suit filed by Chief Tochukwu Onwugbufor (SAN), the plaintiff asked for an order to stop the defendants from harassing or interfering molesting them pending the final determination of the suit.

In a statement of claim, the plaintiff said that between 1984-1993 the traders were allocated permanent open spaces by the AMAC for development into market shops at Area 1 Shopping Centre subject to the payment of annual rent.

Others from The Triumph Newspaper to publish his name on the paper for embezzlement.

The alleged offence, criminal intimidation and deformation of character, is contrary to section 394, 397 (6) of the penal code law.

The chief magistrate granted the accused bail and adjourned the case to May 4, 2005.

granting of bail to the accused will temper with the investigation. The case was adjourned to March 31, 2005 for further hearing.

Ministry staff charged for intimidation

Staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has appeared before a chief magistrate sitting in Jabi on a two-count charge of criminal intimidation and defamation of character.

The First Information Report (FIR) revealed that the accused was reported by one Dr. PA Odenuga of the Ministry of Power and Steel

for blackmailing, attacking and holding him responsible for being posted out from his former office at Custom, Immigration and Prison pensions office, Gwagwalada.

The FIR further stated that the accused allegedly employed the services of one pressman, Mr. Yusuf and

Others from The Triumph Newspaper to publish his name on the paper for embezzlement.

The alleged offence, criminal intimidation and deformation of character, is contrary to section 394, 397 (6) of the penal code law.

The chief magistrate granted the accused bail and adjourned the case to May 4, 2005.

By Ebenezer John, (Intern)

for blackmailing, attacking and holding him responsible for being posted out from his former office at Custom, Immigration and Prison pensions office, Gwagwalada.

The FIR further stated that the accused allegedly employed the services of one pressman, Mr. Yusuf and


Others from The Triumph Newspaper to publish his name on the paper for embezzlement.

The alleged offence, criminal intimidation and deformation of character, is contrary to section 394, 397 (6) of the penal code law.

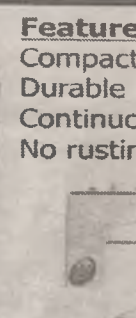
The chief magistrate granted the accused bail and adjourned the case to May 4, 2005.

granting of bail to the accused will temper with the investigation. The case was adjourned to March 31, 2005 for further hearing.

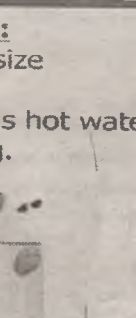
KOSPEL ELECTRIC INSTANT WATER HEATER



PRIMUS
5kw - 2.2L/min @ 35°C



AMICUS
5.5kw - 2.2L/min @ 35°C



LUXUS
12kw - 4.9L/min @ 35°C
18kw - 7.4L/min @ 35°C

Features:
Compact size
Durable
Continuous hot water
No rusting.

DALTRADE NIG. LTD.
LAGOS: 16, Ilupeju Bye-Pass, Ilupeju, Tel: 01 - 5553444, 2901777.
BRANCHES: Abuja, Bauchi, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Port-Harcourt, Lekki.

KANO TRUST

Fake ampicillin syrup producers nab bed

Four persons have been arrested by the police in Kano in connection with the fake production of Ampicillin syrup for children.

Police sources confirmed that the four suspects produced the fake Ampicillin syrup by mixing custard powder with *alubo* (fermented but dried cassava powder) thereby causing harm to little children.

ASP Gambo Mohammed who is police public relations officer, Zone One police headquarters in Kano, who confirmed the report said the label on the Ampicillin bottle indicated that the product

By Jamilah Nuhu,
Correspondent, Kano

was made in Enugu and Onitsha and that the actual fact was that the suspects were using yam flour and custard powder.

He said that the suspects and the buyers of the drug all of who reside in Sabon Gari market would be handed over to NAFDAC for further investigation and prosecution.

One of the buyers said he bought one carton of the syrup and that he suspected the drug was fake and therefore raised alarm.

In his words: "Jude (one of the suspects) sold one car-

ton of the Ampicillin to me at the cost of N4,000. I gave him a deposit of N1,800. Then I noticed that the medicine was fake after one bottle broke while I was trying to lift the carton".

Fire disaster: School receives N70,000 donation

Dawakin Tofa local government of Kano state has donated 70,000 naira towards the rehabilitation of some parts of Dawakin Tofa Secondary School that was recently gutted by fire.

The chairman of the council, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Speaker, condoled students of the school and told the principal, Alhaji Abdullahi Sani, that the amount was meant to cushion the effect of the loss.

He called on the state emergency relief agency and well-meaning individuals to come to the aid of the school according to him; government alone cannot take up all the responsibilities of governance.

The chairman reiterated that though the amount could not meet the necessary repairs it would go along way in improving the welfare of the school.

He advised students and

management of the school to exercise caution in their activities to guide against further occurrence and pledged the council's continued support for the school.

Responding the principal expressed gratitude to the chairman for the gesture. He said that the school would continue to excel in its education in the area.

KNSG to construct 1,528 houses

The Kano State government has begun the construction of housing scheme in all the forty-four local government areas in the state.

Flagging off the campaign, the state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, said under the scheme, twelve houses would be constructed in each of the forty-four local government areas across the state.

During the exercise in Kibiya local government area, Mallam Shekarau said

By Aliyu S. Machika,
Correspondent Kano

the exercise was part of his administration's effort aimed at providing shelter to the people.

He also said that under the scheme, the African Development Fund would contribute fifty (50) percent of the total cost while the Kano State government and the local government councils would give the remaining fifty percent.

Public, private hospitals warned over medical waste disposal

Public and private hospitals in Kano State have been asked to adhere to guidelines governing disposal of medical wastes in the state or face the wrath of the law.

The state commissioner for health, Dr. Sanda Mahmud, gave the warning while receiving the managing director of Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMASAB), Alhaji Hussaini Musa Kerry who paid him a courtesy visit.

Dr. Sanda stated that the existing laws governing the disposal of medical wastes is still in force adding that hospitals therefore should adhere to it strictly.

The commissioner further

said that hospital workers are fully aware of such laws and have knowledge for the proper disposal of such wastes. He called on then to complement government's efforts in ensuring clean and healthy environment.

On the board's proposal to hold a seminar for hospitals on proper disposal of medical wastes, Dr. Sani supported the idea and described it as appropriate.

He then suggested that the seminar should focus attention on reawakening and reminding hospitals' managements of their responsibility.

He also called on the board to intensify action to get rid

of industrial waste in the state as according to the commissioner, it is another factor that needs serious attention of REMASAB.

Speaking earlier, the REMASAB managing director, Alhaji Hussaini Musa Kerry, expressed dismay over the presence of medical dressing materials at some refuse disposal centres in the state.

The managing director, who described the trend as dangerous, explained that such materials could be harmful to both children and animals. He then called on the commissioner to intervene and appeal to assist the board for a successful conduct of the proposed seminar.

Over N200 million has been expended on various developmental projects in Madobi local government area.

The chairman caretaker committee of Madobi, Alhaji Ilyasu Kwankwaso, revealed that in line with Governor Shekarau's call for development projects his council has touched the live of the people in the area like other past administrations.

Madobi expends over N200m on projects

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent Kano

Mallam Ilyasu Kwankwaso said among the projects executed by his administration are the construction of Madobi to Rikadawa road at the cost of N40 million and the electrification of three

polling wards at the cost of N57 million.

Kwankwaso however debunked allegations that the recent extension of his tenure to six months was an effort to frustrate the former Kano State governor, Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso.



Unemployed youths at Kurna slum in Kano take to frying fish for sale due to unemployment.
Pix: Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim

158 VVF patients undergo free treatment

A total of 158 patients suffering from Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) have so far received free treatment in Kano under a free treatment programme initiated by ministry of Works and Health in collaboration and UNFPA and Red Cross Society, Kano state branch.

The state commissioner of women affairs, Dr. Gaji Fatima Dantata, who disclosed this through the deputy director, social welfare in charge of VVF hospital, Hajiya Haruna. Dr. Gaji Dantata urged local councils to immediately send their patients to receive treatment under the programme.

She stated that according to medical doctors, protracted labour is the major cause of VVF. She therefore called on men to allow their wives to undergo antenatal clinic when pregnant up to delivery as according to her this will minimise casualties.

Speaking also on the programme, the executive secretary of the Nigerian Red Cross, Kano State branch, Alhaji Musa Abdullahi expressed delight over the successful conduct of the operations so far conducted on 158 patients.

Mallam Musa Abdullahi

By Yushau Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent, Kano

advised patients to always adhere to doctor's prescription.

He thanked the state government for its concern and assistance for the success of the programme.



Despite Kano government's effort to clear drainages of waste, many waterways are still blocked at Fagge along Murtala Muhammed Way.
Pix: Musa Kazaure

EKO TRUST

AD chieftain cautions against calumny

An AD chieftain, Bashorun Babatunde Odetola, has cautioned politicians seeking elective posts to avoid campaigns of calumny and joining issues with their opponents during electioneering campaigns to curry the favour of electorate.

Odetola, who gave the advice while addressing party stalwarts at Aromoko headquarters of the Ekiti West local government area, urged leaders to prevail on aspirants within the AD fold to desist from running down one another to have undue advantages.

"The people should be allowed to determine who they prefer as representatives; aspirants should allow their manifestos to speak for them. We should discourage politics of bitterness and the pull-him-down syndrome," Odetola pleaded.

Accompanied by AD members from the Ekiti north central senatorial district, Odetola debunked rumours that he was 'flirting' with the

Tinubu appoints new press secretary

Kehinde Bamigbetan, the former editor of *The Country* newspaper, and until recently, deputy chief press secretary, has been appointed the new chief press secretary to the governor of Lagos State.

The appointment took effect from March 3, 2005.

A fellow of the Freedom House, United States, he holds Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science of the University of Ife, (now Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU) and a Master in Political Science of the University of Lagos.

A seasoned journalist, he was at various times deputy news editor, *Vanguard*; associate editor, *Media Review*; editor, *Theweek*; group political editor, *Concord Press of Nigeria* and head, Politics Desk, *the Punch*. He is the publisher of the *Echonews* - (Schools Edition) the only free newspaper that circulates in over 650 public and private secondary schools in Lagos State.

A human rights activist, Bamigbetan was the public relations officer of the Unife Students Union during the Ahmadu Bello University crisis in 1986 and was among the three student leaders suspended indefinitely for leading the union to demand justice for the victims of police brutality.

Stories By Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

Governor Ayo Fayose. According to him, abandoning the AD at a time the party had come out stronger from its crisis would be like committing political suicide.

His words: "It is impossible for me to work for Ayo Fayose. Since I joined active politics, I have never set my eyes on him, except on the television screen. I have invested a lot in the AD that I can't at this moment dump the progressive camp and pitch tent with the conservatives. The PDP is an anti-people organisation."

He told his hosts that the visit was part of the ongoing tour of the 16 council areas in the state, adding that he had earlier visited party leaders in Ise/Orun council area.

Odetola also pleaded with elders of the party to open the doors for members who abandoned the AD in its moment of trials, as according to him, such members who are willing to return should be given the chance.

"If those who aligned with the 'tenants' in the state have now realised that the AD is the authentic landlord, they should be allowed back into the family of progressives," he said.

Responding, the party chairman in the area, Prince Akin Fatoke, assured that the AD would bounce back to reckoning as the party of the people in 2007.



Mallam Mohammed Yahaya (right), chairman, NUB International Bank Ltd., listening to Mr. Aliu Akoshile, head, Corporate Affairs and Mr. Danjuma Ocholi, MD, CEO of the bank at the bank's customer forum in Lagos ...recently

REPORT OF HOUSE C'TTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Tinubu calls for full implementation

The Lagos state governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has called on the Presidency to implement the recommendations of the House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts to sanitise the financial records of the federal government and put in place a transparent and accountable system that will ease the oversight functions of the federal legislature and other federal stakeholders.

He also called for the separation of the office of the

Accountant-General of the Federal Government from the position of the Accountant-General of the Federation.

Tinubu said the findings of the House of Representatives committee are too vital to be swept under the carpet, noting that the Reps committee did a thorough job by examining the auditor-general's reports on the accounts of the federation for the period 1998 to 2001. He said all Nigerians should be interested in the revelation that over 999 audit queries issued by the office of the

auditor-general during the period were generally ignored by the accounting officers.

He said the Presidency's battle against corruption would be easier to win if the auditor-general's office was given the adequate resources to perform its task, and if accounting officers of ministries and parastatals were penalised for refusal to respond to audit queries from the auditor-general's office.

"The committee's report has shown that what the federal government needs is not the creation of new parastatals and bodies to fight corruption, but the strengthening of organs that check waste and fraud within the system. The revelations show that the financial regulations have been severely breached and the organ responsible for discovering the violators was weak. The president's anti-corruption crusade must start with the empowerment of the office of the auditor-general

so that the federal government can enforce its financial regulations," he said.

He noted that the discovery of the committee that the Value Added Tax collection was not properly implemented and that a lot of VAT money was not remitted during the period implied that Lagos as well as other states did not get their full share of the VAT.

The House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts has recommended that the Federal Inland Revenue Service should standardise the assessment and collection of taxes to avoid the colossal loss of revenue by the federal government.

It also recommended that tax evasion should be made a criminal offence and that funds should not be released by the accountant-general to ministries and parastatals which fail to respond to auditor-general's queries on the previous year's accounts.

Lagos expends N1.3b monthly on new LGs

The Lagos State government has been spending N1.3b every month to run the affairs of the 57 new councils since they were inaugurated in March last year.

The development has therefore brought to N15.6b the amount so far spent by the state to run its new councils since the federal government



Gov. Bola Tinubu

stopped the monthly allocation to councils in the state.

Our correspondent learnt that councils, which did not stand a better chance of generating much internal revenue, received a greater attention of the state government.

Confirming the development in an interview with *Eko Trust*, the secretary to Ikoyi/Obalende local government area of the state, Mr

Bolanle Olugbani, said the money was being paid to the councils regularly. He said another factor being used by the state government in allocating the money to the councils was their ability to generate revenues and staff strength.

He disclosed that the

challenge has made staff of the councils to be more productive, adding that multinational organisations, financial institutions, and other corporate citizens at various councils have been assisting them in areas of social amenities.

He revealed that Guarantee Trust Bank took up the responsibility of refurbishing some classrooms at St. Georges' School at Falomo while V-Mobile Communications Ltd donated materials required for the setting up of call centres to 30 residents of the council to support its poverty alleviation programme. He added that Chartered Bank Plc recently donated two hand-held mowers to a council to enable it to clear weeds at the Ikoyi cemetery

Oba of Lagos declares support for confab

The Oba of Lagos, Oba Riliwan Akinolu I, has lent his full support to the ongoing National Political Reform Conference, warning delegates to be mindful of the fact that the world is awaiting the outcome of the forum.

The Oba, in an interview with *Eko Trust*, said he was 100 per cent in support of the national confab. He said he was opposed to persons in the country who had called for a boycott of the national

political reforms, saying that it was a forum bound to bring a change in the polity.

"I am 100 per cent in support of the national confab. I can tell you this in clear terms," he said.

He urged members of the confab to take their assignments seriously, as the prospect of the nation lies in their hands, adding 'my prayer is that this country will not break'.

NEW!

Starcomms

Brings **INTERNET** and **FAX** **TO KANO**



FIXED WIRELESS

Access the Internet with our Internet capable fixed wireless phones from home or office.



FAX

Send and receive vital business documents with Starcomms reliable fax.



MOBILE DATA CARD

Stay in touch with the world while on the move with Starcomms Mobile Data Card.

Now you too can send and receive information from friends and business partners from all over the world with Starcomms Internet and Fax (Data Solutions). With Starcomms, your future is yours to choose.

Kano Customer Care Centres:

16 Andy Boko way, Kano. Tel: 064 952910

Kano Dealer Centres:

Kenneth & George, 75 Ibrahim Taiwo Rd, Kano. Tel: 064 944666

Ephybra Nigeria Ltd, 2b Zaria Rd, Kano. Tel: 064 944861

Alansar Communications, Plot 6, Zoo Rd, Kano

First Option, Shop 4, No. 89 Yaruba Rd, Sabon Gari, Kano

www.starcomms.com | LAGOS | KANO | MAIDUGURI | Call (toll free) 941234



Starcomms

...we speak your language

News

HIV/AIDS spread worries Jigawa

The Jigawa state government has described the spread of HIV/AIDS in the state as a serious concern that calls for intensified enlightenment to help check the disease.

According to the state's head of service, Alhaji Ibrahim Manzo who spoke at a workshop organised for women's development and social welfare officers, although the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the state is not that alarming, all hand must be on deck to arrest the situation.

He said the HIV/AIDS menace has devastated many families to a point of total collapse, while the economy of many nations were under threat. To that end, he said, every government must strive to control the devastating trend.

The head of service therefore urged the resource persons at the workshop to do first ensure that every possible avenue to curb the disease is exploited for the interest of mankind.

In her address, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Hajiya Hadiza Abdulwahab, said HIV/AIDS has transformed from health problems 15 years ago to development issues that called for serious strategies to tackle it.

She revealed that government alone cannot solve the

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

problem, hence, her ministry's decision to call for active support through joining the global campaign by involving social workers on the crusade against HIV/AIDS in the state.

"As you all know, the ultimate vision of this ministry is concerned with programmes and service that have direct bearing on the well-being of the most vulnerable groups in the society."

The training, she further explained, would create a

forum for networking and provide enabling environment for effective information dissemination on HIV/AIDS and to also prepare women and social welfare officers to serve as advocacy intelligence group in their localities.

The permanent secretary therefore commended the DFID for providing the state with access to justice programme, two community law centres, capacity building of social workers, technical and financial support, and other laudable projects aimed at enhancing standard of living.

Yar'Adua signs N31bn 2005 appropriation Bill

The Katsina state governor, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, has signed into law the year 2005 appropriation bill passed by the state House of Assembly.

Speaking shortly after appending his signature on the bill, which amounted to 31 billion naira, Governor Yar'Adua pledged to ensure judicious utilisation of the funds to ensure full implementation of the budget in the fiscal year.

The budget consist of N22 billion capital expenditure and over N9 billion recurrent expenditure.

From Lawal Ibrahim, in Katsina

Earlier in his remark, the speaker, Katsina state House of Assembly, Alhaji Kasir Ahmed Kofa, said the House engaged in the critical evaluation of the budget as a result of which executives of ministries and parastatals were invited to defend their proposals before it.

He said the 2005 appropriation budget passed by the House was in tune with the state government's policy of rural transformation, economic growth and development.



Governor Danjuma Goje of Gombe State (middle) flanked by Governor Shekarau (left) and Deputy Governor of Borno State, respectively, at the NGF meeting at Kaduna ...recently.

Commissioner cautions FG over scrapping of joint account

The Kwara state commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Alhaja Nimota Ibrahim, has cautioned against the scrapping of the joint account system, saying it would create chaos for the people.

Fielding questions from newsmen in Ilorin yesterday, the commissioner said stopping the joint project account system between state governments and local councils would result in the hardship of the people as their finances could not be monitored again.

Alhaja Ibrahim described as unfortunate the allegation that some state governments were tampering with the allocation of councils.

The commissioner also disclosed that the issue of

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

creation of new councils in the state would be addressed in the administration of Dr Bukola Saraki, while a panel headed by Alhaji Saka Opo-biyi was currently handling the review of upgrading of traditional rulers carried out by the last administration.

On the local council officers indicted by the Justice Olujemisi Ajayi Commission of Inquiry, Alhaja Ibrahim said a committee had been set up by Governor Saraki to recommend appropriate punishments and would soon submit its report.

She condemned the performances of most councils, saying while some had problem of low allocations, others were guilty of mispl-

aced priority and "at least six councils have done fairly well as far as my assessment tours and reports of committees are concerned."

The commissioner spoke on the two embattled council chairmen of Asa and Ekiti who are to be sanctioned by the ministry on the directive of the state's House of Assembly, explaining that "the ministry was waiting for the directive of the state governo"

She described the changes effected since the new administration came on board as positive, because "we met the ministry in a state of decay", adding "people turned their offices into bedrooms," a development she noted was a spill over from the previous administration.

www.inlandbank.com



We are on the **GO** to building an enduring financial institution.

GO ahead! Be our Partner!

We have just one **Goal**; to serve you better.

That's the legacy of Inland Bank.



RC 112876

Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.

Totally Devoted to You.

Corporate Head Office: Plot 19/23 Isa Yuguda House, Jos Road, PMB 050, Bauchi, Nigeria. Tel +234(0)77-542701, 542586, 542000, 541076, Fax +234(0)77-543401

Abuja, Abuja CIO, Abuja, Asokoro, Asokoro Road (PH), Asokoro, Asokoro West, ATBU, Azare, Bauchi, Benin, Bridgehead, Borno-Kala, Borno, Borno, Calabar, Damaturu, Dutse, Gusa, Gombe, Ibrahim Tahir (Kano), Ilorin, Jere, Kaduna, Kaduna South, Kaduna North, Kaduna, Lagos, Lafia, Maiduguri, Marikwa, Mok'd Way (Kano), Monday Market (Maiduguri), Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Opebi, Owerri, Onitsha, Potiskum, Ruzumani (PH), Sabon Gari, TinCan Island, Uyo, Victoria Island, Warri

News

FG urged to build good roads

The president of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Comrade Gidedo Hamman, has called on the federal government to provide Nigerians with motorable access roads to reduce the incidence of accidents. According to him, 90 per cent of road accidents in the country resulted in part from the terrible condition of roads across the country.

'Nigerians are dying



Comrade Gidedo Hamman

...committed to funding energy research centres - DG

The director general of the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN), Professor Abubakar Sani Sambo, disclosed that the federal government was fully committed to funding four energy research centres in the country. Prof. Sambo was speaking in Sokoto on Wednesday when visited the Sokoto Energy Research Centre.

He said that his recent appointment as director general of the commission was to kick-start the revamping of research centres to enable to function effectively. According to him, federal government has reiterated its readiness to give the commission all the necessary support to revive the four centres in Sokoto, Zaria, Ife, and Nsukka

By Abdullahi M. Gallama,
Labour Reporter

prematurely as a result of road accidents due to the poor condition of our roads,' he said, and 'the government must take bold steps to put our roads in good shape in order to make transportation safer.'

The NURTW boss also condemned the federal government's move to weaken the labour movement in the country via the controversial Trade Unions Acts Amendment Bill currently before the National Assembly. He said that NURTW would join hands with the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) to fight the governments' anti-labour policies, adding that the union opposed the federal government's determination to weaken the central labour organisation.

Comrade Hamman also commended the Nigeria Labour Congress for introducing local NLC schools to train labour leaders and activists.

From Aminu Mohammed,
Regional Editor (Sokoto)

respectively. Professor Sambo disclosed that the research centres were established to regulate research and utilise the energy resources available in the country. He however regretted that the centres 'were not to confront, but to complement NEPA.'

Answering a question on whether or not Nigeria has the capacity to develop nuclear weapons, the director general confirmed that the country has already signed the document calling for the stoppage of nuclear weapons development. What the country is doing, he said, 'is to generate and develop the energy sector for internal purposes.'

Crash landing: Yuguda condemns media reports

The aviation minister, Mallam Isa Yuguda, has described media reports on Saturday's incident involving Chanchangi Airline's B727-200 at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja as sensational and inimical to the entire aviation industry. According to him, the incident was overblown, inaccurate and caused panic in the industry.

Mallam Yuguda who stated this while inaugurating the re-constituted Aviation Sector Reform Implementation Committee (ASRIC), specifically referred to a report carried by *Punch*

By Mohammed S. Shehu,
Aviation Reporter.

newspaper on Sunday with the caption 'Ministers, Senators, other VIPs escape death' and said it was sensational and mind-boggling, considering the fact that the plane landed safely. He added that such incidents warrant professional journalist to cross check facts before publication in order not to disseminate untrue stories. 'I am just making reference to what I saw in the *Punch*, which carried my photograph and reported that several ministers escaped death.

That was not true,' he said.

Narrating what happened, Yuguda said that the aircraft, which was on a chartered flight from Katsina Airport to Abuja, departed Katsina about 3:30 p.m. local time with the first officer on the control and 107 passengers and 12 crew members on board. About ten or eleven nautical miles from the airport, air traffic controllers got in contact with the Abuja air traffic controller for landing instructions. 'The aircraft's commander thereafter took over control of the aircraft and landed at 4:24 p.m. After landing, the aircraft ran into

a storm caused by heavy rains and skidded off the paved runway onto the grass strip where it came to rest. The square/gusty wind contributed in forcing the aircraft off the paved runway, and the pilot lost control in the process.'

'The aircraft was immediately closed,' he said, 'as all the agencies under my ministry at the airport, including the security agencies, swung into action to evacuate the passengers. All the 107 passengers and 12 crew members were safely evacuated,' he added.



Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Kabir Usman receiving set of computers to Katsina Islamic University by Ijaw community in Katsina...recently.

MT African pride: Afolayan receives court martial report

By Ruby Rabin, Defence Reporter

The General Court Martial yesterday submitted its report and recommendation on the trials of three Rear Admirals over their alleged role in the disappearance of the *MT African Pride*. The court martial, which lasted for 72 days, had convicted and dismissed Rear Admiral Francis Agbite and Samuel Kolawole for the disappearance of the ship, but discharged and acquitted Bob Manuel.

The Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Samuel Afolayan, receiving the document on behalf of the Nigerian Navy 71 days after the General Court Martial pronounced its judgement, said that the delay was because certain procedures had to be followed before the record of proceedings and reports were submitted. Vice Admiral Afolayan said that the Navy was not interested in punishing any one but rather in ensuring that the right thing was done. He explained that preliminary reports from the court martial have already been handed over to the ministry of defence, but added that, 'These reports given to us by the board will be reviewed by the Navy and handed

over to the appropriate authority, the defence headquarters, which will present it to the Navy board.' He said that the Navy was constrained to proceed with the court martial because the issues were of national interest and above sentiments or personal interests.

'The Nigerian Navy has learnt its lesson from the trial,' he added, 'which is simply

that it must shoulder the responsibility of protecting the lifeline of the Nigerian economy, which comprises mainly oil and gas; and such a responsibility would not be compromised.'

The vice admiral called on all Nigerians to acknowledge that the Nigerian Navy did not cover its bad deed, but crushed out the bad eggs among its personnel. 'This should serve as an example to other services and ministries,' he added, while urging

Nigerians to appreciate the efforts of the Nigerian Navy.

Speaking earlier, the chief of defence intelligence and president of the General Court Martial, Rear Admiral Joseph Ajayi, said that the trial took over 72 days and judgement was delivered on January 2005. He explained that an interim report was compiled and submitted on January 15, 2005, and that members of the General Court Martial have since been working on the court proceedings, which was contained in 7 volumes.

Jigawa to develop mineral deposits

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent (Dutse)

The Jigawa state government has revealed its determination to develop mineral deposits in the state in the effort to sustain its policies on economic regeneration and development. The government has therefore released N25 million for economic regeneration and development, according to the state's commissioner for solid minerals, Alhaji Rabi Auta. He disclosed that another N25 million has been released for the take-off of

the state's glass factory in Kazaure.

The commissioner said that arrangements to exploit the recently discovered bentonite site in Birmiwa were in an advanced level of planning. The mineral is used in the iron and steel and petroleum industries, as well as for cosmetics manufacture.

Alhaji Auta added that the state government would give priority attention to the exploitation of the mineral deposits to improve the state's resource base. Whenever feasible, manufacturing enterprises would be sited in areas with mineral

deposits to ensure that the natural resources were optimally utilised for local development. The state government has already sent personnel to Europe for training on the operation and maintenance of the machines to be imported, according to Alhaji Auta.

Jigawa state is reported to have discovered over 2 million metric tonnes of iron in Hadejia, Kaugama, and Auyo, and to be funding research projects to find more. Alhaji Auta disclosed however that the establishment of necessary infrastructure was accorded a higher priority by his government than direct involvement in the expansion of the state's resource based.

Benue electoral commission postpones election in Kwande LG

The chairman of the Benue State Independent Electoral Commission (BSIEC), Mr James Ikye, has announced the indefinite postponement of the Kwande local government council election. He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Makurdi that the postponement was because of a court case against the commission instituted by some aggrieved politicians from the area. Mr. Ikye said that the plaintiffs were

challenging the commissions' decision to declare the March 2004 polls conducted in the area as inconclusive, adding that the matter was before the Appeal Court in Jos because after the High Court in Makurdi had ruled in favour of the commission.

NAN reports revealed that supporters of the main political parties in Kwande LGA resorted to violence following the cancellation of the election result, which has led to the loss of lives and property.

News



Akwa Ibom State Governor, Arc. Obong Victor Attah (middle) inspecting a fish pond at Ikot Ubasi in Nsit Ubium L.G.A., Akwa Ibom State established by a farmer, Mr. Samuel Ebong Effeh

Sultan appeals for housewives' participation in census

The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Alhaji (Dr.) Abubakar Maccido III, has appealed to all Muslims in Sokoto state and Nigeria to allow their wives and children to participate in the coming census. His Eminence spoke at the Ammad Maigero Theatre in Sokoto during the flagging-off ceremony of the publicity campaign for the 2005 population and housing census. According to him, Islam does not kick against the exercise. He further urged the traditional rulers to do everything possible to ensure the success of the national population census.

Speaking on the same occasion, Alhaji Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa, the executive governor of the state, called on the census publicity committee

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, Correspondent (Sokoto)

members to use every available means of information dissemination at their disposal, including traditional town criers, to educate the members of the public on the importance of the exercise. He said that the success or failure of the population census in the state depends on their efforts or inaction, adding that his government would support the committee in the effective

discharge of its assignment. In his words, 'The importance of census to any nation cannot be over emphasized. It is the bedrock for planning, and therefore for sustainable growth and development.' He lamented however that successive population census exercises conducted in the country from colonial times to the post-independence era were bedeviled with a number of problems, which sometimes resulted in their cancellation.

Reps probe use of ecological fund

Against the backdrop of investigating the diversion of ecological funds provided by the federal government to the states, the House of Representatives Committee on Government was in Plateau state yesterday to probe two projects so far executed with the ecological funds. It recalled that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission had recently beamed its searchlight on the Plateau state government's hand-ling of ecological funds in the state.

Speaking while in audience with the governor of Plateau state at Government House, Jos, the chairman of the House committee, Hon. Dayo Ogunniyi, said that the lawmakers had to perform the

From Rakiya A. Mohammed Correspondent (Jos)

oversight function of assessing how ecological funds has been spent from 1999 to date. Hon. Ogunniyi, who disclosed that Plateau was the 27th state they had visited, decried the environmental degradation of the state. 'We have not been very happy about the environmental degradation of this place. What we saw was not the Plateau state of yesterday,' he said.

The House committee chairman said that they were also in Plateau state to look at its areas of critical need and would later convey their conclusion to the Plateau state government.

C'ttee blames police inefficiency on funding

The chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Police Affairs, Hon. Emmanuel Bwacha, yesterday pointed out inadequate funding as the main factor undermining the efficiency of the Nigeria Police Force. Hon. Bwacha was reacting to questions from pressmen at the National Assembly. He said that despite the huge allocations to the police force in the annual budgets, the force remained underfunded owing to its large numeric strength. He stressed however that the funding issue was no excuse for police officers to illegally extort money from the public, adding that they needed to exercise patience as their welfare packages were being gradually improved. 'I am not persuaded that poor conditions in the police service could ever justify extortion,' he said, adding that 'as democracy stabilises in the country, police welfare will continue to improve.'

He promised that although he was yet to receive any official complaint on improper payment of police remuneration as required by the law, he would take swift action on such complaints whenever communicated to him. He refuted claims that the committee jerks up the budgetary allocation of the police, saying that National Assembly appropriates funds according to the importance of each subhead.

Commenting on the on-going investigation of the former Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, Hon. Bwacha said that his committee was liaising with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which is still investigating the matter. 'We have some facts on ground,' he said, 'but we do not want to preempt the final report of the investigation by the EFCC. We are therefore still giving them time to turn in a comprehensive report.'

By From Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter

In answer to allegations that money may change hands on the Balogun case in a bid to

sweep it under the carpet, the lawmaker said that the committee members would be the wrong people for the former IGP to attempt to give

money. 'All the facts we have are inconclusive,' he stressed. 'Once a comprehensive report reaches us on the matter, action will be taken adequately.'

Barracks rehabilitation c'ttee warns two contractors

The Presidential Committee on Barracks Rehabilitation (PCBR) has issued a 7-day ultimatum to two contractors to begin work on their sites or lose the licence. The committee chairman, Alhaji Sani Gidado, who spoke to newsmen in Abuja yesterday, named the contracting companies in question as Legend Construction Services Limited and the Concron Nigeria Limited. He said that the committee had to issue the ultimatum assessing the progress of work at the companies' sites across the country. He revealed that the affected companies were in line to handle three other sites at new barracks in Calabar.

Alhaji Gidado stressed that if the contractors did not show serious commitment to the projects, their contracts will be revoked at the expiration

of the ultimatum and awarded to other contractors. 'These projects were awarded to contractors since December, but they have not even commenced work on the sites, although comparable contracts awarded at the same time were at the completion stages,' he lamented. 'To my total dismay,' he added, 'a contractor handling the rehabilitation of 30-family quarters for the ranks of corporal and below was using low quality materials. We have directed him to replace the low quality doors and the sanitary facilities within 7-days or lose his money.' Alhaji Gidado warned contractors who failed to comply with the bill of quality that they risked having their

contracts revoked or losing their money, adding that the committee will reject badly executed jobs.

From Ruby Rabiu, Defence Reporter

Anti-human trafficking hotlines launched in Akwa Ibom

In an effort to eradicate human trafficking for prostitution and child labour in Nigeria, a monitoring and preventive centre for fighting the menace has been set up in Uyo. Mr. Israel Ekanem, the coordinator of the non-governmental organisation known as Grassroots Empowerment Network (GSN), said that the centre, which is located at No. 49 Ibong road, off Ikot Ekpene road in Uyo, has a help desk for documenting reported cases of trafficking, child abuse and exploitation, and supporting children in need of help. The centre also has facilities for telephone and e-mail hotlines.

Mr. Ekanem announced that GEN, which will work in collaboration with the Niger-

From Edet Ekanem Correspondent (Uyo)

Delta Observatory and more than 30 other NGOs, will follow-up on children rescued and returned to their families. The centre will also play a 'watchdog role,' he added, 'by providing immediate protective and affording the rescued children any necessary physical and psychological assistance.' He called on people with information on potential trafficking and other child abuse cases to inform the centre, using their anti-trafficking hotlines 2348057131176@SMNetwork.com or 08033674233, or report the same to the law enforcement authorities for immediate and prompt intervention.



CONFIRMED NN RECRUITMENT CENTRES FOR NIGERIAN NAVY NNBSTS BATC 2

1. Prospective candidates for the NN recruitment exercise which will take place from 21 - 26 March 2004 are to report at the zonal recruitment centres chosen for their respective States of origin as shown below.
2. We regret the inconveniences caused to Enugu and Sokoto States respectively.

S/No	Zone	States	Zonal Recruitment Centres
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1.	Zone A	Lagos, Ogun	NNS QUORRA Naval Base Apapa.
2.	Zone B	Oyo, Osun	Govt. Tech. College Okafia-Oshogbo, Osun State
3.	Zone C	Ondo, Ekiti	State Stadium, Akure, Ondo State
4.	Zone D	Edo, Delta	NNEC Ogorode, Sapele
5.	Zone E	Imo, Abia	Artillery Battalion, Oboize, Owerri, Imo State
6.	Zone F	Rivers, Bayelsa	NNBTS, Orme, P/Harcourt, River State
7.	Zone G	Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi	State Stadium Abakiliki, Ebonyi State
8.	Zone H	Benue, Nassarawa	Nassarawa State Polytechnic Lafia N/State
9.	Zone I	Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe	33 Field Artillery Brigade, Bauchi
10.	Zone J	Kaduna, Niger, FCT	TRADOC Minna, Niger State.
11.	Zone K	Borno, Yobe	Army Children Sch. Maimalari Cant. Maiduguri
12.	Zone L	Taraba, Adamawa	State Stadium, Jalingo Taraba State
13.	Zone M	Kano, Katsina, Jigawa	NAF Base Kano
14.	Zone N	Cross River, Akwa Ibom	State Stadium, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
15.	Zone O	Kwara, Kogi	State Stadium, Ilorin, Kwara State
16.	Zone P	Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi	State Stadium Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State

Signed
Navy Secretary
For Chief of the Naval Staff

THE ARTS

Nigerian films

NTA to acquire screening rights



Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu, Minister of Information and National Orientation

Chief Chikelu the humorist

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu is a rather interesting and humorous man. Before delivering his speech yesterday at the film distribution workshop, which, typically, started late, the always cheerful minister asked the audience what the organisers of the event had said about his late appearance at the event.

He first said something to the effect that he'd been ready by 10.00am but was told not to come to the venue as the organisers were not yet ready for him. "What did they tell you?" he then asked. "Did they tell you the minister is not ready?" When the audience laughed he went on to say, "I just wanted to be sure because they told me you were not ready so I hope they didn't tell I was not ready." The house roared its approval of his anecdote.

Prior to that, just as the minister stepped up to the lectern, a polyphonic GSM phone rang out in the hall, emitting a high-toned melody. This went on for a few seconds until the owner of the phone switched off the gadget. The minister smiled and said, "Thank God for GSM!" The house laughed as one.

The ebullient chief was not yet done. When the laughter had died down, the minister said something to the effect that it never failed to amuse him how everyone always looks around whenever a GSM phone rings at a public event. "Even the culprit," he said, seemingly delighted at the turn of events, "would be looking around before eventually reaching into his pocket to switch off the phone!"

Chikelu's last major crack was on the absence of opening and closing prayers on the programme of events. After making this observation, he jovially asked the MC, Mr Brian Etuk of the Nigerian Film Corporation, to lead the house in closing prayers if he was close to God.

Etuk played himself by inviting a pastor from the audience to lead the prayer. Predictably, not only the minister but virtually the entire house laughed with audible quips stating that the MC must indeed be very far from God!

Stories by
Crispin Oduobuk,
Group Literary Editor

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) will soon begin to pay for screening rights of Nigerian films to be transmitted on its channels. This revelation was made yesterday by Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu, while delivering the keynote address at the opening ceremony of the Workshop on Effective Distribution and Marketing of Nigerian Films and Video. The two-day event organised by the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), Jos, and BOB TV, Lagos, is taking place at the

Ladi Kwali Conference Centre of the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja.

Chief Chikelu assured the audience of film industry practitioners, marketers, journalists and various other persons that the federal government is committed to the survival and growth of the Nigerian film industry.

He said this commitment would further be strengthened by the planned establishment of a film industry practitioners' council in about two weeks' time.

According to the minister, the proposed practitioners' council will be peopled by active participants in the film industry who are conversant with the peculiarities of the industry.

In the same vein, Chief Chikelu also informed the gathering that government is in the process of setting up a committee to coordinate a review of Nigerian film policy. He said the committee should be up and running in about a fortnight.

Sounding a note of caution at the event, the minister told the workshop

that the film industry is yet to fashion out an efficient distribution system. He said without this in place, industry practitioners would not be able to reap profits from their efforts and without profits to plough back into the industry, there would be neither growth nor development. He therefore urged participants to come up with "meaningful and practical recommendations" after their deliberations.

The Workshop on Effective Distribution and Marketing of Nigerian Films and Video is expected to end today.

...Filmmakers lack adequate funding—NFC MD

Meanwhile, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), Mr Afolabi Adesanya, has said that poor financing remains the perennial problem of Nigerian filmmakers. He made this observation during his welcome address at the opening ceremony of the Workshop on Effective

Distribution and Marketing of Nigerian Films and Video.

He said besides discussing general problems in the sector, participants at the workshop should come up with "modalities for putting in place efficient and more 'impactful' framework and policy for the distribution and marketing of Nigerian films and video locally and abroad."

Extolling the growing influence of Nigerian films through the branding of its production sector as "Nollywood", the film corporation boss also said, "Today, after Hollywood and Bollywood, the most influential and most talked about film industry in the world is Nollywood and its peculiar contribution to entertainment." Furthermore, Adesanya noted that the

workshop "is coming at a very critical period in the development of both the Nigerian Film Corporation and the film industry." He said the corporation was taking stock of its activities with a view to reinvigorating itself to face the issues militating against the film industry to enable it "be more effective and relevant to the needs of the government and filmmakers."

Obasanjo backs film village

* Gives Institute N20million

President Olusegun Obasanjo is solidly behind the establishment of a film village in the country. Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu, Minister of Information and National Orientation, made this known at the Workshop on Effective Distribution and Marketing of Nigerian Films and Video.

The minister said, "I can tell you that the president is solidly behind the development of a first class film village in Nigeria." Furthermore, Chief Chikelu said several states were

already jostling for the film village to be sited within their boundaries.

Still on the proposed film village, the minister informed participants of the workshop that a team of foreign experts

were expected to come into the country soon in order to advise on the specific requirements of the film village.

In the meantime, the federal government has released the sum of 20 million

Amaka Igwe seeks protection against big 'poachers'

Amaka Igwe, veteran filmmaker and Chief Executive of BOB TV, the co-organisers of the Workshop on Effective Distribution and Marketing of Nigerian Films and Video, is seeking government protection from those that

may want to come into the film industry to hijack the lucrative business after the pioneers had worked hard to set it up. She made the plea while delivering a vote of thanks at the opening ceremony of the event. Speaking about purported disagreements in

naira to the Nigerian Film Corporation to resuscitate the Nigerian Film Institute. Chief Chikelu said this development underscored government's desire to put in place a solid foundation for the film industry.

the film industry, the famed film director said that disagreements only exist in the minds of journalists. However, she admitted that there are quarrels in the industry even as all practitioners are untied by common problems and goals.

Group plans dance drama to honour Segun Olusola

As part of activities to mark the 70th year birthday of Chief Segun Olusola, an icon of Nigerian arts and culture, Ara Studio has concluded plans to premiere a drama dance titled *Lami-Lami* at the cinema hall, National Theatre, Lagos, on March 21st 2005.

According to the Arts Manager of Ara Studio, Mufa Onifade, the whole essence of

By Ikechukwu Eze,
Reporter, Lagos

Lami-Lami is to celebrate Chief Segun Olusola's patriotism in championing Nigerian arts and his immense contributions to the development of the nation's culture that cannot be ignored.

"Ara Studio, as one of the designated arts managers and stakeholders that share the vision, commitment and

achievements of this culture personality, we came on board to premiere *Lami-Lami*," Mr. Onifade stated.

Explaining further, he said *Lami-Lami* was a fusion of dance, music and drama with a message that seeks to cry out against child and women trafficking.

He also pointed out that "it's a didactic cry for peace and peaceful co-habitation which

Chief Segun Olusola represents with his vision and numerous activities."

Written by Mufu Onifade, directed by Wale Macaulay and choreographed by Segun Adefila, the play which features the Crown Troupe of Africa comes up from 5:00 p.m. that Monday.

Chief Segun Olusola, MNI, OFR, clocks 70 on March 18 2005.

THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS

World's first 'blind' art exhibition ends in London

Artworks designed to appeal to blind and partially sighted people have been on show in London, United Kingdom. 'Sense and Sensuality', as the show was tagged, exhibited works by finalists from the UK's first annual competition to create pieces that could be appreciated by visually impaired people.

The event was funded by the charity BlindArt and featured several works by visually impaired artists. They were available to be viewed at the Royal College of Art from 2-7 March in central London.

All of the works exhibited were for sale, and some of the proceeds will be used to create a permanent collection. BlindArt was founded by Iranian-born Sheri Khayami, who has been visually impaired since childhood. She said the project was the result of "four consecutive years of tragic events" in her life.

"Two years ago I had to confront my visual impairment for the first time ever in forty years and I hated it," she told the BBC News website.

"BlindArt is my way of coming out and saying to the world, 'yes, I am visually impaired and, yes, it's fine'."

The 62 works of art included oil paintings, acrylic on aluminium, mixed media pieces using paper and collage, woven pieces and sculptures in bronze and wood.

One piece - made from cast nylon - shows the movements of a bird's wings in flight, and

like most of the other works can be touched as well as viewed.

Another - entitled Pinky and Perky - is a large, latex bra with the cups sculpted into pigs' heads. Although the artist, Carrie Riechardt, offered to wear it for the exhibition, it

was decided that it would be better displayed on a tailor's dummy.

'Sense and Sensuality' was designed to be accessible to the widest possible audience. Most of the pieces could be touched, all were audio described, labels were in large

print and Braille, and British Sign Language guided tours was available.

The works were hung at low level so that they could be explored through touch, plinths had been designed with wheelchair users in mind and the gallery floor had colour

contrast and texture to help orientate visually impaired visitors.

The winner of the competition would receive £5,000 and BlindArt will purchase one of the works for its permanent collection.

Adapted from the BBC News website



Works from the exhibition



African arts and crafts as gifts are hot again in Europe, the Americas and parts of Asia. This print above by Artificio.com (located in Ghana) is an example of highly desired prints.

Dr. Peter Ozo-Eson's paper entitled Pension Reforms and Economic Recovery seeks to answer the question: What is the role of pension reform in the process of economic recovery? The paper shows clearly that reforming the pension system is a step in the process of economic recovery while surveying the background of the reforms and examining the framework of such efforts. He expresses the fear that a disproportionate size of the informal sector and the underdevelopment of the capital market can weaken the stimulus to be provided by the 2004 pension reforms. The economist also suggests a strong regulatory framework to ensure the development of the capital market. He admonishes that there is the need for pension savings to be immune from stock market volatility.

Ozo-Eson cites the case of Chile, the Latin American nation that is reputed to be the first country to carry out the first comprehensive reform of its pension system. The economic consequences of reforms on the economy are discussed in the paper. Like Akintola-Bello, Ozo-Eson also acknowledges the stimulating impact of pension reserves on the capital market and the relief that the reform can bring on public finance in the long run. This, he argues, can bring about macro-economic stability. The paper makes references to the NEEDS document in respect of the goal of government to

Rethinking social security (II)

Review
Title: The Quest For Social Security
Publisher: Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF)
Reviewer: Kayode Komolafe

stimulate savings and investment in the economy for the purposes of growth. According to the NEEDS document, savings-investment equilibrium is stagnating at about 20% at a time a minimum investment rate of about 30% of GDP is what is required to ensure a growth rate of 7-8% per annum.

Mr. Olusegun A. Oshinowo's paper is entitled NSITF as Social Security Outfit: The Employers' Perspective. It is a balanced assessment of the NSITF in its 10 years of operation. To Oshinowo the question to ask is not whether there should be social security, rather the issue is the "type of social security scheme that is required to meet the needs and expectations of the society". From the employer's viewpoint, Oshinowo shows how the NSITF can be repositioned to become one of the best social security organisations in the world. He shares in the optimism that given the necessary dynamics, NSITF could draw on its wealth of experience in the sector to become an institution that can provide "social safety net". In scrutinising the Fund, the benchmarks used in are as follows: the satisfaction of contributors about the service delivery of the Fund; compliance with the statute setting up the NSITF; the International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s

Convention and comparison to other social security schemes around the globe. His verdict is also unambiguous: He scores the NSITF highly in terms of interaction with contributors, restructuring and re-engineering of its administration. But he rates the Fund as being "timid", in ensuring employers' compliance and unable to meet the self-imposed standard of payment of benefits within two weeks. He also expresses the hope that NSITF would improve on data management and produce statements of accounts with ease. Looking ahead, Oshinowo posits that the future would be determined largely by how NSITF meets the challenges of the pension reforms and internal organisational development needed to adjust to the new reality.

With the insight of the man in the saddle, Mohammed makes an appreciation of the challenge before NSITF in his paper entitled Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund: The Journey So Far. Essentially the paper is a distillation of

NSITF's achievements and challenges. In a remarkably frank analysis of the issues before the organisation, Mohammed exhorts stakeholders to contribute towards making the NSITF the "best" institution providing social security in Africa. Full of optimism, he does not see this as tall order at all. But then there has to be a "paradigm shift", in the way things are done, he insists.

In a departure from the norm of making excuses, the paper highlights the "operational and administrative weaknesses" of the Fund.

Embodied in the paper is also the cheering news that opportunities abound for the Fund not just for survival but indeed also for expansion. There is also an indication of the technical and administrative preparedness of NSITF as it faces the immensely challenging future.

The possibilities for enhanced performance are there with the positive factors of new investment outlets to be explored by the Fund, a

relatively young population to make contributions to it and demand for new social security products.

Mohammed's analysis is naturally situated within the context of the 2004 Pension Act which provides the legal framework for the pension reforms. He surveys the implications of the new law for the NSITF. For clarity, the law requires the NSITF to establish a company as a Pension Fund Administrator while the NSITF itself would still remain a social security institution. Before the law, NSITF focused on private sector workers, but now the NSITF-owned PFA has the challenge of making itself attractive to contributors from both private and public sectors. In addition, the social insurance function is clearly defined in the Section 71(2) of the Act which gives the Fund the responsibility of providing every "contributing citizen" with services of a social insurance organisation. How would the social insurance services (besides pension) to be provided by the NSITF be funded? These and other questions, according to Mohammed, ought to be answered as the reforms proceed. It is also significant that Mohammed's reading of the law is that it has, in fact, "strengthened" the NSITF. Above all, how the Fund responds to this change in the legal environment of its operation will, among other factors, determine its future.

A fuller story of NSITF in the last one decade is

contained in a piece entitled 10 Years of National Insurance Trust Fund. The edited form of the text has, in fact, been published in newspapers as part of the celebrations of NSITF at 10.

The message of this publication is that if the goal of poverty reduction is to be significantly achieved, the issue of social protection must be taken more seriously. The contributors to the book deserve commendation for the powerful insights and analysis offered in matters of social security schemes as means of ensuring protection. The NSITF has also done well by publishing the book as a contribution to the discussions of issues arising from the current reforms in the social security sector.

The publication is far from being exhaustive, but it is a timely and important contribution to the process of clarification needed at this period of reforms. The contributors handle the various topics in such a way that there is a thematic coherence on issues that are germane to the growth and development of the Fund.

This publication is recommended for all those who seek to be literate in issues of social security as they emerge in Nigeria today. It is recommended for experts, stakeholders and members of the general public who are interested in the discussion of issues of social protection.

The few errors such as those in spelling of names should be corrected in subsequent reprints.

Komolafe is with Thisday

Inside Politics

Confab: FCT delegates must defend Fed character, mayorship - Hon. Sidi Ali

Hon. Sidi Ali represents Abuja South Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives and is a member of the committee on FCT. He spoke with Hammeed M. Bello, Senior Political Reporter, on the ongoing conference as it affects the FCT, the structural and institutional reforms and the status of the FCT among other issues. Excerpts:-

You represent Abuja South, a section of the Federal Capital Territory in the House of Representatives, and it is expected that you should articulate the views, hope and aspiration of the people, as it affect them politically, economically and socially. Would you say you have given a worthy representation?

It would be recalled that I got to the National Assembly about three months after inauguration because of the case I had at the tribunal. When I came in, I understand that first and foremost, the assignment before me is for members of the House to understand what the reality on ground is as far as Abuja administration is concerned.

The issue of Abuja as given in the constitution is in expectation of what the reality might be. Most members might have understood Abuja upside down. The common knowledge is that Abuja has been taken over by the federal government because it is a virgin land. When I got to the House, the first thing I did was to, on one to one basis at every opportunity I have, to explain the reality of Abuja to the members. The fact is that the federal government enacted a decree establishing the FCT in 1976, and the policy statement is everybody will be resettled out of the FCT to a place of their choice. Now this has not been feasible at all and I think President Obasanjo was the one who told us then that the federal government cannot take the burden of resettling everybody outside the territory. As development reached those who wished to remain, the federal government will compensate them and they will move from the sight of development. This has been the case and as we go along, compensation is becoming a non-issue because non of the governments was ready to pay compensation and as such, the issue of integration came up during Babangida regime. My primary assignment has been to clear the impression that Abuja is a virgin land. To some extent, we have succeeded, and that is why members come to understand some of the bills coming to the National Assembly from the executive to create boards and parastatals in the FCT, especially as the constitution mentioned that Abuja should be treated as if it were one of the states of the federation. To my mind what this means is that it will give room for establishing organisations, governments so that we can have proper management of Nigerians living in the FCT. Members understood this and approved a

number of boards, including the water board, environmental protection board, the primary school board among others. You will agree with me that these boards are essential and there are other boards like the health management and the pilgrims boards so that we can have similarity with what obtains in the states that accounts for their smooth administration. I think that has been achieved. Every member of this Assembly today now understands what is the reality on ground, especially that they are living here and they go round to see things for themselves.

And secondly, as you are aware, the responsibility of any legislative is to improve the lot of its people and the only ways we can do this is by participating fully in the provisions and implementation of the budget.

In Abuja we have two budgets coincidentally we participate in the national budget and we participate in the statutory FCT budget. Luckily enough, last year, we were able to entrench a number of projects but for the due process which made most of the projects not due until about the end of the year but for now, as I am talking to you, I can glad to say that I have the water project for my constituency out and I have about eight boreholes which is now currently going on in one of the area councils that is Gwagwalada.

If you look closely, you will find out that the development of the Federal Capital Territory is in phases but so far, bulk of the development is concentrated in the Abuja municipality with little federal presence in the local areas and suburbs. They might not feel the impact of general development process going on in the FCT because of this concentration of projects in the city centre. What is your impression?

That is a very good observation and it has been the case for many years but I think in the last two years we have already in the pipeline programmes that will change all that. I have told most of my area council chairmen that they have to be serious in providing amenities and developing their area councils. We are expecting some development from these young men who are newly elected and, another area we are likely to have changes is that about a week ago, there was a budget defence in which the satellite towns development agency appeared. The agency has been put in place by the present minister of the FCT, Malam Nasiru el-Rufai. I think it is one of the things I appreciate from

the young man because he has put in place development as it affects health services and education, and of course, this satellite towns development agencies have their budget which have been defended. In the budget, primary and secondary roads, among other rural development projects have been captured.

Also, electrification has been captured in the budget. You are right that development has not been reaching the satellite towns as expected. But the establishment of the Satellite Towns Development Agency and the provision made for them in the budget, we are hoping that we will see changes within the year 2005. In my constituency, some roads and hospital rehabilitations have been captured in the budget. It is important for these development of the satellite towns because with the mass movement of people outside the city you will feel that they will have comfort in some of these area councils and I think by the time they have comfort there, we shall also have peace here. If they don't have peace, we move them out of the city, and they are not peaceful, then we cannot be peaceful here in the city. So, I think it is our responsibility and that of the government to make the area councils comfortable for other Nigerians so that we can have security, real security in the city itself.

There is one worrisome trend that most residents of Abuja have been expressing concern over. The authorities of the federal capital have been embarking on massive restructuring and re-organisation of the city such that little or no provision is made for the less privileged people. Their business has been smashed.

Also, you find that there are no bus stops because it was believed that everybody living in Abuja must be above average person, but the entire process is making life difficult for the less privileged, don't you think that the way the Abuja is planned, there are some errors that need to be corrected to make provision for the less privilege to live side by side with the elites. What is your impression of all these?

I always quarrel with the Abuja planners right from the word go. I had an opportunity one time to make a comment at a conference to review the master plan of Abuja, and in that meeting, I made my mind clear that a lot of things are wrong with the Abuja planning.

I want to say that the initial planners of Abuja never take into consideration the peculiarity of Africans, the peculiarities of Nigerians, in fact the peculiarities of read extended families of



Hon. Sidi Ali

Africa and its quite unfortunate. What should be done?

What is to be done is for the master plan to be reviewed. I am of that opinion we have to review this master plan of Abuja. In the subsequent phases of development, we should be able to improve and incorporate the peculiarities our way of life, our tradition our culture. We are in Nigerians, we have the rich far up there and you have the poor extreme down there. We should be able to provide for where this poor can stay, to improve their life because if they stay around where there is economic activities, where there is social activities, they can come into the city and gradually they also get improved. They also get developed in their social and economic activities.

If we want Nigerians to unite in Abuja then we must make provisions for all class of people appropriately through the development of their standard of living.

Most currently, you recall that the federal government approved the scrapping of the ministry of the Federal Capital Territory and the recommendation that the status of the state should be given to the Federal Capital Territory is feasible. The impression this creates is that the hues and cries of the indigenes of Abuja, to some extent, has been addressed.

I don't see the way of saying we are going to have a state as such but I think there is a corrective measure trying to make Abuja as provided by the law. In the first place, having ministry of the Federal Capital Territory in place is improper. Now that we are going back to the provisions of the law, I am glad about that, but at the same time the people of the Federal Capital Territory want the government to, at least, humanly look at the law and marry them with what

we have on the ground today because if you look at the law establishing the Federal Capital Territory, the great Nigerians that sat down and drafted the constitution look at Abuja as a virgin area. So everything was left hanging until we have Nigerians here now. Application of that law should be done very, very carefully. Now that the executive have reverted to the provision of F.C.D.A. Act and the provisions of the constitution, how do we want to see the provision of the constitution totally applied in the federal Capital Territory, especially Section 299 which says we should treat Abuja as if it were one of the states of the federation. The reason for this provision is to make sure that if you come from Abeokuta, you come from Jigawa, you come from Sokoto you come from Lagos, once you come to Abuja and you decided to make Abuja your place, you should not miss what you have in Lagos or Sokoto or Kano administratively. If your child is going to school if you come here your child should be able to go to school. If you are a politician, you should be able to politics here. If you are a trader should trade here if you are a civil servant and so on and so forth, this is what we are expecting to be done.

If care is not taken, and we allow we hand pick areas that only affect the government and allow other areas that affect the administration of the people, then we are in trouble and this government is not being fair. For instance, if the government believes that F.C.D.A. should be in place and the Federal Capital Territory should be in place now we should go ahead and invoked the provision of the constitution that says there should be a mayor for the Federal Capital Territory comprising six areas councils. Now lets see how do we make up this mayor; can we have

elected mayor; can we have appointed mayor or what do we call that mayor. Do we say territorial mayor where now we line up activities, we line up business, we line up management for him. Such mayor, what will he be doing, what is his relationship with the president; what relationship with elected area councils chairmen now it is the responsibility of the executive and the National Assembly to now sit down and see how we can evoke that provision of the constitution to have a territorial mayor or mayor whatever the case may be. But if we now say we are reverting to F.C.D.A act and we only concentrate in providing amenities and forget about the administrative aspect of it, then it is very very unfortunate.

As we are reverting to the law establishing the Federal Capital Territory, we should also evoke that section which allows for the good management of the people of the Federal Capital Territory. If these two are put together, I will welcome the change. But the change is very necessary and is overdue.

My appeal is that both the National Assembly, which I am a member of, and the executive, must put their head together and make laws that will govern the FCT because the constitution allows that - it has made a lot of provisions because of situations like the present one we have in Abuja.

At the ongoing conference, though the FCT has its representations but what do you think require urgent attention of the conference?

The delegates we have, I have confidence in them. I want them to reach consensus, to first of all understand the problems of the FCT. Secondly, there is the issue of federal character as it affects the FCT and the entire country. There is constitutional provision for the federal character commission which the commission has not been implementing. The people of the FCT have missed out a lot in this area. For instance, our children have no provision in the JAMB admission. Most of our children don't have a place by the JAMB quota, they have to go to other states to use their quota to be able to get admission. If the commission should strictly implement the quota system, the people of FCT would have their place in employment in the civil service and political appointments. For instance, the FCT PDP tried in voting in the present government but you can see that in the ministerial appointments, there is nobody groom the FCT. I think the federal character thing has not been applied to the FCT. Delegates to the conference should emphasise on the implementation of the provisions of the federal character as it affects the FCT. Section 299 and other sections of the constitution that makes pronouncement on the provisions that should be given to the FCT. This is in addition to the issue of mayor. By the time these issues are sold out to the conference, I am sure other Nigerians would want Abuja to be peaceful, to have a unity city for everybody. I want the delegates to sell the idea that what really is Abuja; what is the situation on ground and what are the solutions.

Inside Politics

My expulsion is unconstitutional - Ngige

Anambra state governor, Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige, has reacted against his expulsion from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), saying the move is unconstitutional.

The governor, who spoke through his senior special assistant on media and publicity, Mr. Fred Chukwuelobe, indicated that he would challenge his expulsion in court.

According to him, going by the party's constitution, he is still a member of the PDP and urged his supporters not to panic over the latest development in the party.

Said Chukwuelobe, "the attention of the governor, Dr. Chris Ngige has been drawn to certain decision in Abuja by some members of the PDP National Executive Committee (NEC), expelling him from the party.

"The governor wishes to state that going by the provision of the PDP constitution, particularly article 16(c) (v), he remains a bona-fide member of the party," Chukwuelobe said, adding that, "the steps taken by those who participated in the so-called expulsion are unconstitutional within the context of the PDP constitution and the governor intends to challenge them in the court."

He however, alerted

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Stringer (Awka)

Anambra citizens of an alleged plan to send in Mobile policemen to provide cover for Chris Uba's men to embark on another round of property vandalisation and burning in the state and even cause harm to Ngige.

"The attention of all Nigerians and indeed world leaders is called to this

undemocratic and jungle justice perpetrated against a federating unit of Nigeria - Anambra state.

"The governor hereby appeals to the people of the state to remain calm but vigilante and refrain from being used to derail the infrastructural development revolution currently being witnessed in the state," Chukwuelobe added.

2007: Benue North-East wants governorship seat

Stalwarts and elders of the Benue North-East zone of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), at the weekend made a case for the zoning of the 2007 governorship ticket to the area.

Comprising Sankera, Jechila and Kwande federal

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

constituencies, the North-East, which has the largest population out of the three senatorial zones in the state, said that it was on course at ensuring that the Sankera axis produce the successor to Dr. George Akume as governor of Benue State.

The decision, which was made known by political leaders of the area who thronged Tor Donga town in Katsina-Ala local government area to receive over 4,000 decampees to the PDP however, represents a set-back to the power shift struggle by the Idomas of Benue South, who also want power shifted to their area.

Chief Atoza Ihindan, a second republic politician, who was also the House of Representatives member for Sankera, echoed the decision of the political class in the area before state principal officials of the party including the chairman, Mr. Aloysius Wuam, the secretary, Dr. Samuel Utom and North-East zonal chairman, Hon Mike Bosua who were in Tor Donga for the event.

Chief Ihindan, who also lauded the effort of his successor, Hon Gabriel Tor Suswan in building the party in the area, called on the leadership of the PDP in the state to consider their appeal for power zoning seriously lamented that in spite of the immense contribution of Sankera to the socio-political and economic development of the state, it has not had a shot at the exalted seat.

He was supported by the zone's second republic Senator, Jack Tilley Gyado who urged the people not to relent in the struggle to be zoned the governorship position, adding that the efforts of Hon Suswan would be a deciding factor for the zone to get the nod of the party to produce the candidate.

State secretary of the party, Dr. Samuel Ortom, who acknowledged the effort of the zone at building the party, said however, that zoning the exalted position would be a decision to be taken by the entire leadership at the appropriate time.



Governor George Akume

Senator Gyado, Hon Suswan receive decampees to Benue PDP

For the third time since the beginning of the year, former Senator Jack Gyado and House of Representatives Committee Chairman on Finance and Appropriation, Hon Gabriel Tor Suswan, have received decampees to the Katsina-Ala chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The event, which took place in Tor Donga, a major town in the Shitile district of Katsina-Ala local council, saw the decamping of former All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) strongman in Benue North-East, Hon Terfa Abuu and over 4,000 of his supporters who pitched their tent with the ruling PDP at a ceremony that also attracted several party stalwarts including Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Hon Mzenda Iho, state secretary of the party, Dr. Samuel Ortom and council chairmen including the host, Hon Tsenongi Abancha.

Supported by Senator Jack Gyado who was guest speaker at the event, Hon Suswan, representing Sankera federal constituency in which Shitile is a major district,

From Ita Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

expressed his appreciation over what he described as the "return of the big masquerade into the main arena," and said the re-union would add weight to Sankera people's quest for gubernatorial power shift come 2007.

"The return of a respected friend and straight politician of the Benue North-East zone into the PDP marks the beginning of the long sought after union and strength to enable the people of Sankera in their decades of struggle to be zoned the governorship position.

"Also the decamping of over 4,000 supporters of Abuu into the PDP marks another movement to further support the good policies and programmes of Governor George Akume," said Hon Suswan.

Dr. Ortom, state secretary of the party welcomed the decampees and assured further that PDP had enough room to accommodate everybody without discrimination.

anan



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA

Founded in 1979 and chartered by Act. No. 76 of 1993

PUBLIC NOTICE

2005 MANDATORY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MCPD) PROGRAMME

Pursuant to Rule 14(10) of Association of National Accountants of Nigeria Rules 1995, the 1st session of 2005 Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) programme will hold as follows:-

DATE

Monday 21st - Thursday 24th March 2005

VENUE

Women Development Centre
Onitsha-Enugu Expressway
Awka, Anambra State

COURSE FEE

Fifteen Thousand Naira (=N=15,000) per participant. The fee is to cover course materials and Lunch only. Payment in Draft should be made to the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria. Personal cheques are not acceptable. No Credit will be granted to any group. Members should make arrangements to pay their fees and claim refund from their employers in due course where necessary.

ACCOMMODATION

Members are to pay for their accommodation and feeding in any of the Hotels of their choice. List of some popular hotels can be obtained from the Secretariat.

NOMINATION

All nominations with payments in bank drafts or certified cheques should be made to the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria at least two weeks before the commencement of any session.

EXTRA INVITATION LETTERS

Extra invitation letter may be obtained from the Secretariat and the Nigerian College of Accountancy, Jos, Plateau State or from the Chairmen of the State Branches of the Association.

FOR WHOM

It is compulsory for every member of the Association to attend this programme at least once a year. Although this session is particularly for the members in the Eastern Zone, which includes the following States: Abia, Imo, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi States. Members in other States who wish to attend this session at Awka are free to do so.

Please note that REGISTRATION would commence from 12 noon on Monday, 21st March, 2005 at the venue

SIR PETER C. IBEKWE, B.Sc. (Hons), ECNA, FMC,
REGISTRAR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

10th MARCH, 2005.

E-mail: anan@yahoo.com

Web Address: www.ananweb.org

01-863369 01-866317 01863237

SPORTS

Freeman supports London 2012 bid

Australia's Olympic heroine Cathy Freeman has given her support to London's bid to host the 2012 Games.

Freeman, who won gold in the 400m at the Sydney Olympics, was in London for the start of The Queen's Baton tour for the next year's Commonwealth Games.

And Freeman expressed her views to London bid leader Lord Sebastian Coe when they met at Buckingham Palace.

"I want London to win the 2012 Olympics. I've already voiced my support to Lord Seb Coe," she said.

London is up against Paris, New York, Madrid and Moscow for the right to host the Olympics.

And Freeman believes London can learn from the Sydney Olympics and from Melbourne's preparations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

"From behind the scenes,

being retired as I am, teamwork is really important," she added.

"It's a tough challenge, and that's how it should be, but it is so worth it.

"Staying in touch with the community is really important too and understanding what people want.

"Getting inside people's

hearts and capturing their imaginations is a lesson so worth learning."

The head of the Melbourne Games, Ronald Walker, has joined Freeman in praising the London bid.

He admitted that the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester was a benchmark for Melbourne.

"We learned a lot from Manchester," he said. "I think Manchester was the underpinning claw for your bid for the Olympics.

"You deserve to win the Olympics. I'm helping Seb Coe, myself, in certain countries and you're the best country to get the Olympics and I hope you do get them."

Cup semis to stay in Cardiff - FA

Manchester United fans have been told there is no chance their side's FA Cup semi-final against Newcastle will be moved away from the Millennium Stadium.

Earlier, the Independent Manchester United Supporters Association urged fans to boycott the match.

"We announced that Cardiff would host both semi-finals back in September," said Football Association spokesman Adrian

Bevington.

"It will allow about 30,000 fans from each club to attend the games."

Bevington added that a final announcement over precise dates and kick-off times would not be made until Newcastle had completed their Uefa Cup tie with Olympiacos.

If the Magpies secure a place in the quarter-finals of the European competition then their FA Cup match will be played on Sunday because their Uefa Cup encounter is scheduled for the previous Thursday.

"A decision regarding which games will be played on which days, and at what particular time will be made later this week after Newcastle's Uefa Cup tie," said Bevington.

"Our first priority in that decision will be the safety and security of supporters as well as their travelling plans."

Chairman for the IMUSA, Jules Spencer, said his association would not back down from their stance against the plans, although he refrained from asking fans to boycott the semi-final.

"IMUSA would never seek to tell United supporters what to do," he said.

"We all have to make a personal choice, as members of our organisation have done, between the desire to support the team and the hassle, cost and inconvenience the FA are forcing us into by travelling to Cardiff.

Injury 'delays Klitschko defence'

Vitali Klitschko's planned WBC title defence against Hasim Rahman has been postponed after the Ukrainian injured his thigh, it has been reported.

The fight was due to take place on 30 April in New York but the Agence France Presse news agency says organisers are now looking to secure a date in June.

WBA champion John Ruiz could defend his title against James Toney on that Madison Square Garden bill

instead.

The 36-year-old Toney is a former three-weight world champion.

Rahman and Ruiz, as well as IBF titlist Chris Byrd and WBO champion Lamont Brewster, are promoted by Don King.

King also controls Klitschko's defence rights and is keen on unification show-downs.

"I can make that happen," King said. "My goal is have world title unification matches this year and I'm fighting to get it done."

Hasselbaink to miss UEFA Cup clash

Middlesbrough's hopes of rescuing their UEFA Cup campaign have been dealt a major blow with striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink ruled out of Thursday night's trip to Sporting Lisbon.

The 32-year-old was today due to undergo scans on a knee injury picked up in training which will rule him out of the game at the Jose Alvalade Stadium.

The former Chelsea player will almost certainly miss Sunday's Premiership home clash with Southampton too,

and Boro officials fear he could be out for several weeks as the club's injury list continues to grow.

"Jimmy has damaged a knee in training and will have scans later today," said a club spokesman. "He is definitely out of the game in Lisbon and is a doubt for Sunday."

Gaizka Mendietia, Ugo Ehiogu, George Boateng, Mark Viduka and James Morrison remain on the long-term casualty list, while keeper Mark Schwarzer only played in the first leg against Sporting because of a goalkeeping crisis. Ray

Parlour missed the game with a back problem.

Manager Steve McClaren will have only youngster Danny Graham, Joseph-Desire Job and Szilard Nemeth available from which to select a strike-force, with the Teessiders needing to score at least twice to stand any chance of reaching the quarter-finals.

Sporting raced into a 3-0 lead at the Riverside last Thursday night, but late goals from Job and defender Chris Riggott gave Boro a chance in the return.

Real confident of Woodgate return

Real Madrid are hopeful that Jonathan Woodgate will make his long-awaited debut at the beginning of next season.

Fears for the 25-year-old defender's future grew when a thigh injury ruled him out for the rest of this season.

But Real president Florentino Perez told Spanish newspaper AS: "We hope he will be able to start playing with the team from the beginning of the season.

"We are now on the road to recovery, and I am convinced he will become a great defender for Real Madrid."

Real signed Woodgate for £13.4m from Newcastle in August but he has not played a competitive game since a Premiership match in April last year.

He was poised to make his Real debut back in October but suffered a recurrence of the injury during a training session and had to fly to the United States for specialist advice.

In Woodgate's absence, Real have struggled and look likely to end a second straight season without a trophy.

But Perez insists he will see out his second term as club president.

"Until 2008, I will continue here because club members are with us," he added.

Perez also said that current coach Wanderley Luxemburgo has "all our confidence", despite reports that the Brazilian may be sacked if he does not deliver a trophy

this season.

"Next year's Real Madrid

will be built around Luxemburgo," said Perez.

Monaco aim at Champions League spot in Strasbourg

Monaco have the chance to leapfrog Lille into the third Champions League spot when they travel to struggling Racing Strasbourg in a rescheduled Ligue 1 game on Wednesday.

In other games St Etienne host AC Ajaccio, who are fighting to avoid relegation, and Sochaux take on neighbours Metz.

Monaco, knocked out of the Champions League by PSV Eindhoven, need to repeat against Strasbourg their fine first half display in the 2-2 draw at AJ Auxerre on Sunday.

Should they win their first game in five, Monaco would climb to third place with 49 points, two behind Olympique Marseille, who beat RC Lens 2-1 on Saturday and remain eight points behind runaway leaders and champions Olympique Lyon.

"We need to put ourselves in a good position by winning this game. We could be then well placed before the final sprint," said defender Francois Modesto.

"They will be very motivated as they are still fighting against relegation," said Swedish international midfielder Pontus Farnrud, who is doubtful with a groin injury.

Monaco's next two home games are against Marseille and Lille. The top two in the French league will qualify di-

rectly for the Champions League group stage and the third-placed side will enter at the third qualifying stage.

St Etienne will be keen to make amends for their 2-0 loss at Girondins Bordeaux last weekend as they entertain AC Ajaccio

who are 18th in the 20-strong league.

The Corsicans beat Paris St Germain 1-0 on Saturday and will jump out of the relegation zone if they win.

Lewis takes on former manager in High Court

Former world heavy weight champion Lennox Lewis was in the High Court on Tuesday trying to claw back up to two thirds of three million pounds he is still owed by his former manager Panos Eliades from an 8 million-dollar fraud damages award in the U.S.

Lewis, who retired in 2004, was awarded damages by a federal jury in Manhattan in February after it found Eliades and his company, Panix Promotions, guilty of fraud, breach of fiduciary duty and racketeering against Lewis.

The 39-year-old Lewis is asking top judge Mr Justice Peter Smith to rule that Eliades is the beneficial owner of a two millions pounds property in north London in moves aimed at enabling him to recover the value of the house.



Real Madrid midfielder Luis Figo battles Bayern Munich opponents in a Champions League clash. Woodgate will line up with Figo next season.

Schumacher eyes Sepang fight back

Michael Schumacher expects to be a leading contender in Sunday's Malaysian Grand Prix despite failing to finish the season opener in Australia.

Schumacher has been buoyed by team-mate Rubens Barrichello's climb from 11th on the grid to second in Melbourne.

"Getting zero points in the first race makes me even more determined to do better," the world champion said.

"But after what we saw in Australia, we are able to compete with our interim car even better than we thought."

Ferrari have started the season with an updated version of their 2004 car, as they

spend the extra time ensuring their definitive 2005 car is as well suited to the new rules as possible.

Renault were the clear pace-setters in Australia, while McLaren also looked very strong before their drivers made costly errors.

But Schumacher is confident he can fight with those two teams at the demanding Sepang track near Kuala Lumpur.

"I think we can expect to do quite well in Sepang and achieve a good result," said Schumacher, who has won in Malaysia three times.

"After all, (in Australia) Rubens showed what's possible even after a qualifying

session that didn't go too well.

"Our performance during the race was quite consistent, so I'm still confident."

Schumacher started the Australian race from the back of the grid after rain on his qualifying run and retired after a collision with Nick Heidfeld's Williams.

Schumacher has been in Malaysia on holiday since Melbourne, adapting to the tropical temperatures and humidity that make it such a demanding event.

"We all know Malaysia is one of the races that is physically toughest on the drivers, so nobody can afford to just hang about," he said.

Sports

NIGERIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Tornadoes seeks Insurance's fall in Benin

Confederation Cup aspirants, Insurance Football Club of Benin will today trade tackles against Niger Tornadoes of Minna in a rescheduled week four encounter slated for Sam Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin.

Coach Godwin Uwua of Insurance is in dire need of victory in the match to improve his team's current poor standing on the Premier League table where they are in the relegation zone on 17th position.

Tornadoes only fare a place

better, as they are precariously perched on 16th position also in the relegation mire. Thus, it will be battle royale to see who picks result in the match, as both teams attempt to improve or continue with the impressive results they obtained in the past weekend.

The Benin Arsenal were held to a barren draw by Zamfara United in far away Gusau, while Niger Tornadoes bagged three points and three goals in the kitty against Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri at home.

Insurance, who went to pick a valuable away draw in their continental match penultimate week in Equatorial Guinea, need the victory more than the Minna side, as the match is a home clash, which explains why the encounter is crucial to Uwua and his boys.

However, to Coach AbdulRafi'u Musa of Tornadoes, the match is also significant, as he wants to use it to gain lost ground in his battle to place the team higher on the Premier League table, as well as to prove a point to

other oppositions. The Tornadoes sweat merchant has thus advised Insurance to forget about the points at stake in the clash, as the Minna side intends to continue with its impressive away form.

"Insurance should forget about the encounter because they are going to fall in Benin. As we have shown in previous matches, we don't usually have problem while playing away from home as the boys play without tension or pressure, so I am sure we are

going to do well against Tornadoes and El-Kanemi (on Saturday). Even if we do not get the maximum 6 points from both matches, we would leave with a result.

"Insurance is a great team no doubt, but it is not name that plays, once my boys play well and the officiating was good, there would be no stopping us. I propelled the boys to get a fabulous result against Nationale (last weekend), I would also guide them to get another result in Benin on Wednesday," Coach Musa disclosed to *Trustsports* in Minna.

The former star player will bank on the defence pair of Alex and Alabi Musa to thwart any attempt by Insurance to score his team, while putting young winger Simon Zeinke to task to use his powerful runs to prise open the defence of the Benin Arsenal to allow strikers Ajilo and Clement score the much-needed goals.

Uwua will put his team to task to win the game in order not to disappoint the highly critical Benin fans, as well as to put them in good stead for the return leg of their continental match against the Equatorial Guinea representatives on Saturday.

At the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu, Rangers International will lock horns with Zamfara United of Gusau in another rescheduled week four Premier League encounter.

The Flying Antelopes, who were beaten with a lone strike by 3SC of Ibadan last Saturday, will need to beat the Zamfara boys to put their derailing campaign back on track and improve their current 14th position on the league table.

Victory for the Coach Lawrence Akpokona boys will also put them in good frame of

mind ahead of their Confederation Cup match on Saturday. Zamfara who drew at home with Insurance on Saturday also needs the match to make up for lost points, and boost its 9th place on the league table.

Time would tell if Rangers will allow them get any result from the encounter.

2003 League champions, Enyinba FC of Aba will also play host to NPA FC of Lagos today at the Enyinba International Stadium, Aba.

The Aba Elephants, who got a point from their away match against Julius Berger in Abeokuta last Saturday will attempt to use the match to further prove their invincibility in this year's Premier League.

The Coach Okey Emordi tutored side is yet to lose a match this season, as the only unbeaten team in the Premier League so far, they would need to beat the Seasideers to improve their number 10 standing on the league table.

Coach Maurice Cooreman of NPA still basking in the euphoria of his team's victory over Wikki Tourists at the weekend will make all efforts to rubbish the unbeaten run of the Aba side or in the least leave Aba with a result that would boost the Seasideers' 8th placing in the league.

Cooreman will bank on enterprising goalkeeper Chigozie Agbim to keep a clean sheet against the People's Elephants, while upfront skilful Emmanuel Atobasi will be unleashed on the Enyinba's rear.

While the Ughah Opara anchored defence line is put to task to contain the Seasideers' attack, Joetex Frimpong and Emeka Nwanna will be released to wreak havoc on the defence of NPA in order to get the required result.

Coreman: NPA not scared of Enyimba

NPA F.C.'s Belgian coach Maurice Coreman has restated that his team is not scared of today's mid-week cracker against Enyimba FC of Aba, Coreman said Enyimba is just another big Nigerian clubside but his youthful NPA squad could return to Lagos with a positive result.

"We are not under any pressure but Enyimba would be under pressure, in fact NPA has nothing to lose as we'll go there to put in our best" said the former Gabros and Lobi sweat merchant. Adding after home wins and away losses to Enyimba at both Gabros and Lobi Stars it is his personal target to rattle the Aba Elephants in Aba.

Coach Maurice Coreman of the NPA Seasideers has continued to lament the poor state of our pitches nationwide, Onikan stadium, Lagos in particular. Even as his team celebrated their 1-0 win over visiting Wikki Tourist last weekend Coreman said the

Onikan Stadium turf is a big hindrance.

"You cannot play good football on such a pitch, it affects the flow of the game and it is alarming". Coreman has persistently lamented the poor state of the Onikan pitch during his team home draw with Kano Pillars and 3-1 win over Sharks. "I think the Nigeria Football League should do something about the pitches in the country, I implore the Lagos FA to keep the playing turf of Onikan Stadium smooth, it does not cost too much. Many Nigerian teams boast of quality players but the bad playing pitches are a big detraction and drawback to development of professional football in the country, fans are not enjoying the game as it should be," he said.

The big Belgians also complained that each time he comments on the poor standards of our pitches club officials will ask him to keep quiet and concentrate on grabbing crucial points in the

league. "I love football, I like to see free flowing football, it is in fact in the best interest of the

development of football in the country that there are good pitches" he said.



Enyimba striker, Joetex Frimpong attempts to steal the ball off Etoile du Sahel keeper Austin Ejide during the 2004 Champions League final.

Why I wept – Tornadoes coach

The chief coach of Niger Tornadoes Football Club, Minna, Alhaji AbdulRafi'u Musa, was overwhelmed by emotion as he wept profusely moment after the referee's final whistle signified his team's victory over visiting Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri last Saturday at the Bako Kontagora Stadium, Minna.

The sweat merchants later revealed to *Trustsports* that he could not hold back his emotion because his boys justified his confidence and trust in them, hence the emphatic 3-0 spanking of the Naze millionaires.

AbdulRafi'u, who was handed a three match ultimatum, win or be sacked by Tornadoes management, before the match, said the victory showed that his players could play well and win anywhere irrespective of the opposition.

He added that his team is good and should not be written off because of indifferent results obtained in earlier matches especially at home, saying that the poor home form was as a result of the over-bearing pressure piled on the young boys by impatient supporters of the team.

"I thank God for being on my side. Because of some little problems people began to pile pressure on the team, however, thanks to God we have been

By AbdulRaheem Aodu, Reporter (Sports)

vindicated. The way the boys played and the victory was too much for me particularly against a big team like Iwuanyanwu Nationale that was why I wept.

"The boys are good, they are young boys that would mature as the season progresses. We have a good

team but we don't know what happened (in previous home matches). The fans that should support us kept on piling pressure on us to win, however, now that we have overcome the poor patch with this win, other victories will follow both at home and in away games," he said amidst sobs of joy.

Following the victory, the technical crew chief has sounded a note of warning to

other teams to beware of Tornadoes as they intend to pick results from future matches at home and on the road.

"It is a matter of time before we put our season back on course, but with patience we are going to spring back soon. Starting from our next matches against Insurance in Benin and El-Kanemi in Maiduguri, we are going to strive to continue today's form."

Premier League Table

Pos.	TEAMS	PL	WN	DR	LS	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1st	Kano Pillars F.C	5	3	1	1	7	5	+2	10
2nd	Gombe Utd F.C	5	3	1	1	4	2	+2	10
3rd	Dolphin F.C	5	3	-	2	6	3	+3	9
4th	Nasarawa Utd	5	3	-	2	7	6	+1	9
5th	Lobi Stars	5	2	2	1	8	5	+3	8
6th	Kwara Utd	5	2	2	1	6	4	+2	8
7th	3SC	5	2	2	1	6	4	+2	8
8th	NPA F.C	4	2	1	1	5	3	+2	7
9th	Zamfara Utd	4	2	1	1	4	4	-	7
10th	Enyimba Int'l F.C	4	1	3	-	4	1	+3	6
11th	Gabros Int'l	5	1	3	1	6	5	+1	6
12th	Wikki Tourists	5	2	-	3	5	7	-2	6
13th	Nationale F.C	5	2	-	3	2	8	-6	6
14th	Rangers Int'l	4	1	2	1	2	2	-	5
15th	Julius Berger	5	1	2	2	4	5	-1	5
16th	Tornadoes FC	4	1	1	2	4	3	+1	4
17th	Insurance	4	1	1	2	2	4	-2	4
18th	Sharks FC	5	1	1	3	5	8	-3	4
19th	Gateway FC	5	-	3	2	1	4	-3	3
20th	El-Kanemi W	5	-	2	3	1	7	-6	2

League Results Premier League

Tornadoes 3 Nationale 0
 3SC 1 Rangers 0
 NPA 1 Wikki 0
 Pillars 2 Sharks 1
 Berger 0 Enyimba 0
 Dolphin 1 Kwara Utd 0
 Gabros 2 Lobi Stars 2
 Gombe 1 El-Kanemi 0
 Zamfara 2 Nasarawa 0
 Nasarawa 2 Gateway 0
Pro League 1A
 Jets FC 2 Yobe 1
 Buffalo 0 Juth 1
 VON 3 BON 2
 Plateau utd 2 NEPA 1
 Ranch B 1 Jigawa 0
 Adamawa 1 SEC 0
 Kogi 1 Kaduna 2
 Appeal 2 JC Raiders 1
Pro League 1B
 Ebedei 1 Ebonyi 4
 F Bank 1 Bayelsa 1
 Crown 2 C Rovers 2
 Ocean FC 2 Bussdor 0
 Delta Utd 1 Ila FC 0
 Bendel 2 U Bank FC 1
 GlobeStars 2 Sunshine 0
 Abia W 0 Awka Utd 1

My boys broke down – Ekundina

Iwuanyanwu Nationale sweat merchant, Alfred Ekundina has explained that the inability of his boys to rise to the occasion in the second half of their encounter with Niger Tornadoes Football Club of Minna, led to their loss of the match.

Coach Ekundina, who disclosed this to *Trustsports* moments after the match said it is unfortunate that they can play so well in the first half only to capitulate in the last 30 minutes and lose the match with such a result.

He added that since the team did not quite get it right in Minna, they would go back and re-strategise in order to come up with a stratagem that would give them valuable results in away matches in order to poise them for the league diadem or in the least, a continental ticket.

"I don't know what happened, we played so well in the first half but we were not very aggressive in the second stanza of the match. Come to think of it, this is a

match we prepared so well for only for my boys to break down.

"I didn't really know what happened but we would go back and work harder so that we can improve on our weaknesses. The boys though, tried their best particularly our new striker, Christian Jacob, you can see his efforts in the first half, though his goal was disallowed but he had a great half.

"If he was not injured and had to be replaced at half time, the result would have been different but like I said, we would go back and prepare harder," Ekundina said.

Nationale must defeat Zamfara United when they come visiting this weekend, otherwise the management's hammer could fall on Ekundina, who is currently under threat to improve the club's fortune and take them to the top of the league.

Trust Classified

CHARIOT OF LIGHT ASSEMBLY

This is to inform the general public that the above named Organisation has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs commission under part 'C' of the companies and allied matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are

1. REV. VINCENT OSEGHALA ARIANEGBE,
2. DEACONESS KATE ARIANEGBE
3. PETER IGHODARO
4. BQAIN AKERE

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse zone 5, Abuja. Within 28 days of this publication.

Signed

• BARR. AKPABIO O. C.

LOSS OF ALLOCATION PAPER

This is to inform the general public that the Allocation Paper of Plot No. 055 bearing JIBRIN ZAKARI got missing. If found please contact Alhaji Abdullahi Isa of No. 2 Sarkin Hausawa Line New Karu, Nasarawa State or the Zonal Manager, AMAC Abuja.

NURUL ISLAM SCHOOL

AH 40 KATSINA ROAD, KADUNA

This is to inform the general public that the above named Association has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs commission under part 'C' of the companies and allied matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Muhammadu Inuwa Abubakar | 2. Adamu Yaro Usman |
| 3. Abdulhamid Balele Wali | 4. Muhammad Sani Yahaya |
| 5. Suleiman Ahmad | 6. Muhammad Baba Iyang Gusau |
| 7. Ashiru Muhammad | 8. Muhammad Tukur Isah |
| 9. Sule Bako | 10. Col. Shehu Ibrahim Kano (rtd) |
| 11. Zubairu A. B. Aliyu | |

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse zone 5, Abuja. Within 28 days of this publication.

Signed

Muhammed. I. Abubakar
Secretary

LIVING HOPE MISSION INTERNATIONAL

This is to inform the general public that the above named Association has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs commission under part 'C' of the companies and allied matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are

1. Dr. Sunday Onyebuchi Achor
2. Christiana Ngozi Achor
3. Chimbi Ogbonna
4. Arch. Azike Deribe
5. Dr. Christian Ibe

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse zone 5, Abuja. Within 28 days of this publication.

Signed

Akelikun Abdu & Co.

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the following documents were missing by misplacement:

- 1) FCT/ABU/PL.221 of Block 33, Gaborone Stree, Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, trasnfered to Cosharis Finance and Investment Limited on behalf of Chief (Mrs.) Iyu Uchendu Ozoka from the assignee Ahmadu Abdum Kura.
- 2) FHA/EST/1/1343 of House 15, B Close, 3rd Avenue Festac Town, Lagos State - trasnfered to Cosharis Finance and Investment Limited on behalf of Allottee Mr. G. N Onuoha. If found, return to GONG HOUSE, Plot 119 Garki II Neighbourhood Centre, Abuja.

CHANGE OF NAMES

I, formerly MISS JECENTER CHINWE ENWENAM, now to be MRS JECENTER CHINWE A. AKIDI. All former document remain valid. Public to note.

I, formerly known as LINDA MPERHAN AGAH, now to be known and addressed as MPERHAN IORNAV. Corporate Affairs Commission and general public to note.

I, formerly known called USMAN MANU, now wish to be called UMARU MOHAMMED. All former documents remain valid. University of Maiduguri and the general public to note

I, formerly known as HADIZAH ABUBAKAR, now wish to be called KHADIJATU MUHAMMAD MAGAJI. All former documents remain valid. University of Maiduguri and the general public to note.

I, formerly known as MISS AYIBATONYE FLORENCE ITI, now wish to be known as MRS. AYIBATONYE FLORENCE ORIAKHI. All former documents remain valid. Securities and Exchange Commission and the general public please note.

VACANCY

Excellent Job opportunity for young, smart and hard working people with computer knowledge in a private company with branches in Kaduna and Abuja.

COMPETENCES

Result oriented, initiative, innovative, team-working ability and ability to work without supervision.

* Computer/Electronics Maintenance Supervisor

Qualification: B.Sc, HND, OND or Diploma in relevant areas of specialization.

* Marketing Officer/Marketing Executive. (Female)

Qualification: B.Sc, HND, OND or Diploma in relevant areas of specialization.

How to apply:

Hand written application letter and C.V. containing contact telephone number and email address should be submitted not later than 20th March, 2005.

To either of the following address;

The Head of Administration
Raz Resources Limited
222 Gamagira Road,
by Polytechnic Roundabout,
Tudun Wada,
Kaduna

The Head of Administration
Raz Resources Limited
Suit C1
El-Zamyro Plaza
No. 11A Isa Kaita Road
Kaduna

The Head of Administration
Raz Resources Limited
Suit 10, Abuja Shopping Complex,
Funmilayo Ramson Kuti Road,
Garki 3 Abuja.

LOSS OF ORGINAL LETTER OF AWARD

This is to inform the general public that the Original letter of award of a plot of land in Abuja with Ref: No. MFCT/LA/ABU/KN/2703 belonging to MR. SALEH HALIRU of Plot 99 Malanje Street, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja is hereby declared missing. All efforts to trace the said document proved abortive. If found please return to MR. SALEH HALIRU or the nearest police station.

The Federal Capital Development Authority, AGIS and the general public to please note.

Signed

MR. SALEH HALIRU

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the Certificate of Occupancy No. 2127 issued by FCDA belonging to Mrs. Ify Mbanefo is reported missing.

If found please, return to the undersigned or nearest police station.

This is for record purpose.

Signed

C/o Mrs. Ify Mbanefo
NTA, Abuja

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I lost the following landed documents.

- 1) Duplicate copy of AMAC allocation letter changed in respect of Mr. Alozie Ukoh for plot No. 3355 of about 1,600 sqm at Lugbe 1 extension dated 7th May, 2001.
 - 2) Original and duplicate copy of allocation letter (cancelled allocation letter) in respect of Mr. Umar Kurma for plot No. 3355 of about 1,600sqm in Lugbe extension dated 29th June, 1998.
 - 3) Original and duplicate copy of allocation letter (cancelled allocation letter) in respect of Mr. Oliha A. E. for Plot No. 3355 of about 1,600sqm in Lugbe 1 extension dated 17th February, 2000.
- If found please send to AMAC Zonal Land Office or the nearest police station.

Signed:

Mr. Ugwunna Alozie H. Ukoh

ASSOC. OF ALUMINIUM ROOFERS & FABRICATORS OF NIG.

This is to inform the general public that the above named Organisation has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs commission under part 'C' of the companies and allied matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are

1. PRINCE CHRISTIAN EGEDI
2. LUKMAN ADEYEMI
3. IGBEN GOWIN

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse zone 5, Abuja. Within 28 days of this publication.

Signed

DIEGBE, DIEGBE & ASSOCIATES

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the Original copy of the Right of Occupancy (R of O) No. MFCT/LA/88/MISC. 5062 of 22nd December, 1995 for plot No. 1125 within Katampe District issued to the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN) by the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja is missing.

This notice is to inform the general public that the PCN will be applying for a certified true copy (CTC) of the R of O and subsequently for a re-certification.

The Minister in charge

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
First Abuja Parish

For: The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
26-29 Ehere Road, Ogbor Hill, Abu.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the Original Land Document belonging to HON. LUMUMBA ADEH with provisional approval of No. 11 of about 3840m2 located in C.K..C Ext. layout Gwagwalada Abuja. Whoever transact business with the said document does that at his/her own risk.

Signed

Hon. Lumumba Adeh.

Sports

FG doles out N27.5m to Olympics heroes

• Dissolves national sports associations

The Minister of Sports and Social Development, Col. Musa Mohammed (rd) on Monday doled out N27.5million to 12 Athens Olympics medalists, 12 finalists in Athens, 2 coaches, track and field technical director and secretary, even as the 28 boards of national associations were finally dissolved.

The federal government largesse, which was announced by the minister at a dinner party held in honour of the outgoing president of national sports federations in Abuja, is a fulfillment of the pledge made to the athletes during their camping in Stuttgart, Germany ahead of the Athens Games.

Col. Mohammed lauded the athletes for putting the name of the nation on the medals table at the Athens Olympics. He also thanked the sports federations presidents for working tirelessly to bring glory to Nigeria.

"The three reasons for convening this gathering are to bring the sports federations leadership together, to thank the president of sports federation for their selfless services to the nation and to laud our athletes, who did not allow Nigeria to be disgraced, for putting the nation's name

By AbdulRaheem Aodu, Reporter (Sports)

on the medals table at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

"We thank the sports federation presidents for their meritorious service to this nation, we wished them the best in their future endeavours. I hereby formally declare the national sports federation boards dissolved. The various secretaries will take over as acting president, while elections will be held at the end of April to fill the vacant positions.

"Inauguration of the new board to be constituted will take place in the first week of May. We would endeavour to organise free and fair election

into the new board. We also announce monetary reward for our athletes and their officials thus: N1million each to the members of the relay teams members who won bronze medal in Athens. N1million each to the female relay teams who made the finals of the Games. "N1million to the technical director of AFN, Alhaji Abdulkarim Amu as well as coaches Lawrence Adegbeingbe and Tobias Igwe and N500, 000 to AFN secretary general".

4x100m Olympic medalists Olu Fasuba, Deji Aliu, Uchenna Emedolu, Ambrose Ezenwa, Tamuno Atoridubo and Aaron Egbele are to benefit from the largesse, as well as 4x400m bronze medalist

Saul Wagopwa, Musa Audu, Godday James, Aniefiok Udobong, Bola Lawal and Abayomi Agunbiade.

Others who are in the league of new millionaires are 4x100m Olympics finalists, Mercy Nku, Endurance Ojokolo, Mary Onyali-Omagbemi, Chinedu Odozor-

Onikeku, Damola Osayomi and Gloria Kemasode. And the sextet of 4x400m Olympic finalists, Christy Ekpahon, Gloria Nwosu, Omolade Akinremi, Ngozi Nwokoche, Alimat Ismaila and Mabel Madojemu.

Afro Asian sprint champion, Olu Fasuba who spoke

on behalf of the athletes thanked the minister for fulfilling his promised adding that "the award will motivate us to work harder and bring more glory to Nigeria."

The 28 sports federation presidents were later presented with plaque of merit by the minister.

African U-17 championship Ambassador pledges support for Eaglets

The Nigerian Ambassador to Mali, Alhaji Suleiman Suberu, has pledged that the embassy will be on hand to support the Nigerian contingent to the African U-17 Championship taking place in the Gambia in May.

Hyginus Osinebe, the chairman of the Mali branch of the Nigeria Football and Other Sports Supporters

Union, said the ambassador made the pledge in Bamako on Feb. 23 when he was installed the patron of the association.

Osinebe, who is in Nigeria for consultation with national officials of the union, said today in Lagos that Suberu promised that since Mali was a neighbouring country to the Gambia, the embassy officials in Bamako would be in Banjul to render assistance to the Nigerian contingent.

The Mali chapter of the club, he said, was appreciative of the support of the ambassador to the club and to sports generally.

Osinebe also promised that members of the club would be in the Gambia in their hundreds to cheer the Golden Eaglets to victory at the championship.



4x100m female relay team celebrates its victory at 2003 All Africa Games.

Pix: Joe Oroye

Makarfi Volleyball Championship opens Saturday

All is now set for the opening of the Makarfi National Volleyball Open Championship which begins at the Murtala Mohammed Square, Kaduna next Saturday.

The Kaduna state commissioner for youth and sports, Mr. Nkom Yakubu Bitiyong told newsmen at the venue of the competition yesterday that all the arrangements have been completed to receive the

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief, Kaduna

over 40 male and female teams from all the 36 states and Abuja.

He assured all the teams of their security adding that security outfits such as the police, the SSS, road safety officials are involved in the planning and execution of the one week championship.

Mr. Bitiyong said the competition will cost

N5.521million out of which each of the 23 local governments in the state will contribute N150, 000 which totals N3.45 with the state government making up the N2.7million.

He assured the players and spectators from all over the country that the upheavals in Kaduna have become a thing of the past and no one should fear for their safety in the historic city.

Furthermore, he said, "the championship is aimed at arousing the interest of our youths in professional volleyball and that is why we believe the enhanced facilities we are providing at the venue will encourage them for train and attain professionalism.

Chairman of the Kaduna state volleyball association, Mr. Musa Nimrod said the teams from Kaduna state are in high spirit and expressed the hope that the state is hosting the championship to win.

He said the championship was coming after 23 years of not hosting any in Kaduna and expressed satisfaction with the response from all the participating states. He said teams from Nigeria Immigration, Navy, Air force and Police are participating.

Mr. Nimrod said all the 23 local government in the state are presenting teams in the championship adding that Zamfara state is also participating sharia notwithstanding.

He also called on the people of Kaduna state to come out to cheer their teams to vic-

NFA approves new adidas design

The NFA have approved a new kit design presented by adidas for the national teams according to Chairman Ibrahim Galadima.

"They sent us the new design last month (February), and we gave them the go-ahead," Galadima told kick off. "That is the design that will be used for the World Cup," Galadima stated.

Adidas representative Chris Eseka added that the design will be launched this year.

"I can't say exactly when that will be, but it will certainly be before the end of the year," he told kick off. "It will be

properly launched, and after that full scale production of replicas will begin immediately."

Galadima also disclosed that NFA top shots and officials of adidas are expected to meet next month to iron out issues regarding the German company's kit sponsorship of the national teams.

"We will be having a meeting sometime in April," NFA chairman Ibrahim Galadima told kick off.

"They sent us a letter asking for a meeting but we requested that they wait until after our World Cup qualifier at the end of the month."

Police evicts illegal occupants at National Stadium

The police have evicted about 100 illegal occupants of the National Stadium, Lagos, following a complaint by the management of the facility.

Ahmed Jumare, the stadium manager, told the News

Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Lagos that he was assisted to flush out the illegal occupants, some of whom had turned their offices into homes, by about 20 policemen from the Area C command of the Lagos State Police Command, Surulere.

"On Monday, we were able to flush out illegal occupants at the hockey and basketball changing room areas of the stadium," Jumare said.

"Today we are extending the raid to the Main Bowl of the stadium, the Brai Ayonote Boxing Gym area, where some of the illegal occupants reside and later to the main gate," he said.

Jumare said that many of the occupants had turned the offices into residential quarters with some of them living there with their families.

"I did not allocate any space or room to anybody as residential quarters. What we only allocated were office spaces for associations," he said.

some of the dislodged occupants admitted that they were allocated the spaces for office accommodation by the stadium manager and wondered what his business was if they converted the places to residential homes.

"After all the stadium authority collects rent from us, and there should be no reason for the stadium authority to demand from us what we use the space or the room for," one of the occupants said.

It will be recalled that Mr. Solomon Matankari, the former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sports and Social Development, had said last month that all the illegal occupants and food vendors at the stadium would be dislodged.

Matankari, who was in Lagos to inaugurate the board of the Nigeria Kung Fu Federation (NKF), said the eviction of the food vendors and the illegal occupants was necessary to give the stadium

Purchase of fire equipment: FFS expresses displeasure

The Federal Fire Service (FFS) has expressed displeasure over its non-involvement in the purchase of seven special fire fighting trucks by the Federal Ministry of Sports and Social Development.

FFS Controller Fidelis Ogbogoh told the (NAN) yesterday that the service was not even invited to inspect the trucks when they arrived in the country.

The trucks have elevated platforms that can evacuate 5 persons to 10 persons from high rise buildings during fire outbreak.

"The ministry of sports just commandered the whole show. We were not even given a chance to make our inputs on the type of machines or the personnel that will operate them," he said.

Ogbogoh accused the ministry of trying to usurp the duties of the fire service. "They are supposed to be in charge of sports, they should leave fire-fighting to the professionals," he told NAN.

Ogbogoh said the service which served as a member on the committee on fire fighting during the 2003 COJA games,

had suggested to the ministry the need to procure the trucks.

"We suggested the need to purchase such trucks not only for the National Stadium but to be used to fight fires in high rise buildings in the city.

"We do not have such fire fighting trucks in the agency and there is need for us to run such equipment for the benefit of the whole city," he added.

NAN reports that the ministry of sports took delivery of the fire fighting trucks last week from HTM, a Chinese company known for producing cranes, fire trucks and fire

AGOA! AGOA!! AGOA!!!

* Do you export or want to export to the US Market?

* Do you know that you could be entitled to duty free treatment under AGOA?

For more information contact Federal Ministry of Commerce, Old Secretariat Abuja - Phone: 09/2341792 or the Office of the Special Adviser to Mr. President on Export Programmes, Export House, Wuse Zone 2, Abuja. Tel: 09/5230932-3

DAILY TRUST

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Muslims and the confab: The case of blaming the victim

By Mohammed Haruna

The controversy surrounding the composition of the leadership and membership of the National Political Reform Conference has once again brought to the fore the importance of the mass media in shaping public opinion and in policy making and implementation. When President Olusegun Obasanjo decided to make virtually the entire leadership of the NPRC Christian and also decided to give them a nearly two thirds majority edge over Muslims in its membership in a country he himself says is 50:50 Muslim/Christian, he knew he could count on the conspiratorial silence, if not the support, of most of the Nigerian mass media in his flagrant breach of the same Nigerian Constitution he has sworn to defend. Clearly the president has not been disappointed. Three weeks into the Conference, there has been a deafening silence from most of the Nigerian mass media over the president's blatant act of injustice.

Worse still, those of us who have dared to complain about this injustice are being portrayed as unreasonable. The Secretary of the Conference, my good friend Reverend Father Mathew Hassan Kukah, himself an object of the protest, albeit not over his person, has even dismissed the protesters as "irresponsible". To which another friend, but this time a scion of the Hausa-Fulani ruling family in Kano, Lamido Sanusi Lamido, has in effect said, Amen. "Kukah", he said in his trenchant defense of the reverend father in the *Daily Trust* of last Monday, "is absolutely correct. It is irresponsible".

Sanusi said his intervention was to stop the debate over the composition of the NPRC from degenerating into a purely religious affair. "An urgent Muslim intervention," he said, "is required before the debate becomes one between Muslims and Christians." In which case it should have been obvious to him that his intervention was like bolting the gate after the horse had escaped, because the president's very act made such a controversy inevitable. Sam Ndah-Isaiah, the editor-in-chief of *Leadership*, was correct in his argument in his article last Monday, titled *Seeing through the president's mischief*, that the president did what he did to divide and rule Nigeria, the North in particular. Like Sanusi, Sam was, however, wrong to conclude that the proper response to the president's mischief was to have kept quiet, lest he achieved his objective. "Many of those talking today," said Sam, "have made the president's day. They have helped him achieve his objective. The people are now divided, helped by the legitimate anger of those protesting."

Both Sanusi and Sam seem to assume that national unity is an end in itself and so no amount of injustice can justify any act that undermines it. The huge irony of this assumption, at least on Sanusi's part as Father Kukah's defense attorney, is that Kukah himself does not share it. On the contrary he seems to detest it with a passion. "God," he said the other day in a paper he presented last year at the *Conference on Peace* organized by the Northern Governors' Forum, "is a God of justice and therefore cannot let injustice into His Sanctuary. We are under no obligation to promote peace, if that peace is not founded on justice..."

Father Kukah went on in that paper to say whereas the duty of religious leaders is to point out the right way, that of politicians is to provide the vehicles to take us to our destination. And if politicians provide rickety vehicles, religious leaders, he said, have a duty to raise hell against such a contraption. No fair-minded person, not even Sanusi in spite of the passion of his intervention, can say that the architecture and structure of the vehicle Obasanjo has provided for the National Conference are sound.

Sanusi infers in his intervention that it is difficult, even impossible, for the leadership of, not just the National Conference, but of any similar committee, to hijack it, and that in the event that it tries, the offended members would only have themselves to blame if they keep quiet. The simple answer to this is to say if in the last six years we have been

apparently helpless in stopping the convener of the Conference from hijacking government to carry out his agenda, what is so impossible, or even difficult, about hijacking a committee? Second, given the repeated acts of bad faith by the convener of the Conference, would it not have been suicidal for those who felt injured by the president's action to have waited until their heads were off before they complained?

Sanusi questions the assumption that "there is something like a 'Christian' or 'Muslim' position in a national Confer-



Rev. Father Mathew Hassan Kukah

ence..." He questions the assumption on the grounds that there are divisions within the religions themselves. Surely, however, Sanusi knows that divisions within people of the same faith, tribe or region, has never stopped them for having common positions on issues that are basic to their identities. For example, no Muslim, whether he is Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanafi or Hambali, or whatever, will reject Sharia or subscribe to the doctrine of secularity.

In case Sanusi is not aware, one of the hidden agenda of the convener of the Conference is to finally banish so-called political Sharia from the Constitution, through some sleigh-of-hand. For, among the amendments a committee under Professor Jerry Gana, the president's political adviser, is proposing there is one which says "If any other law, customary or religious practice is inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution, this constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void". This amendment is meant to replace section 2 (3) of the existing constitution. The difference is the seemingly innocuous phrase "customary or religion practice", a phrase that has been smuggled into the provision behind the back of the constitutional reform committee chaired by Deputy Senate President, Ibrahim Mantu.

Even though a Muslim cannot reject Sharia as long as he believes in Islam, such a Muslim member of the Conference may or may not stand up for so-called political Sharia. But any Muslim member would be foolish to think that a non-Muslim member of the Conference will go out of his way to defend a Muslim's cardinal belief in Sharia..

Central to the position that those protesting the unjustifiable lopsided composition of the conference are being unreasonable or even irresponsible, is that the religious identities of members do not matter as long as they are persons of merit. "Many Muslim Northerners, the present writer included," says

Sanusi, "do not care about the religious identity of competent Nigerians appointed to an office whatsoever, SO LONG AS THEY CONSIDER THEIR CONSTITUENCY TO BE THE WHOLE NATION IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS" (Emphasis mine).

Sanusi is right that religion, or for that matter, region or tribe, ideally should not matter in such things. But he himself has entered a sensible caveat about the behaviour of public officials. He has also admitted that there is no such thing as an objective person. Invariably we are objective only to the extent that we know we cannot get away with our prejudices. The way the National Conference was composed, the majority can easily get away with their prejudices.

This is why our Constitutions since 1979 have emphasized the importance of government reflecting the federal character of the nation in its conduct and composition. The relevant section in all those constitutions obligate government to "(ensure) that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the government or any of its agencies."

It bears repeating that Obasanjo blatantly violated this provision as far as the religious character of this country is concerned and it amounts to adding insult to injury for anyone to say those who have complained about this injustice are being unreasonable or even irresponsible.

Before now when the Christian leadership, specifically the then Archbishop, now Cardinal, Olubunmi Okogie and Primate Sunday Mbang, as former national presidents of the Christian Association of Nigeria, used to complain - sometimes justifiably, sometimes not, as we shall see next week when, God willing, I write on the issue of our next census - that Christians were being discriminated against, no one ever called them irresponsible.

When *The Guardian* wrote an editorial on October 7, 1992, saying that the presidential primaries that year under General Ibrahim Babangida's transition were unacceptable because "the two presidential candidates that will emerge at the end of the day are from the same part of the country - the Far North. This is disturbing given the national composition of the country," no one said the newspaper was irresponsible.

Last but by no means the least, when Father Kukah himself said the actions of Obasanjo in the wake of the Kaduna religions riots of 2000 and the Plateau crisis of last year were prejudicial to Christians, no one said he was irresponsible. Needless to say he himself could not have seen his protest as irresponsible or even unreasonable.

On the Kaduna riots, Father Kukah clearly saw Obasanjo's reaction as favouring Muslims. "He" said Kukah, "tongue-lashed religious leaders in Government House and then took off to greet his friend, the Emir of Zaria. HE DID NOT EVEN SEE IT FIT TO VISIT OR CONDOLE SUCH EMINENT RELIGIOUS LEADERS LIKE THE ARCHBISHOP OF KADUNA, PETER JATAU" (Plateau: State of Emergency as a metaphor - *The Guardian*, May 30, 2004). (Emphasis mine).

Similarly when he said in the same article that Obasanjo was wrong to mix religion with politics - something which I have said elsewhere is not necessarily true depending on how you mix the two - no one said he was irresponsible. "Had General Obasanjo declared himself a born-again Christian and gone back to the farm," said Kukah, "that would have been no problem. But to do so and then proceed to seek political power was bound to create a problem for religion and the country, especially within the Muslim population."

In the last six years Obasanjo has mixed religion and politics in the most cynical and self-serving way, culminating in his blatantly lopsided composition of the leadership and membership of the National Conference. In the last few days he has tried to redress one but has done nothing about the other. It is unreasonable to blame those that feel aggrieved by such an insensitive act for complaining, simply because the unity and peace of the country must be maintained.

But then as Malcolm X once said, "If you are not careful the media will have you hating the people who are oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."