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STAR FEATURE

Recalling moments at the Maiduguri pre-hajj camp

Pages 20 & 21

This space is for sale

Confab: Delegates lists raise dust nationwide

From Abdul-Azeez Abdullahi, Abuja; Musa Kazaure, Kano; Salisu Maradun, Gusau; Abdul-Azeez Adebayo, Ilorin; Hir Joseph, Makurdi & Isa Gusau, Maiduguri

The lists of state representatives to the forthcoming national conference on political reforms scheduled for next month in Abuja has continued to evoke mixed reactions from various stakeholders across the country.

In Kano, one-time Attorney-General and Commissioner of Justice, Alhaji A.B. Mahmud (SAN), said individually, the nominees are qualified because they are people of high integrity.

He stated that it is difficult in a place like Kano to be able to get adequate representation of all groups and interests but regretted that women interest was not represented in the actual delegates to the conference. Alhaji A.B. Mahmud noted that although he is not aware of the yardstick used for the appoint-

ment but it seems as if adequate consultations were not made.

He, however, said he has no quarrel with the new faces in the Kano team, saying there is no harm in bringing new faces to contribute to such debates from Kano. "There is nothing wrong with having some new faces. They can contribute very well to Kano's position at the conference. It will be wrong to restrict it to the same old faces again," he added.

Another contributor, Sheikh Jamil Mohammed Adamu, who declined to be

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Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Prof. Charles Soludo (left), CBN deputy governor (operation), Dr. Samsudeen Usman (middle) and CBN deputy governor (policy), Mrs. Wahir Mshelia during the press conference to announce amendment and addendum to the 2004/2005 monetary, and exchange rate policy guidelines held in Abuja... yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Reps reject confab budget

To probe CHOGM expenses

The House of Representatives, yesterday turned down a request by President Obasanjo to approve N931 million budget for the conduct of the national conference billed to commence mid February.

Rather, the House asked the president to source the money for the conference

By Hammeed M. Bello, Senior Political Reporter (Reps),
Habeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter, Senate & Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter (Reps)

elsewhere, particularly from the contingency or security votes of the presidency.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, gave the House position during the plenary session yesterday.

CBN suspends lending to govt

Reviews monetary policy guidelines

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has declared that it will not extend credits to the federal government throughout this year, in line with current efforts to curb excessive fiscal spending by the three tiers of government in the federation to ensure monetary stability in the economy.

CBN governor, Professor Charles C. Soludo, stated this while addressing a press conference to announce amendments/addendum to the 2004/2005 Monetary, Credit, Foreign Trade and Exchange Rate Policy Guidelines, yesterday in Abuja.

The amendments and addendum to the guidelines,

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

according to the CBN governor, were necessitated by the far reaching developments in the nation's banking industry, occasioned by the ongoing reforms in the economy, particularly in the financial services sector.

Other key elements of the amendments/addendum to the subsisting guidelines include, upward review of the minimum share capital of banks from N2 billion to N25 billion as announced by the CBN boss shortly after he took over the helm of affairs

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This is just as the senate's minority caucus rose fiercely against the conference, describing it as illegal and unconstitutional.

The House, which normally sits by 2:00 pm on Wednesdays, sat at about 4:30 pm yesterday because all the political party caucuses held prolonged closed door meetings over the contentious confab budget to closely x-ray the president's request for approval vis-à-vis the constitutionality of approving such money.

The Senate president,

Why Pentascope was sacked

The sacking of Pentascope International of the Netherlands as contract managers for the Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL), may have been premised on disagreement over the contract terms between Pentascope and government and failure to meet set targets, Daily Trust findings have shown.

The contract which was activated in 2003 was terminated on Tuesday on the or-

Adolphus Wabara and Speaker, Aminu Bello Masari, attended the House's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) caucus meeting along with other members, while the all Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) held their meetings separately.

When the plenary session commenced yesterday in the House after hours of consultations and caucus meetings, a member of the House, Hon. Haruna Yarima, pleaded to move a motion against the confab budget and the illegality of holding the conference but the speaker interjected, asking Hon. Yerima to rest his case because the House has already taken a unanimous decision on the confab budget.

"Regarding funding for

By Austine Odo, Senior Labour Reporter

ders of the federal government, even though reasons for taking the action were not clearly stated.

An informed source at the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), the secretariat of the national council on privatisation which midwived the contract, told our correspondent in Abuja yesterday, that although it could not be

the conference, the House has already taken a position not to appropriate money for the confab," and this was greeted with a resounding ovation by the members.

Earlier, the chairman, media and publicity of the House, Hon. Abike Dabiri had briefed newsmen on the position of the House on the matter.

SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

- | | |
|--|---|
| Akwa-Ibom
Mr Etim Inyang
Mrs. Helen Esucne
Dr Asikpo Essien
Dr Ekeng Anam-Ndu
Senator Akaninyene Ukpama
Senator Emmanuel Essien Ibok-Essien | Mohammed Aliba
Ibrahim Dancida
Lawal Buba |
| Anambra
Dr Chukwuemeka Ezeife
Mr Zik Obi
Senator Mike Ajegbo
Mr Gabriel Akweze
Chief Obi Ogene | Delta State
Mr. Gamaliel Onosode,
Prof. Itse Sagay
Prof. Omafume Onogwe
Andrew Moemeke
Rear Admiral Onah E.K. Clark |
| Benue State
Victor Malu
Geoffrey Ejigah,
Steven Okor
Fred Orti
George Korgba
Jack Gyado | Jigawa
Najib Hassan
Sulaiman Bappa
Habu Gumel
Aminu Ringim
Tijjani Inuwa Dutse
Fatima Mai Borno |
| Borno
Muhammadu Goni
Baba Ahmed Jidda
Nuru Alkali | Kano
Magaji Danbatta
Auwalu Yadudu
Sule Yahaya Hama
Isiaku Umar Tofa
Haruna Salihi
Musa Tanko Waziri |

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News

Confab *Contd. from Pg 1*

specific on the nominees, described them as being a mixture of good and better, saying that some can do the job assigned them while others can't do it to satisfaction.

Sheikh Adam who is the Chief Imam of Dorayi Juma'at mosque, explained that for anybody to be assigned to represent people at such an important meeting should possess lots of qualities which includes knowledge of both Islamic and western education, knowledge of the conditions of the country and have probity of justice, fairness and truth.

Others he said are fearlessness, patriotism and incorruptibility and that only when we give such calibre of people that they will succeed.

He then called on the government to consider those who have the feelings of the ummah at heart and that differences in political parties and ideology should not be a barrier to selecting qualified citizens who can do the job by giving a proper representation during the conference.

Politician however, kicked against some of the nominees describing them as government favoured candidates. Chairman of the Coalition of Opposition Parties in Kano State, Alhaji Musa Dan Birni, said although some of the nominated delegates deserve the appointment however half of them were there as government agents.

He stated that politics should not have been applied for the selection, adding that people needed for such an assignment should be people who are bi-partisan and knowledgeable in the problems and aspirations of the people of Kano State and not people who rarely mingle with the common man.

The list of nominees to represent Niger State at the conference was also given a knock by Senator Dangana Ndayako, who said the nominees were not competent to articulate the yearnings of the people of the state.

He said besides the fact that the delegates may pur-

sue an agenda that is in the interest of the present government, the delegates, he added, are not politically experienced enough for such a gathering.

Senator Ndayako, who said Niger state is blessed with capable individuals, lamented the self-serving agenda of the organisers of the conference which he said is evident in those nominated to the conference.

He pointed out that at the moment, one of the nominees to represent Niger state at present is being investigated by the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and wondered why the state government deems it fit to nominate him to the conference.

you appropriating the funds for? We believe that there are many ways to source for funds but we are not likely to appropriate any fund specifically for the conference but we are not against the dialogue," she said.

Responding to a question as to why the president allegedly refused to explain the rationale of the dialogue when the leadership of the National assembly visited him over the matter, Hon. Dabiri explained that, "people were worried that there is a hidden agenda for the dialogue but Mr. President assured that there was no hidden agenda."

Meanwhile, the ANPP caucus rose from its meeting yesterday resolving to reject the presidential proposal for the conference budget and the convocation of the conference because it will usurp the functions of the National Assembly which they said contradicts section 4 of the constitution.

The ANPP Whip, Hon. Usman Balkore, who gave the position of his caucus yesterday said, "every issue the conference wants to discuss falls within the competence of the National Assembly."

in June last year, quarterly review of the Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR), in line with the inflation rate, resumption of periodical withdrawal of public sector funds from commercial banks and downward review of the period for maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), from eight weeks to two weeks.

The apex bank, according to its chief executive, has resolved that henceforth, the MRR shall be anchored on the year-on-year inflation rate and has now been pegged at 13.0 percent based on the 9.5 percent inflation rate achieved as at December 2004, as the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) reported.

Specifically, Soludo said "the CBN is moving to a regime of more active monetary policy with decisions on interest rate regime reviewed every quarter".

Reps *Contd. from Pg 1*

Although Hon. Haruna Yerima could not present the argument of his motion on the floor, a copy of the motion was got by *Daily Trust* in which Yerima urged the House to reject the national dialogue because it conflicts with section 4 of the constitution.

He urged the House to direct Mr. President not to spend "any national resource either from the service-wide vote or contingency vote or any other vote on the dialogue and to request the National Assembly constitution review committee headed by the deputy senate president, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, to immediately submit its report.

The motion also called for the conduct of a national referendum to determine the inner feelings of the people on whether to have a national dialogue or a sovereign national conference.

In the senate, opposition to the proposed national political reform conference heightened yesterday as the senate minority caucus described the confab as illegal and unconstitutional. The caucus cautioned that the conference has the tendency to truncate the nation's democracy and therefore urged government to shelve the idea.

Leader of the caucus, Senator Lawal Shuaibu, who made the position known to senate correspondents yesterday, said the opposition lawmakers have braced up to kick against the confab till it fails.

"After careful deliberations and analysis of the current situation, we have come to the conclusion that the purported national political reform conference in the making is not only unconstitutional, but has the negative tendency to derail, erode and strangle the gains of our nascent democracy.

He added that "it is sad to note that our democracy is being misled and instead of being nurtured and sustained through the process of learning and corrections, it is being short-circuited and eroded by both short sighted individuals and subjective parochial interest groups of a few cabal through all kinds of unconstitutional machinations and fraud such as the

In order to deepen the foreign exchange market and ensure sustained exchange rate stability, he said the central bank will launch a "Wholesale Dutch Auction System" after the completion of the re-capitalisation and consolidation in the industry by end-December this year. "Also, the CBN will ensure the installation of requisite infrastructure to monitor banks' open position for the effective implementation of the DAS".

He stressed that it is envisaged that the introduction of the Wholesale DAS will not only deepen the foreign exchange market, but also assist in the convergence of the DAS and the interbank exchange rates and eliminate rent-seeking behaviour by the authorized dealers.

CBN *Contd. from Pg 1*

He also announced the planned launch of the National Savings Certificate (NSC), this year to enhance liquidity management and ensure monetary stability. "It is expected that the issuance of the NSC would encourage the growth of domestic savings, as well as address the problem of excess liquidity in the economy on a more sustainable basis", he added.

On the public sector funds, the apex bank boss said the withdrawal of same last year, which though lasted for a short period, proved effective in liquidity management, stressing therefore that, "depending on the liquidity condition in the banking system, the CBN may resort to this instrument for liquidity management in 2005".

Professor Soludo said fur-

ther that, "accordingly, banks are strongly advised in their own self interest not to rely heavily on public sector funds for their portfolio management", stressing that the CBN shall give a two week notice to banks and relevant public agencies whose funds are to be withdrawn. He said, however, that, "the withdrawn funds will be returned to the banks when and if the liquidity condition improves".

He also hinted that the guidelines for appointment of "Settlement Banks" will be reviewed this year to enhance the settlement and clearing systems of the banking industry, adding that this review will take into cognisance the need to provide collateral commensurate with the volume and value of cleared items.

Pentascop

Contd. from Pg 1

clearly said that Pentascop was sacked for incompetence, there was need to evaluate its performance so far in line with the contract terms.

"We can't surely tell you they are incompetent but when you talk of competence, we should examine their level of attainment of set targets in the terms of the contract. Have they actually met the set targets?" the source asked.

He pointed out that though more light might be shed on the development at a news conference to be addressed by the BPE in Abuja today, it is clear that NITEL needs to be handled by people who would place it where it really ought to be as the country's first national carrier.

"NITEL is very strategic to this country and the whole world is watching us, moreso as it is slated for privatisation. So there is need to reposition the company properly to get the desired value," he said.

The BPE, it was learnt, was apprehensive of the management fee of \$16 million charged by Pentascop, while holding on to \$12 million out of which \$9 million has been paid, prompting queries from the National Assembly which alleged violation of sections of the Companies and Allied Matters Act.

Government was also said to be apprehensive of NITEL's image under Pentascop as it desired to boost the confidence of investors in NITEL in preparation for its eventual privatisation even as Pentascop was said to have recorded a balance sheet of \$500 million loss in 2004.

The contract with Pentascop had before now come under public criticisms as the company was alleged to lack the requisite experience to carry out its assignment.

Engaged as contract managers for NITEL/Mtel for a period of three years from 2003, Pentascop was given the target to turn the two companies around as world class telephone companies. It was for instance, mandated to ensure that Mtel meets the 1.2 million lines capacity by 2005 while NITEL was expected to achieve three million lines

SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

Kaduna State Umar Dikko Chris Abashjya Ja'afaru Makarfi Emmanuel Toro Ango Abdullahi Abdullahi Jibrin	Tawa Williams Chief O.B. Adebowale
Katsina State Ibrahim Coomassie Saidu Barda Garba Ja Abdulkadir Kabir Saidu Ibrahim Shema Tukur Mani	Niger Shehu Bida Dahiru Awaisu Kuta Abubakar Magaji Umar Kawu Isiyaku Jikantoro Garba Duba
Kebbi State Col. Bello Kaeli (rtd) Alh. Isah Mohammed Abdullahi Na'amo Garba Mohammed dan diga Abdullahi Ahman Zuru Daidu Mohammed B/Yauri	NPAN Nduka Obaigbena
Kwara State Abubakar Baraje Ayinla Folorunsho Kola Shittu Saidu Isa Mahmud Ibrahim Albert Ogunshola	Ondo State Admiral Akin Aduwo (rtd) Dr. Femi Adeganye Dr. Olaiya Oni Dr. Adewunmi Ibitoye Chief Oluosola-Oke Dr. Tayo Dairo
Lagos State Femi Okunnu Sikiru Shitta-Bey Olorunfunmi Bashorun	Osun Chief Ebenezer Babatope Justice Bola Babalakin Professor John Ayoade Chief Olu Alabi Mr. Dosu Oladipo Dr. Wale Oladipo
	Taraba State Tanko Bobbo Anadami Luka Zanya Ibrahim Abubakar Emmanuel Bavoia Yakubu Agbaizi

News

Fresh communal crisis breaks out in Benue

• Many killed

Few months after the return of peace in the area, the people of Ugambe and Ulam communities in the Tiv speaking area of Benue State have resumed hostilities against each other over a piece of land resulting to the death of several persons.

The renewed hostilities which broke out Monday, was the outcome of a quarrel between two women from each of the communities, over

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

ownership of a small cassava farm.

According to the state commissioner of police, Mr. Johnson Uzuegbunam, the woman from Ulam in Gwer West local council had to invite her husband into the quarrel following which he (husband) went the extra mile to use violence which later resulted to the entire communities rising in arms against each other.

The renewed fighting claimed several lives but the police commissioner gave as two, the number of persons confirmed killed by Monday when the incidence started.

The police boss also gave as over 40, the number of houses burnt, while also disclosing that by Tuesday the visit of a detachment of mobile policemen there on peace-keeping has sent everybody running while neighbouring villages swelled up with displaced persons.

Meanwhile, the state governor, Mr. George Akume, yesterday, paid an on-the-spot visit to the warring communities during which he appealed for the use of dialogue instead of violence in the settlement of disputes.

ANPP chieftain decries media silence on Balogun

By Abdu Labaran, Group
Political Editor

The deputy national welfare officer of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Alhaji Muhammadu Murtala, has decried the poor reporting of the efforts of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), to unravel the corrupt practices of former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun.

The ANPP chieftain who spoke to *Daily Trust*, expressed reservations on the commitment of the Nigeria media to assist the EFCC prove the guilt or innocence of the former police boss, accusing the media of a conspiracy of silence and reluctance to give the Balogun case adequate coverage.

Alhaji Murtala wondered why the same media that "went wild" reporting the travails of the former managing director and chief executive of the Bank of the North, Alhaji Shettima Bulama "will all of a sudden go silent" over the Balogun case.

According to him, the Balogun story deserves similar treatment as the Shettima case, saying both cases have similar criminal undertones and should therefore be approached in the same manner.

The ANPP deputy national welfare officer also condemned the "half hearted" attention the administration is giving the case, urging the government not to do anything that will expose the lie in its much touted war on corruption.

It is his belief that going by the "lack of enthusiasm" that government is showing in the case, "the whole thing will be allowed to pass away quietly as has happened with so many probes started by the Obasanjo administration.

Urging the EFCC chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, to peruse the case with all the vigour it deserves, the politician told the EFCC chieftain not to allow himself to be embarrassed but to do everything to find out the truth about the allegations against the former Inspector General of police.



Prof. Odeh Ojowu (m.) briefing the state House journalists on the decision taken during the FEC meeting held at the State House Abuja yesterday. With him are Prof. Fabian Osuji, Education Minister (L) and the Minister of Information, Dr. Chikumeke Chikelu (r.).
Pix: Joe Oroye.

Plateau to demolish illegal structures

The Plateau State government has described as alarming, the rate of illegal structures within Jos, the capital city, just as it has set up a committee on the demolition of such structures.

Secretary to the state government, Mr. John Gobak, who disclosed this in a statement in Jos, noted that the illegal structures not only defaced the original plan of the city, but also disrupted services of the National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA), Nigerian

From Rakiya A. Muhammad,
Correspondent (Jos)

Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) and the Water Board to members of the public.

He said the committee on the demolition of these illegal structures was charged with the responsibility of identifying structures and development that have been built on or over utility lines, water pipes power lines, NITEL lines, drainages and on unapproved places.

The committee is also to identify all illegal structures/

developments within the Jos/Bukuru metropolis and impose development control measures on developers.

Mr. Gabok gave the composition of the committee to include three special advisers, the general manager, Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB) and a representative each of NEPA and NITEL.

Others include a representative each of the water board, ministry of lands, survey and town planning as well as JMDB.

Employment minister wants corruption eradicated in Africa

The minister of employment, labour and productivity, Dr. Hassan Muhammad Lawal, has called on workers in Africa to work together and rid Africa and the Arab world of corruption.

The minister who made the call at the occasion of the international annual conference of Public Services International (PSI), in Abuja yesterday, said that corruption has militated against Africa's economic growth and development.

According to him, the establishment of an effective and competent public service to formulate and implement government's policies and programmes for socio-economic development is a *sin qua non* for the success of any administration in Africa.

Dr. Lawal said further that no economy, either in the developing or developed world can grow beyond the capacity of its public services, saying that the PSI conference is of great importance.

"The concern of the workers in the public sector are similar to those of their counterparts in the private sector, not only in Nigeria but indeed the whole of Africa.

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma,
Labour Reporter

"It is sad that Africa with its rich resources in men and materials, is described as the poorest continent in the world. The appellation is not in our collective good image and workers both in public

and private sectors of our different nations should work together using the benefit of social dialogue to rescue African nations from this unwholesome position," he said.

Dr. Lawal also appealed to the personnel at the conference to assist

government in the various African and Arab counties to achieve the long-term objective of regulating and liberalising the economy, improve the investment climate for wealth creation and poverty reduction and facilitate good governance.

ALSCON SALE SUIT: BPE created obstacle for BFI group - Witness

A federal high court sitting in Abuja yesterday, heard that the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), deliberately created obstacles for BFI Group to prevent the signing of share purchase agreement for the privatisation of Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON).

Testifying in a suit filed by BFI Group Corporation against BPE over the privatisation of Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON), an executive director of BFIG, Dr. Mfon Amana, said that demand for pay of 10 percent of purchase price by BPE was wrong when share purchase agreement was yet to be signed.

Led in evidence by the counsel to BFIG, Chief Adeniyi Akintola, the witness said that on the day that the team was invited to sign S.P.A documents, the BPE that invited them revoked the contract.

He said that 10% of the

bid sum was to be paid 15 days after signing the agreement, saying that since they were not allowed to sign the agreement, the BPE should not have expected them to pay.

He said, "after winning, we were supposed to be given a letter confirming us as winners. It was not written until June 17, 2004 and we received it on June 21, 2004, and I faxed the letter to the United States on the same day." The letter was tendered by BFIG counsel and admitted as evidence.

The witness denied allegation made by the BPE that he faxed the letter to the United States on July 4, saying that it was possible that someone tampered with the date on the copier paper.

He, however asked the court to compel BPE to conclude the agreement with them in order to pay the agreed sum.

Cross-examined by the counsel to BPE, Mr. R. O. Yusuf from J.K. Gadzama (SAN), chambers, the

witness debunked an allegation by the BPE that an application for extension of

BILLION FREIGHT FORWARDING Public hearing holds Feb 8

The chairman, House committee on marine transport, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, yesterday disclosed that the committee's public hearing on a Bill to regulate the practice of freight forwarding in Nigeria is scheduled to hold on February 8, 2005.

He said that the Bill was important owing to the indispensable nature of their job as freight forwarders, otherwise known as clearing and forwarding agents in port activities. "We all depend on these agents at one time or the other, almost everyday," he said.

He disclosed further that investigations into their activities have pointed out

Britain gives condition for loot recovery, debt relief

By Elkhannah Chawai,
Foreign Reporter

The British minister for Africa, Mr. Chris Mullin, yesterday disclosed that money amounting to about 920,000 pounds from Joshua Dariye's account and the Abacha loot of about 30 million pounds will be returned to Nigeria after court proceedings in Britain.

In a press briefing, the minister assured Nigeria of Britain's assistance to recover looted funds, adding that Nigeria will have to show interest in punitive measures against the culprits.

He reiterated Britain's commitment to the campaign for debt relief for Africa on the basis that Nigeria will spend the money on the welfare of Nigerians like education and health.

Mullin stated that Nigeria will have to convince the Paris Club of its intentions with the money after debt relief.

He bestowed confidence on the minister of finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, expressing optimism in the reforms she is championing in the public finance sector adding that the federal and state governments will have to accept the reforms and transparency as part of the conditions to persuade the Paris Club.

Nigeria currently owes a debt of about \$34 billion of which about \$8 million is owed Britain in multilateral debts.

time for payment of purchase price was submitted because the group could not raise the initial deposit for the contract. Further hearing continues on tomorrow.

By Zainab Alimi, Political
Reporter (Reps.)

fundamental problems which the proposed Bill seeks to address to regulate the standard of their performance in Nigerian ports.

"It is important that we regulate the functions of these agents, bring them under one umbrella to enhance their efficiency, hence the public hearing which we want to be a no-holds-barred event."

He stressed that the lawmakers are committed to aiding the passage of the Bill into law, expressing hope that this will enhance efficiency of the job despite Nigeria's non-membership of FIATA, an international regulatory body of clearing and forwarding agents.

News

Why deputy director was evicted -HOS Official

A senior official in the office of the Head of the civil service of the federation, has explained the recent controversy surrounding the eviction of a deputy director in the federal ministry of science and technology, Mr. James Ogwuche, from his official residence, saying that "records show that the director was enjoying double allocation of houses, which was improper and unacceptable".

Daily Trust had reported on Monday that the alleged

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

forceful ejection of Mr. Ogwuche from his official residence had sparked some controversies, as the deputy director is said to be stranded in spite of the intercession of the permanent secretary of his ministry.

Efforts by our reporter to get responses from the permanent secretary in charge of staff welfare in the office of the head of service, Ambassador A.T. Hart, on the alle-

gations failed. A source in the office of the head of service said "the perm sec cannot speak to the press as a civil servant".

However, a senior official in the office of the head of service affirmed that "the deputy director was discovered to have been enjoying double allocation and when he was asked to relinquish one to another officer who is an assistant director, he was reluctant."

Specifically, the official who pleaded anonymity, alleged that Mr. Ogwuche was told to quit one of the resi-

dences for Mr. M.I. Malaolu, an assistant director who was desperately in need of an accommodation, "but for almost a year, he did not leave, meaning that he has two appointments to himself at the same time."

The official explained that from records, Mr. Ogwuche was residing in a four bedroom bungalow within the finance quarters in Wuye district of the federal capital ter-

ritory when he (Ogwuche) saw a four bedroom duplex and applied for a change of official residence.

The official explained further that the deputy director was duly allocated the residence, but was subsequently asked to vacate his former house for Mr. Malaolu, which Ogwuche allegedly refused to comply.

On allegations that Ambassador Hart refused to

grant Ogwuche audience despite the intercession of Dr. Aliyu Abdullahi, permanent secretary in the science and technology ministry, the official said the ex-ambassador was on a national assignment as he was directed to go to the airport and receive the Guinean president on that fateful day, adding that "it wasn't as if the perm sec snubbed him."

Obasanjo laments neglect of non-oil sector

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Reporter (Business)

President Olusegun Obasanjo, Tuesday expressed dissatisfaction over the oil dominated revenue earning base of Nigeria, saying that the country can prosper economically only if the non-oil export performance is at its best.

Speaking at the presentation of a document on "National Export Strategy" by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, Obasanjo said "the idea of Nigeria's need to develop and promote non-oil export trade,

as a means to free herself from the oil dominated revenue earning base is not new."

The president who was represented by the secretary to the government of the federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette insisted that there must always be reference to non-oil exports and by extension, trade and commerce in order to usher in quick and sustained socio-economic development.

Obasanjo said it becomes obvious that issues of eradication of poverty and hunger, provision of employment, reduction in child mortality, im-

proving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS as well as sustainability and developing global economic partnership would only be fairly settled when the non-oil export is considered best.

"The goals that we expect to achieve from non-oil exports are enormous and our efforts require the making of highly critical policy choices that would clearly define the path and pace of our future economic and social development."

According to him, government has committed itself to a sound macroeconomic management policy framework by sustaining the ongoing deregulation of key variables in the economy.

He however, cautioned that the international dimensions of Nigeria's trade policy outlook should always be carefully balanced with the local, in order to ensure that economic dislocation does not arise as a result of domestic adjustments so as not to end up eroding national economic benefits.

He added, "government continuously played active roles in identifying, fostering and protecting the non-oil export sectors of the economies in close collaboration with the private sector."

Speaking at the occasion, the special adviser on export and chief executive officer, Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Mrs. Gladys Modupe Sasore said the presentation of the document aimed at finalising consultations and take decisive steps that will shape the future and propel the growth of the nation's non-oil export sector.



The sports minister, Col. Musa Mohammed conferring with the minister of state works, Alhaji Saleh Shehu and the minister of integration in Africa Alhaji Gana Garba during the presentation ceremony of the African Youth trophy won by Nigerian fly Eagles to President Obasanjo held at the state House Abuja ... Wednesday. Pix: Joe Oroye

FG transfers N278.5m railway hospital to ministry

From Adelanwa Bamgboye,
Correspondent (Lagos)

In order to relieve the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) of some of its financial burden, the federal government, Monday transferred the N278.5m Railway hospital, Ebute-Metta, to the federal ministry of health and the place is to be called Federal Medical Centre, Ebute-Metta.

Speaking at the official take-over of the hospital at Ebute-Metta, the minister of state for transport, Engr. Mohammed Inuwa Musa, said that the transfer was part of government reform agenda for the NRC which will ultimately affect the railway printing press and advertising and catering services, which are considered as non-core businesses.

Princess Olufunke Adedoyin, minister of state for health, in her speech at the occasion, said that the hospital has been involved in the training of intern pharmacists, laboratory scientists, dental technologists and therapists for the purpose of their professional accreditation.

"As a result of the full compliment of consultants, specialists, different cadres of medical personnel, specialized equipment and other relevant resources, the railway hospital has been designated as a tertiary health institution by the medical and dental council of Nigeria," Princess Adedoyin said.

The minister explained that the policy of the present administration was that health institutions should not be privatized because "health

is a public good and this administration remains committed to performing its social responsibility to the citizenry."

She disclosed that the fixed asset being taken over was estimated at about N278.5 million excluding the cost of equipment.

In his address, the managing director of the NRC, Abdulrahman Abubakar, said that it was often painful for any organization to cede any of its organs but overriding national interest must always prevail.

He noted that the hospital, over the years, has positively impacted on the corporation by giving robust health care services to staff and members of their families.

FCT appropriation Bill gets second reading

By Zainab Alimi, Political
Reporter (Reps)

The Bill for an Act to approve the sum of N34 billion for the federal capital territory statutory budget 2005, passed its second reading in the House of Representatives.

The Bill, which was referred to the House Committee on the Federal Capital Territory for further scrutiny, generated heated debate in the House.

The Bill proposes about N9 billion for personnel cost, N5 billion for overhead cost while the balance of about N19 billion is estimated for capital projects for the services of the FCT in 2005.

But a member of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), representing Imo state, Hon. Uche Onyeagocha, strongly opposed the Bill because according to him, the Bill is anti-people.

He argued that the Bill did not do justice to poor people in the FCT as opposed to the provisions of the constitution which states that resources should be used to benefit the people, and that passing the Bill would amount to calling for a revolution.

Describing the Bill as a

Nigeria loses N136b to bunkering annually -Shell

From Ikenna Emeka
Okpani, Bureau Chief,
(Port Harcourt)

The visit of the presidential action committee on the control of violent crimes and possession of illegal weapons to Rivers State is throwing up many revelations, one of which is that Nigeria loses about \$1 billion (equivalent of N136 billion), annually to crude theft and other bunkering activities in the Niger Delta.

Speaking while briefing members of the committee, the director of corporate affairs of the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, Mr Mutiu Sunmonu, said the nation would be saving a lot of money if the activities of bunkerers are checked.

The Shell top shot who complained that his company was finding it difficult to police its facilities and installations in the area due to what

he called difficult nature of the environment the company was operating, stressed the need for intensified poverty alleviation programmes in the country.

Mr Sunmonu commended the committee for its activities and wished them luck in their assignment.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Okrika local government has accused multinational

companies operating in the Niger Delta of illegal importation of sophisticated firearms which later find their way into the hands of restive youths.

Speaking at the public forum organized by the action committee on the control of illegal weapons and violent crimes in Port Harcourt, the chairman said most of the multi-national companies arm some youths to fight elders in their communities instead of reaching agreement with such host communities.

Kwara sets up committee on abandoned projects

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara state, yesterday inaugurated an eight-man committee to verify abandoned projects inherited by his administration.

Inaugurating the committee headed by Alhaji Saka Onimago, governor Saraki said since assumption of office in May 2003, many contractors involved in the abandoned projects which he said were at different stages of execution, have made representations to government over payment for work they claimed has already been done or for their completion.

"While we accept that government is a continuous process, the insufficiency of nature of information available on these projects dictated that we withhold action on the processing of claims that were made on them," governor Saraki declared.

He said it would be irresponsible to further commit

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

scarce public resources to many of these projects "until we have verified the particulars of the contracts, level of work done and the claims arising from them."

Governor Saraki said in looking into the abandoned projects, "we would avoid an ad-hoc or piecemeal approval but instead, attend to them in a way that would lead us to a comprehensive and permanent solution of the problems that they constitute.

The terms of reference of the committee which has three months to discharge its assignment include identifying and collating the projects either completed or at various stages of completion, partly paid for or yet to be paid for, throughout the state and their locations, including the amount due to the contractor.

What's in a name? Everything positive



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Opinion

What Manner of a Census?

Nigeria will forever remain a mystery to some of us who have made it our duty to worry about her, to defend her, to protect her and to interpret her to those who do not seem to understand her too well.

Many have given up on Mother Nigeria already as they cannot make sense of some things that our policy-makers do. But some of us stubbornly stick to the hope that one day soon, things will change for the better.

But even for those of us who can be accused of foolish, stubborn hope, some time you are plagued by doubt as there are always things, try as much as you do, that you can not make sense out of them.

Take for example the national population census billed to take place later this year. Reports indicate that the policy-makers have decided that the head-count will not seek to find out how many Nigerians belong to which ethnic group or how many are adherents of particular religious belief.

Can any one who knows please tell me the reason(s) behind this absurd decision? What manner of a census will leave out the very vital questions that such an exercise is supposed to answer? If a census is not going to tell the composition of Nigeria, then what exactly is it going to reveal to us? Is the intention just to fulfill all righteousness by going through the motion of doing what others do in order to arm themselves with vital information for development? Surely, if the intention behind head-count is to use the information for development purposes, there will be a deliberate attempt to provoke many questions rather than seeking to suppress answers to very obvious questions.

Who is afraid of revealing not just how many we are but how Nigeria is really made up? Whose interests will be hurt by knowledge of the ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria?

I asked a friend of mine the possible reason behind the policy and he told me that trying to find out the religious and ethnic make-up of Nigeria will reinforce ethnic and religious division! I was amazed by this submission.

This is surely a classic case of playing the ostrich. Trying to hide our differences will certainly not solve the problem. Every one knows that Nigeria is made up of several ethnic groups. It does not therefore make much sense to me to seek to

hide certain truths in the hope that such blissful ignorance will wish the problem away.

We have a lot of differences and that is the truth. Only God knows why He made us so. And this is not in any way a weakness. It is rather a source of strength. We are supposed to be enriched by our variety. The trouble however is that those who rule over us have made a poor job of our plurality. Rather than see it as a source of strength, they often seek to manipulate this reality to their selfish political, economic or social advantage.

There are many countries of the modern world which are even more plural than Nigeria. Leaders of such countries have adroitly harnessed their variety to build very strong societies. They have achieved that feat because the foundation for such nation-building is laid on the concrete of justice, fair-play and transparent honesty.

Our differences in Nigeria have become such a great problem because Nigeria is built on a foundation of lies, damned lies, injustice and dishonesty. Our census figures have been manipulated since the foundation of what is today Nigeria. That is why it has become necessary to tell lies or seek to hide certain facts in subsequent population census exercises. You do need lies or a hiding of certain truths to sustain a foundation of lies and injustice. If truth is made to come out certain entrenched interest will be ruined.

But tell me, is it not amazing that while in both the ancient and modern world census is meant to reveal a quantum of statistics for the development of society, ours seeks to hide some vital information? Are we therefore surprised why we are not developing as fast as we ought to given the enormous resources that the good God has blessed us with?

Accurate statistics and subsequent good planning and execution are the secrets behind the phenomenal development of many nations of the modern world. It is doubtful if anyone can plan and execute well without accurate and reliable information.

The curse of underdevelopment will continue to plague Nigeria if our leaders continue with the delusion that it does not really matter to know the character and complexity of Nigeria.

What our leaders have failed to understand is that it is not the fact of knowing which religious belief has the

more numerous adherents or which ethnic group has the greatest number that will lead to conflict, but it is what you do to all the citizens in relation to another that really matters.

After all, it is a fact of life that in a plural society some groups have to be more in number than others. Who is afraid of knowing the truth that some ethnic groups are more numerous than others? The problem we have been having is that a deliberate policy of injustice, unfairness and dishonesty has been instituted over the years to the benefit of other groups. Which explains why attempts to arrive at just how many we are have been such a contentious issue over the years?

Nigerians have realized that figures determine how much revenue you get from mother Nigeria. The smarter you are in lying about many your kith and kin are, the better for your group.

My sincere wish has always been that President Olusegun Obasanjo who is ever so conscious of his role in history, who sees himself as a great man of destiny, will seize the golden opportunity of another population exercise, to give to Nigeria an accurate, reliable and generally accepted census, an outcome that no Nigerian will ever have cause to doubt. This beginning, which seems to indicate that we are again out to hide something, does not inspire such hope.

It is certainly not too late to exercise a change of heart. The government should instruct the National Population Commission not to exclude statistics on the religious and ethnic composition of Nigeria. God is not foolish to have made us the way we are. If he had wanted, he would have crated all of us either Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba and compelled us to worship him in only one way. As he chose to make us the way we are, we must not run away from that reality but acknowledge it and thank him for it.

Any administration that is given the opportunity to correct some of the things wrong in Nigeria but which fails to do so, has merely denied itself the privilege of entering the history books. For some of us eternal optimists and patriots, there will come a government which will courageously, sincerely and patriotically solve some of our seemingly unsolvable problem with effortless ease and get all the accolades.

Since the emergence of modern Nigeria, every administration that has been given the change to organize a population census has always flunked it. One day, some one will get it right for Nigeria.

Reforming Nigeria: Which model?

By Yusuf Ibrahim Gamawa

This has been a subject of debate amongst different scholars within and outside Nigeria and at different periods, although sometimes bearing a different title but with the same meaning, a dream of an egalitarian, sufficient Nigerian society. In fact, it is not only scholars that share this dream, but almost every well meaning and right thinking Nigerian. Our leaders have tried, I will not say in vain, but it appears so. The Nation has been rated as one of the richest in terms of human and natural resources, but surprisingly with the lowest per capital income, so what are the likely reasons for these contradictions?

Recently, I was at a lecture organized by the Media Trust marking the second Annual Trust dialogue. The topic of the lecture was "Reforming Nigeria which model?" Three speakers of intellectual repute, who are mostly economists and experts were invited to present papers on the topic, they include Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, a banker, Professor Mike Kwanashie, an economist and Professor Sam Aluko also an economist and an experienced hand in the Nigeria Project.

It is indeed well known that when the British conquered what is today known as Nigeria, the entire system of the Nigerian people was subjected to fundamental changes. The traditional political system, which had been in existence for several centuries, was transformed immediately into a semi-Urban one that is somewhat Western oriented. The economy which had been purely feudal and subsistent also witnessed some changes with the introduction of the colonial economy which was largely export oriented.

The entire society itself which had been basically rural, also witnessed some changes associated with modernization, roads were constructed, cars and other means of transportation were also introduced such as bicycles and railways.

Hospitals and other social amenity centers became visible in many cities across the country.

When all these changes were taking place, most Nigerians and in fact even Elites like Hebert Macaulay, knew very little about the nature and implication of the colonial economy. In fact most Nigerians were only concerned with seeing developments in their areas not minding how it could be sustained. It was not until after the attainment of independence that Nigeria began to see the effects and as a matter of fact the very structure of the colonial economy itself became very glaring.

It could be recalled that amongst other things that led to the failure of the first republic are acute shortage of food supply as well as the failure of the Balewa government to decolonize the economy, that remained tied to that of the British and till this day this has been the basic problem facing the Nigeria economy. Railways were built by the colonial government, but it should be noted that the lines only linked areas with mineral resources to the coast for the speedy evacuation of goods and services and even roads were constructed with a view to exploration and not because Nigerians needed roads. Farmers were encouraged to produce only cash crops for exports.

When I heard the first speaker, who was Sanusi Lamido Sanusi speak about the economy, I began to think of how the various governments had tried to deal with this very subject right from independence. In fact it was the Balewa government that I remembered in particular, for they first discovered this cancer that has defied surgery.

It has been alleged by many scholars and leaders that the European powers did not establish colonial states to carry out a programme of political development or change, but to erect efficient and effective administrative states for purposes of economic exploitation. This explains further the problems faced by Africa and other third World Nation's after independence. Although Lamido did not go deeply as to show that the economy is in a mess because of the British.

Sanusi's paper first and foremost identified corruption and indiscipline by Nigerians as the first step towards any kind of economic policy or reformation. Sanusi argued that unless Nigerians become disciplined and responsible, they cannot carry out any kind of reform. He also blamed the Central Bank of Nigeria; he accused the bank of adding to the inflation in the country, because of the amount of money in circulation. Sanusi saw the economy collapsing as a result of the SAP programmes of I.M.F and World Bank which the

Babangida government introduced. He therefore criticized such policies, pointing out that the effects still remain on the economy, leading to the devaluation of the naira.

Sanusi's paper seemed to have identified some of the immediate problems of the economy, to which he suggested some solutions. I agree with most of the problems he raised in the paper, but I want to remind Sanusi that people like Dr. Nkrumah of Ghana have identified neo-colonial imperialism as the major obstacle to public accountability in Africa and as such even corruption itself has its roots in imperialism. But this is not to say that I am in disagreement with Sanusi's call on War Against Corruption, particularly on the leadership.

The next speaker was Professor Mike Kwanashie, who is also the special adviser to the vice President on economic matters. It is probably due to his experience in terms of practical application to economic problems at the national level that made him differ from Sanusi. Kwanashie argued that most of what Sanusi highlighted in his paper had been identified by this government and even challenged Sanusi to look for the NEEDS document. He did not deny that these were not problems, but he argued that the problem with the economy is beyond what Sanusi is considering. Kwanashie tried to explain that it all has to do with globalization, and that whatever you try to do would not work.

Kwanashie said whatever policy the government takes, a problem always arose from its implementation either at the federal, state or the rural level. Kwanashie himself found it difficult to really paint a picture of what he wanted the audience to see.

It is something one really needs to experience either practically or theoretically, but as far as he was concerned whatever model was taken, it will be very difficult for it to work and therefore he refused to make any suggestion, but was rather of the opinion that if things change in favour of the nation at the global level, then there is hope for Nigeria.

(to be continued.)

I began to think of how the various governments had tried to deal with this very subject right from independence. In fact it was the Balewa government that I remembered in particular, for they first discovered this cancer that has defied surgery.



YOUR LETTERS

PDP crisis: Is Atiku defeated?

The Vice President and the defunct PDM is not in any way conceding the choice of a new national chairman to the President contrary to a newspaper report. The Atiku groups are only playing politics of deceit which PDM are noted for.

The Peoples Democratic Movement group has been randomly beaten; they are battered and are trying to find a way to show the world that they are still relevant in the scheme of things.

According to a source close to pro Obasanjo group in Abuja yesterday, having tried in vein to reverse Ogbeh's resignation and made issues out of it and failed, they raised G-34 to confront the President, they also failed.

They wanted to use some governors, they failed, it was certainly not out of place for the "opposition" to begin to retrace steps. How then could they have said they have conceded the Chairmanship to Obasanjo when in actual fact they have been thoroughly beaten politically?

The pro-Obasanjo group said, having lost severally, PDM group are like a group of 10 villages been attacked by soldiers.

six, and now, they were left with just two, can one call that conceding or surrendering? the group asked. The issue of loyalty has been brought to the forefront in recent time, and if this is the way to show loyalty, the group is still not sincere.

It is not true that the President has been choosing the chairman; it is a collective responsibility of the party. It is not good, to portray the President as a dictator.

Chief Audu Ogbeh came into forefront through Dr. Iyorchia Ayu via the Vice President, and the issue of his resignation was a collective one. Those who think they can drag the name of the President in the mud should go ahead; they will meet their political Waterloo.

The President is the President of Nigeria, not that of PDP, he has the mandate of the people, PDP Chairman is about the party and the President name should not be linked with the choice or otherwise, Chief Obasanjo has a lot up his sleeves than party politics. If PDM was humiliated or not by the exist of Chief Audu Ogbeh, time will tell the source concluded.

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Balogun and his anti-corruption mantra

That the former police boss was neck deep into a huge financial scam running into billions of naira was most startling, considering the vigour and determination with which he did his job.

Immediately he assumed office as the Inspector General of police in 2001, the fight against corruption was one of his famous eight point mantra for the most corrupt public institutions in Nigeria.

"Laws are for all, and he who seeks to lay it upon others should by rights obey them" wrote Geoffrey Chaucer (1342-1440). As a lawyer and high ranking police officer, Mr Balogun should be in a better position to know what our state book says about the crime he was alleged to have committed.

"If you shut up the truth and bury it underground, it will grow and gather to itself such explosive power that the day it burst through, it will blow everything in its way" says Emile Zola (1840-1902). Now the wind has finally blown and all have seen the chicken's rump. The full weight of the law is recommended in this regard without fear or favour.

Conversely, prominent traditional rulers from south west Nigeria, speaking here

Aso Villa to plead for Tafa's cause. At the helm of the lobby gang was the respected Ooni of Ife Oba Okunade.

One of the problems with our nation is that of ethnic jingoism which has blinded our sense of reasoning. We sympathise with issues relating to our tongue, origin and geographical location, while we remain indifferent to others. If Tafa Balogun were to be an ordinary 'alaye' would the Oba and his entourage think it wise to plead for his leniency?

Traditional institutions is very sacred and such should be revered. As the custodian of our norms and values, they should be men of honour and great respect. Issues of national interest or morality as in the case of Tafa Balogun should be viewed sincerely and objectively without contaminating it with ethnic sentiments and prejudices.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should be commended for revealing yet another crime in the high place.

However, let the EFCC be reminded that there are so many Tafa Baloguns in the past and present administration. The commission should move

the manpower to unearth these kind of people and their nefarious activities.

The entire world is looking at us and government should make a point here. Nigerians also needed conviction and sincerity on the part of

government on the much touted fight against corruption. Here lies another litmus test government should never fail.

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P.D.P Crisis and Okadigbo's prophesy

July 29, 2003 is the day that comes to my mind whenever a P.D.P crisis is mentioned. It was a day in which a book titled "Rape of Democracy 2003" was launched by the congress of Nigerian political parties (CNPP) in Abuja.

It was on that occasion that one of the persons I admire said something not less than a prophesy on the collapse of P.D.P. Dr. Chuba Okadigbo said, "revolution starts when the forces of the king clash with those of the slaves, which is what we are having at our hands now."

When cataclysm meets cataclysm the result is calamity. What is happening in Anambra state is the beginning of implosion in the P.D.P and the illegitimate Government... However,

according to him, calamity must befall the party and that the abduction of Governor Ngige was the beginning of the calamity and sooner or later another calamity may befall another P.D.P state Governor.

I was a witness to the removal from office of plateau state Governor Mr Joshua Dariye who was also one of the P.D.P Governors and it is his removal that showcased the second segment of Okadigbo's prophesies.

But unfortunately, he could not live to celebrate the final decomposing of the party which is as a result of that same Anambra saga which 'oyi' was talking about but I wish the victims of the crisis would relate the story to him.

Usman Baffa
usmanbappah@yahoo.com

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

Happy Birthday

54 HEARTY CHEERS TO THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR



Oga Sir! On this special day today, I join millions of your admirers and well wishers in wishing you many fruitful and rewarding years on earth. May God in His Infinite Mercies continue to grant you good health and wisdom in abundance and may you continue to render useful service to mankind and your fatherland.

Congratulations and many happy returns

**HIS EXCELLENCY
PRINCE OLAGUNSOYE OYINLOLA
GOVERNOR, OSUN STATE**

SIGNED:

PRINCE HONEST IRMAYA STERILIA



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSTS OF TECHNOLOGY INCUBATION CENTERS, MANAGERS

The Federal Ministry of Science and Technology intends to employ dynamic, well-focused and result-oriented persons to fill the vacant positions of Center Managers in the existing 15 Technology Incubation Centers (TICs) grouped as follows:

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
Agege, Lagos	Benin	Akure
Aba	Calabar	Bauchi
Kano	Nnewi	Birnin Kebbi
Minna	Gusau	Maiduguri
	Uyo	Warri
		Sokoto

2. Technology Incubation Center is a comprehensive infrastructural facility established for the nurturing of up-coming entrepreneurs engaged in value-added and technology-related manufacturing activities. It is a vehicle for commercialization of research and development results or findings from our research establishments and other higher institutions. Entrepreneurs are admitted into the centers and graduate after 3-5 years of the incubation period.

3. Applications are hereby invited from suitable individuals that meet the pre-requisites specified below:

A) Educational Qualifications:

Candidates should possess relevant degrees preferably in Science, Engineering, Economics/Accountancy and Business/ Public Administration. Computer Literacy and higher degrees will be an added advantage.

B) Conditions of Service:

Conditions of Service for the groups of centers are similar to those obtainable in the Public Service as follows:

- i) **Group A:** Directorate Level (GL 15-17) or equivalent;
- ii) **Group B:** Senior Management Level (GL 13-14) or equivalent;
- iii) **Group C:** Middle Management Level (GL 10-12) or equivalent.

C) Experience:

Candidates should have a minimum post-qualification experience in the relevant areas for the groups of centers as follows:

- i) Group A - 15 Years;
- ii) Group B - 12 Years;

This should include at least 5-years at managerial positions or equivalent in government or reputable companies, particularly in small and medium scale enterprises.

D) Duties:

The successful candidates will be responsible for implementing the centers mandate through the day-to-day management of the centers.

In addition they will be responsible to the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology through the Director, Technology Acquisition and Assessment (DTAA) for the over all attainment of the goals and objectives of the centers.

Also Center Managers shall be responsible for establishing strong linkage between the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology and the various State Governments and the Organised Private Sector.

E) Age Factor:

Prospective candidates should be within 30 to 50 years of age.

F) Submission of Application:

Application letters from candidates should be submitted with 10 copies of curriculum vitae to include:

- i) Educational qualifications with dates;
- ii) Relevant job experiences;
- iii) Present employment and emoluments;
- iv) Photocopies of relevant credentials including birth certificates or affidavits; and
- v) Contact address and telephone number.

All applications should be received within 6 weeks from the date of this publication and addressed to The Honourable Minister, Federal ministry of Science and Technology, 9th Floor, Federal Secretariat, Phase I, Abuja.

Signed

Ibe Ochu Ukoha

Director Personnel Management,

For: Honourable Minister

Trust International

Iraq admits vote flaws

Iraq admitted there were flaws in the country's landmark vote as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice predicted a new spirit of international cooperation for Iraq but refused to speak of a US exit strategy.

On the ground, resistance renewed their attacks after a period of relative calm following Sunday's elections that are expected to bring the country's long-repressed Shiite majority to power.

As the massive security election clampdown was eased, a Shiite political leader escaped an assassination attempt in the holy city of Najaf, at least three people were killed in a string of attacks around the so-called Sunni triangle and an oil pipeline was sabotaged.

In other attacks around the

Sunni Muslim triangle, two civilians and one soldier were killed.

One group of resistance is also claiming to have killed several US soldiers and captured one, whom they identified as John Adam.

The soldier in question, however, was widely speculated to be no more than a toy figure sold at US military bases in the Middle East.

Iraqi and US officials have urged the country's various communities to unite after the polls, the first since Saddam Hussein was toppled in a US-led war in 2003 and the first free election in more than half a century.

As Iraq waited for the final vote tally, the election commission said it was investigating remedies to the fact tens of thousands of people who were unable to vote in the polls due to a short of ballot papers.

"We are dealing with it now. Let us see what happens, we are very sorry," spokesman Farid Ayar told AFP. But Iraqi officials were unable to say if there was a procedure for reopening the vote.

Interim President Ghazi al-Yawar told a press conference on Tuesday that "tens of thousands were not able to vote for the lack of ballots", with the problems mainly in Mosul, Basra, Baghdad and Najaf.

Abdul Hussein al-Hindawi, chairman of the electoral commission, also acknowledged problems in Sunni areas where polling

stations had not opened or not enough ballots had been distributed in Nineveh, Salaheddin and Tamim provinces.

In an effort to reach out to Iraq's embittered Sunni population, Yawar, a tribal sheikh from Mosul, insisted there was consensus that his position would be retained by his fellow Sunnis in the next cabinet.

Yawar said he believed the ethnic shareout would remain the same for the post-election government that must oversee the drawing up of a new constitution, with the Kurds also being given the post of national assembly speaker.

The *New York Times* reported thousands of US troops could be reassigned to training Iraqi soldiers as part of an effort to speed up the strengthening of the local forces.



Iraqis hold up copies of their voting registrations as they celebrate their participation in the country's national elections in the holy city of Najaf recently.

Egypt 'to host Mid-East summit'

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak has invited Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to a summit, Mr Sharon's office said.

The meeting will take place Tuesday in Sharm el-Sheikh - Mr Sharon has agreed to attend, Israeli officials said.

However, Egyptian officials said it is too early to say whether there will be a summit in Egypt and there has been no comment from the Palestinians.

Egypt's intelligence chief on a visit to Israel delivered the invitation.

Mr Abbas and Mr Sharon had tentatively planned to meet on Tuesday, although nothing had been set.

Mr Mubarak has been a key mediator in the Middle East conflict over the years and his backing for the summit will carry considerable weight.

Israel's security cabinet is expected to meet on Thursday to approve a series of gestures toward the Palestinians, including prisoner releases and a gradual troop withdrawal from several towns in the West Bank.

Earlier yesterday, Israel said it might suspend its pursuit of wanted Palestinian militants as a goodwill gesture towards Mr Abbas's leadership.

Defence official Amos Gilad said it was a "freeze not an amnesty" lasting as long as militants laid down their arms.

Mr Gilad said a Palestinian-Israeli committee was planned to deal with the issue and could meet next week.

"We will give Abu Mazen [Mr Abbas] a chance by suspending our operations against the wanted Palestinians, but this is a freeze not an amnesty," Mr Gilad told army radio.

"If these wanted Palestinians start up their terrorist activities again, we will resume our offensive operations against them," he added.

About 300 Palestinians are thought to be on Israel's wanted list. In the past four years of violence, hundreds of suspected militants - and smaller number of bystanders - have been killed in what Israel terms targeted killings.

Palestinian security forces have destroyed a weapons smuggling tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border, in another sign Mr. Abbas is serious about stopping anti-

Turkey urges support for Abbas

Turkey pledged support for Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas in his people's struggle for statehood and efforts to reform Palestinian institutions.

"Lasting peace and stability in the Middle East will not be possible until the Palestinian people achieve their independent state and the honorable, prosperous and free life they deserve," Turkish Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc said at a lunch

with Abbas.

"Rest assured that all your efforts for peace will be wholeheartedly supported by Turkey," he said, according to a statement released by parliament.

"We are confident that you will accomplish in the most efficient way the reforms required in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority.

"We will be happy to share with our Palestinian brothers our experience on reform and extend our solidarity," he

said.

Abbas, who was visiting Ankara on the last leg of a four-nation tour following his succession to the late Yasser Arafat, welcomed Turkey's support.

"We take Turkey's democratic experience as a model," he told reporters through an interpreter.

Abbas also highlighted the importance of Jerusalem for the world's Muslims.

"With the support of peace-loving nations, Jerusalem will again belong to the Muslims and worship will continue in Jerusalem until doomsday," he said.

On Tuesday, Abbas also met with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan as well as Turkish business leaders, who said they would convene a meeting with Palestinian and Israeli colleagues in Turkey in March to discuss possible joint projects.

... wants UN sanctions lifted

Iraq wants the United Nations to lift all sanctions and stop using the country's oil revenue to pay compensation to victims of the 1991 Gulf War and the salaries of U.N. weapons inspectors, Iraq's U.N. ambassador said Tuesday.

Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie called sanctions "anachronistic and inappropriate" and said it's time for the Security Council to recognize that Iraq is a "much more internationally friendly" country that wants to be at peace with its neighbors.

No longer needed, he said, was the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, which was responsible for dismantling Iraqi programs to build chemical or biological weapons or long-range missiles. The commission's inspectors left Iraq just before the March 2003 U.S.-led war that toppled Saddam Hussein, and the United States has barred them from returning.

The commission, known as UNMOVIC, is funded by proceeds from the sale of

than \$10 million a year.

"I think it's generally acknowledged that Iraq now does not pose such a threat, and does not in its present form have any weapons of mass destruction. And, therefore, to continue to fund a bureaucracy to do what, to just continue to say every day that they have found nothing?" Sumaidaie said.

"I think that we should work towards closing these files and unburden Iraq of the legacy of Saddam's rule," he said.

The Iraqi ambassador also took aim at the U.N. Compensation Commission based in Geneva, which consists of the 15 Security Council members and was set up in 1991 to pay compensation to victims of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the war that followed.

It has received claims for \$353 billion from individuals, companies and governments, and has approved payments of \$51.8 billion.

"I think we want to put some ceilings on all these things," Sumaidaie said. "We

doling out money. We have to have some kind of a cutoff, conclusion, closure."

The money for compensation claims comes from Iraqi oil sales, as did the funds for the U.N. oil-for-food humanitarian program, which is the target of numerous investigations following allegations of massive corruption.

Two killed in Yemeni fire

At least two people, including a police officer, have been killed in clashes between Yemeni tribesmen and security forces in a town east of the capital, Sanaa.

A local official said six other people were wounded in the gun battles that erupted in Marib, 170km from Sanaa, involving members of the Ubeida tribe.

Witnesses, however, said six people, including two police officers, had died and 16 were wounded during the firefights that began on Monday and continued until

Kuwait passes new security law

Kuwait's parliament has passed a law giving police wide powers to search and seize illegal weapons to tackle a wave of al-Qaida-linked violence, deputies said.

Kuwaiti security forces on Monday killed five suspected al-Qaida members and captured three others, including a suspected leader, marking an escalation in the fight between authorities and the group bent on destabilising the oil-rich US ally.

"Parliament unanimously passed this law on weapons collection, which is valid for two years," one lawmaker, Abd Allah al-Rumi, said.

After an upsurge in violence over the past month, a government draft was rushed through parliament procedures that often take months.

Kuwait introduced similar legislation in 1992 to deal with a proliferation of arms since the 1990-91 Iraqi occupation of the Gulf Arab state.

But parliament rejected an extension of that law in 1994, saying possession of weapons was a right.

Kuwait, which controls a tenth of global oil reserves, has stepped up security around oil installations after an attempt by fighters to launch an attack near the country's largest oil refinery and a US military camp.

Last week, US and British embassies warned of more attacks in Kuwait, which rounded up suspected al-Qaida fighters during raids after two officers and two armed men were killed in clashes earlier in January.

Kuwait, a transit route for foreign troops into Iraq, was a launch pad for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Kuwaiti government has cracked down on Islamists opposed to the presence of some 30,000 US troops in the

Trust International

Nepal's king names new cabinet after takeover

Nepal's King Gyanendra unveiled a 10-member cabinet under his leadership yesterday, two days after he sacked the prime minister for failing to hold elections or end an escalating civil war with Maoist rebels.

Life carried on as normal on the streets of Kathmandu, but the revolt-racked country remained largely cut off from the rest of the world a day after the king dismissed prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assumed power himself.

Gyanendra declared a state of emergency and suspended civil liberties, including press freedom. Indian television said he had placed many politicians under house arrest.

Phone lines from Nepal remained cut. But air links, badly disrupted by the takeover, were largely restored yesterday.

The king's move to take power for the next three years drew condemnation from the United States, neighboring India, Britain and the United Nations, who said the move would play into the Maoists' hands and urged the immediate restoration of

democracy.

Indian TV reported that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh might skip next week's South Asia summit in Bangladesh because of Gyanendra's move, indicating a hardening of New Delhi's stance against the monarch.

Nepal's embassy in Delhi said the king would chair the cabinet and no prime minister had been appointed.

The Maoist rebels, who have been fighting to topple the monarchy since 1996, called for a three-day general strike from Wednesday in protest at the king's move, the Press Trust of India said.

Rebel leader Prachanda, who uses one name, said the

king's action smacked of "medieval feudal autocracy."

Nepal is locked in a bitter three-way struggle between the king, the rebels and political parties which are divided.

Around 11,000 people have been killed in the uprising, which erupted in 1996. Diplomats worry that the revolt could be spinning out of control and that Nepal could one day become a haven for international terrorist groups or drugs trafficking.

Human rights groups, including Amnesty International and Human Rights

Watch, condemned the king's move which they said would plunge the country deeper into crisis.

Many people in Nepal still view the king as a reincarnation of the god Vishnu, the preserver of the world.

But the monarchy's reputation dived in 2001 when Crown Prince Dipendra killed his father, the popular King Birendra, and other royal family members before turning the gun on himself.

Gyanendra, Birendra's brother, was crowned king afterwards, but is frequently accused of overstepping his powers.



A man struggles to hold on to safety on a pile of debris as it flows down a river in Banda Aceh after a quake-triggered tsunami struck Sumatra, Indonesia ...recently.

Indonesia rejects rebels offer

Indonesia's government has rejected an offer by Aceh's rebels to put demands for independence on hold in exchange for a referendum on Aceh's future.

Despite the government's rejection, the offer shows an encouraging willingness on the rebels' side to be flexible.

The new offer from the rebels came two days after its exiled leadership and government ministers held their first face-to-face talks in almost two years.

The meeting focused on smoothing the path of aid to Aceh's tsunami victims.

Although the talks achieved no formal agreement, the two sides agreed in principle that they would meet again in the next few weeks to discuss longer-term solutions to the 28-year-old insurgency.

The rejection of the offer by the rebels to put their demands for independence on hold for five to ten years until a referendum is little surprise.

Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, has said he is willing to consider any solution that does not involve independence.

Despite the offer's rejection, it does give grounds for hope. It seems to indicate a new flexibility in the position of the rebels who have previously refused to shift from their demand for outright independence.

Few observers believe it will be easy to overcome the differences entrenched by more than a century of bitter conflict, but they say these talks represent the best chance for peace in Aceh for some time.

Haitians to replace Aristide in October

Haitians will go to the polls in October and November during a crucial vote that could fill a political vacuum in the country after a three-week revolt ousted former president Jean Bertrand Aristide last year, an official said Monday.

The elections will be financed by \$33 million Cdn in funds from Canada, the United States, Haiti and the United Nations. The European Union has pledged an additional \$15 million.

Nearly 7,000 local and regional posts will be contested Oct. 9, while the election for Haiti's president and 129 legislators will take place Nov. 13, said Rosemond Pradel, a spokesman for the Provisional Electoral Council.

The council announced the dates in an electoral decree sent to Haiti's interim government, which is expected to ratify the decision later this week.

Voters must re-register for elections because past fraud has left some people with multiple voter cards, Pradel said. His council hopes to register about four million voters - one-half the population - beginning in April, but many doubt credible elections will be possible this year.

Armed ex-soldiers and former rebels who helped

overthrow Aristide still control parts of the country and violence in pro-Aristide slums has killed more than 250 people since Sept. 30.

Interim prime minister Gerard Latortue has accused Aristide of co-ordinating the violence from exile in South Africa, a claim the former leader denies.

"We cannot have free and fair elections in the country until we resolve the problem of the armed ex-military and gangs because those who have arms in the country will try to control the electoral process," said

Pierre Esperance of the Haitian National Coalition for Haitian Rights.

Aristide was toppled Feb. 29 after a three-week revolt led by street gangs and former soldiers of the army he disbanded in 1995, shortly after the United States sent troops to restore him to power after a 1991 army coup.

Aristide has accused U.S. forces of kidnapping him and forcing him from office. The United States has strongly denied the charge.

Representatives of Aristide's Lavalas party have said they will only participate in

Pakistan denies role in US, Afghanistan war

Pakistan strongly rejected a US military claim that its forces were helping American troops in Afghanistan aim artillery fire at rebels on the Pakistani side of the border.

"Not at all, it is baseless, it has got no truth," military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan told AFP in response to remarks by Colonel Cardon Crawford, director of operations for the US military command in Afghanistan.

Sultan said Pakistani forces were cooperating with US-led coalition troops who are on the other side of the porous frontier

but "it is a cooperation in terms of intelligence sharing."

"It is not in terms of inviting their (coalition) fire onto our territory," Sultan said on Wednesday.

Pakistan is a key ally in Washington's so-called war on terror and has launched its own anti-militant operations near the border, but is highly sensitive to claims that its forces are in any way under US control.

It has repeatedly denied reports that US Central Intelligence Agency operatives and special forces are based in the tribal regions close to Afghanistan.

Odd World

Tennis fan to cheer players through phones

Tennis fans could send messages to players via screens on court if plans by mobile phone maker Sony Ericsson come to fruition.

The company signed an \$88 million (47 million pounds) six-year sponsorship deal with the women's game last month under which the WTA Tour will be renamed the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. It is the largest contract in the history of tennis and women's sport.

The deal could pave the way for a variety of interactive options for fans at tennis tournaments, including the ability to communicate with players by posting messages on digital billboards using wireless technology.

"We're looking at being able to send SMS messages to screens on court," Sony Ericsson president Miles Flint told Reuters in Tokyo ahead of this week's Pan Pacific Open.

"It's also feasible to put tennis games and the promotion of the players into phones."

The deal with the company has been welcomed by top players.

"Women's tennis has grown so much from the late 1990s. People know Serena (Williams), Venus (Williams) and Maria (Sharapova) and everyone by their first names," world number one Lindsay Davenport told Reuters.

"I was happy and relieved ... because it was kind of mind-boggling to me that we couldn't get the really big, strong companies that would help us develop the sport even more."

Boy sends granma to hospital after experiment explosion

A British teenager triggered a chemical alert and forced his grandmother into hospital after his chemistry set exploded, a fire and rescue service spokeswoman said.

While experimenting with the kit at his home in southwest England, the boy mixed ammonia and iodine, which blew up and created toxic gas.

His grandmother, Sue Buttle, called the emergency services to say she had inhaled the gas and was taken to hospital for a check-up but was not seriously hurt.

The road in Bognor Regis, West Sussex, where Buttle lives was sealed off and fire crews with chemical protection suits were sent to the scene but were not needed.

Man bites off brother's finger

Police said a man lost his cool and bit off a third of his younger brother's finger on Thursday night after a vicious family dispute.

A criminal complaint filed in the case said Jose Juarez, 45, got into a fight with his younger brother, Roy Juarez.

Witnesses said Jose Juarez insulted his brother's daughter, and the fight began. At some point, Jose allegedly bit off a third of his brother's middle finger on his right hand. According to the complaint, police said Jose appeared to be quite drunk.

Jose Juarez on Sunday night acknowledged that he bit his brother and that alcohol was a factor.

"Yeah, I'm not proud to say I did, but it happened so quick," he told KMSB-TV of the Twin Cities. "We were both kind of intoxicated. I didn't sit there chewing or gnawing or anything like this."

Roy Juarez was taken to Rice Memorial Hospital where doctors reattached the piece of finger. It's too early to tell if the operation was successful.

Jose Juarez was charged on Friday with two counts of assault and one count of domestic abuse. He was released on his own recognizance. His next court date is Wednesday.

Cop investigate self after robbery

A Swedish police officer has confessed he robbed a bank and later investigated the crime himself, telling reporters at the time police had no clues.

A court in the central town of Bollnas Monday officially charged the 36-year-old for the armed robbery on Dec. 17, court documents said Tuesday, adding he had pleaded guilty.

The amount of money stolen was not disclosed but was described as sizeable. An hour after the crime the police officer returned to the bank as a leading police investigator handling the case.

Colleagues became suspicious when he bought a new car in mid-January, paying 219,000 Swedish crowns (\$31,400) in cash using banknotes from the robbery, the court said.

Woman surprises Blair with kiss

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, hardened by years of heckling, insults and humiliating bad hair days, had an unusual experience on Monday: a member of the public actually kissed him.

What's more Jean Peterson, 42, who approached the hard-pressed but steadfastly cheerful leader while he was visiting a community in the northern English city of Manchester, gave a flattering description of her experience.

"He's got lips like a baby, they're very soft," said the mother-of-three, as if faintly surprised they were not made of solid British steel.

Trust International

Pope's health stabilises after illness

Pope John Paul II was given respiratory assistance overnight but is in stable condition at Rome's Gemelli hospital where he is preparing to say mass, a Vatican spokesman has announced after the pope was rushed to the hospital for breathing difficulties.

"During the night, he underwent respiratory assistance," which helped stabilise his condition after he was rushed to hospital with breathing difficulties, spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said outside the hospital yesterday.

He gave no details of what such assistance entailed.

The 84-year-old pope slept "for a few hours" during the night, and had "very little fever", he added, in the first medical bulletin on his condition in more than 12 hours.

"When I left him, the pope was preparing to celebrate mass with his secretary, Monsignor Stanislaw Zewesz," the spokesman said.

He denied suggestions that the pontiff had to undergo a tracheotomy to help him breathe, and added that he did not undergo a CAT scan, as reported by Italian media.

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church, who is also

afflicted by Parkinson's disease, was rushed to hospital late on Tuesday with breathing difficulties after a bout of influenza suddenly worsened.

The Vatican said he had suffered an acute attack of laryngospasm, a blockage of air to the lungs, and needed urgent medical attention.

"The flu condition that has afflicted the Holy Father for the past three days deteriorated tonight with an acute laryngospasm. For this reason, it was decided to urgently take the pope to the Gemelli hospital," a statement had said.

The Polish pontiff has been treated at least six times in the Gemelli during his 26-year papacy, and has his own suite on the 10th floor of the hospital on the outskirts of Rome.

Medical experts said acute laryngospasm was very rarely fatal, but cautioned that his age and medical history complicated matters.

"He's an elderly man and that's a serious problem for an elderly patient," said Gerald Berke, chief of head and neck surgery at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Centre.

The pope has occasionally had difficulty breathing since he came down a decade ago with Parkinson's, a

disorder of the central nervous system which can



Pope John Paul II

affect chest muscle activity. The flu apparently complicated his condition. He cancelled all his public engagements for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The last time he skipped an audience for health reasons was in September 2003, when he had an intestinal ailment.

The sudden worsening of his health again raised fears that one of the most remarkable papacies might be drawing to a close.

John Paul II has put his mark on the world like few others in the 20th century, credited with a leading role in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, and also working tirelessly to revolutionise relations with other religions.

Zimbabwe announces election date

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has announced a general election is to be held on 31 March.

The main opposition Movement for Democratic Change is set to say later this week whether it will take part.

Last year it said it would boycott elections because all the odds were stacked in favour of Mr Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF party.

Mr. Mugabe has promised to abide by a set of regional guidelines to ensure that

elections are free and fair.

He has set up an independent electoral commission but the MDC said these changes do not go far enough.

It had wanted the election to be put back so that more reforms could be passed.

MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai recently said they would be "damned if we do take part and damned if we don't".

In his weekly newsletter published on Tuesday, Mr. Tsvangirai expressed the hope that the polls could prove significant.

"Whether we opt to stay at home or not, the ensuing consequences shall push the political temperature beyond boiling point and hasten the demise of tyranny in our country," he said.

But the BBC's Southern Africa correspondent said that the opposition MDC must make an awkward decision.

If it does not take part, it risks sinking into political oblivion. But if it does participate, and the indications are that it will, it knows that the odds are hopelessly stacked against it, he said.

If Zanu-PF gains a two-thirds majority in parliament, it would be able to change the constitution, which could be important if Mr. Mugabe, 80, decides to step down or if his health worsens.

President Mugabe has the power to nominate 30 MPs within the 150-member parliament.

Sudan slams UN report on Darfur

Sudan dismissed as one-sided a UN report that accused the Khartoum government of gross and systematic human rights violations in Darfur but stopped short of labeling the violence in the region as genocide.

"The violations indicated in the report were not confirmed and were based on information of a political nature," Justice Minister Ali Osman Yassin told reporters.

He said the report by a five-member commission appointed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which recommended that abuses be dealt with by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, was

"biased and unbalanced."

The commission blamed government forces and militia for indiscriminate attacks, including the killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape, pillaging and forced displacement in Darfur.

However, it said the "crucial element of genocidal intent appears to be missing".

Amnesty International, in its reaction to the report, said the UN Security Council should set aside its differences and refer the case to the ICC, whose jurisdiction the United States refuses to recognise.

"The war crimes and

crimes against humanity committed in Darfur are no less serious than genocide," said Claudio Cordone, senior director for regional programs at Amnesty International.

Besides referring Darfur to the ICC, Amnesty International said there is needs to have "a comprehensive, long-term strategy for bringing all those responsible for the crimes to justice".

It also appealed to China and Russia, which have oil interests in Sudan, "to stop arming the killers and to allow the existing arms embargo on Darfur to be extended to include the government" in Khartoum.

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Kaduna	4, Yakubu Gowon Way, Kaduna
Abuja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> V-Rock, Plot 374A Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Wuse 11 Abuja First City Plaza Plot 252 Harbati Marmulay Way, Central business district Abuja
Kano	2, Yolawa Road, Opp. Mallam Koto Sq, Kano
P/Harcourt	26/28 Onna Rd. GRA Phase II P/Harcourt
Ibadan	National Bank Building, Agodi Secretariat, Ibadan
Enugu	Plot 6, Ebeano Housing Estate, Independence Layout, Enugu

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Gross Earnings	4,045,251	3,201,572	2,913,115	2,191,728	846,217
Profit Before Tax	948,958	613,282	752,035	502,369	44,458
Dividend Paid	243,231	202,692	153,500	125,000	25,000
Dividend Per Share (k)	20	20	25	25	5
Cumulative Dividend on 100,000 shares	95,000	75,000	55,000	30,000	5,000
Value (Units) of 100,000 shares bought in year 2000	195	180	150	120	-

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Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50	
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15.30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
Chanchangi Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
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 - CBQ	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	2:30pm.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja - Lagos	8:30a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.
ADC Airline	
Lagos - Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:45a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule

We can't stop GSM operators from expanding - NCC

Apparently reacting to calls from GSM subscribers that it should stop the GSM operators from expanding their networks, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has said that it can not stop GSM companies from expanding their networks and from selling new lines.

GSM subscribers had, in Lagos last week, called on NCC to stop operators from expanding to new commu-

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent (Lagos)

nities and from selling new lines as according to them, these are responsible for series of network problems currently being experienced.

But the executive vice-chairman of NCC, Engr. Ernest Ndukwe said there was no way the regulatory body can stop the GSM operators from expanding their networks.

The NCC executive vice chairman, who was speaking at the January edition of telecoms consumers' parliament in Lagos, said provided the operators increase their base stations and maintain the existing ones, "they are free to expand."

Engr. Ndukwe, who admitted that some operators expanded without adequate base stations and equipment,

ordered such operators to build new base stations and maintain existing ones.

The NCC boss urged community leaders to prevail on their subjects to stop harassing staff of GSM companies and damaging their equipment.

"We cant stop GSM operators from expanding the way they see fit because we don't believe that expansion cau-

ses network problems. The only thing we will say is that operators should increase their base stations and maintain the existing ones. We want every Nigerian to have access to phone. This cant be achieved without expansion. And we beg community leaders to prevail on their subjects to stop harassing staff of GSM operators," said Ndukwe.

Motorola unveils new phones, accessories

One of the worlds largest mobile telecommunication companies, Motorola will today in Lagos introduce its newly appointed master distributor for Nigeria, Mobiltron RCM as well as unveil its latest range of mobile phones and accessories for the Nigerian market.

According to the company, the event will be a major landmark in its business in Nigeria and will enable Nigerians enjoy the latest technology emerging from its stable. The launch will feature Motorola handsets and accessories including C115 model, C205, C650, V300, V800.

The company's general manager sub-Saharan Africa, Mr. Stephen Nolan posited that "this existing partnership highlights the unwiring belief we have in the African market.

"It represents our desire to support this growing economy with an array of handsets that suit individual tastes," he said.

Going further, Nolan revealed that Motorola is committed to as aggressive marketing campaign to ensure that the launch of the new handsets are well positioned in the market place.

According to him this aggressive campaign will be coordinated in Nigeria by Mobiltron, RCN and will focus on mobile phone

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

networks, wholesales, dealers and consumers in Nigeria.

He said that Motorola technical partner in Nigeria Dizengoff (WA) Nigeria Ltd is well equipped to handle services and repairs of all Motorola handsets and accessories.

The launch, according to the company would be graced by high powered delegation from its various regions across the globe, even as Nolan maintain that the new Motorola products will be available in the Nigerian market at competitive prices.

Indian coy uses lasers to bridge network gaps

An Indian telecommunication firm has turned to lasers to help it overcome the problems of setting up voice and data networks in the country.

Tata Teleservices is using the lasers to make the link between customers' offices and its own core network.

The laser bridges work across distances up to 4km and can be set up much faster than cable connections.

In 12 months the lasers have helped the firm set up networks in more than 700 locations.

"In this particular geography getting permission to

dig the ground and lay the pipes is a bit of a task," said Mr R. Sridharan, vice president of networks at Tata.

"Heavy traffic and the layout under the ground mean that digging is uniquely difficult," he said.

In some locations, he said, permission to dig up roads and lay cables was impossible to get.

He said it was far easier to secure permission for putting networking hardware on roofs.

This has led Chennai-based Tata to turn to equipment that uses lasers to make the final mile leap between Tata's core network and the premises of customers.

The Lightpointe laser bridges work over distances of up to 4km and are being used to route both voice and data from businesses on to the backbone of the network.

The hardware works in pairs and beam data through the air in the form of laser pulses.

The laser bridges can route data at speeds up to 1.25gbps (2,000 times faster than a 512kbps broadband connection) but Tata is running its hardware at more modest speeds of 1-2mbps.

The lasers are also ideal for India because of its climate.

"It's particularly suitable

and it's hardly ever foggy," he said.

In places where rain is heavy and fog is common laser links can struggle to maintain good connection speeds.

The laser links also take far less time to set up and get working, said Mr Sridharan.

"Once we get the other permissions, normal time period for set up is a few hours," he said.

RELTEL slashes prices of hand-held phones

One of the Lagos-based fixed wireless telephone service providers; Reliance Telecoms Limited (RELTEL) has again slashed the prices of its handheld phones in a promotion to usher in the New Year.

Speaking with journalists in Lagos at the company corporate headquarters recently, RELTEL's CEO, Mr. Tony Okonkwo said the company's "consistent tendency of slashing prices and selling below per unit costs of its exotic handheld phones digital wireless terminal is formed by the need to make high grade quality services truly available to all and sundry."

Mr Okonkwo said phone-for-all target set by the federal government would not be achieved if more and more people could not buy phones due to high

RELTEL's CEO dismissed insinuations in some quarters that the company and other telecoms companies had shot themselves in the foot by reducing the prices of their products and services, saying "we will reap what we are sowing now."

"RELTEL, in the past four years, has been in the forefront of the renaissance in the telecom terrain, with its ambitious mass-appeal approach which has put reliable phones in the homes and palms of most Nigerians at half the cost prices for such rugged fixed wireless phones," said the RELTEL boss.

The CEO said the Kyocera K series (Sharp eyes) now sold for N6,995 while Kyocera slider (Avant garde) now sold for N17,995 and Nokia 2285 (internet

Virgin Mobile's user numbers jump

Customer numbers at Virgin Mobile are up 37% on a year ago, the UK's fifth-largest mobile phone operator has said.

Virgin said its total subscriber base reached 5.03 million by 31 December, and it added a net 417,000 users in the October-to-December period alone.

However, average customer revenues slipped to £132 (\$248) in the quarter, down from £137 in the previous quarter.

This was enough to trigger a 19 pence fall in Virgin Mobile's share price to 246

The company blamed the fall in annual revenues per user (ARPU) on a regulatory cut in tariffs last September.

The group's churn level - when customers switch operators - edged higher to 16.2%.

The no-frills mobile company was launched in 1999.

It floated on the stock market in July last year and is currently valued at about £670m.

In this last Christmas quarter we enjoyed record connections - our best ever quarter

Tom Alexander, chief



Alhaji Ahmed Isyaku of Intercelular Limited (l) and Engr. Mujaidu Stanley Dako, special adviser to President Obasanjo on informal sector (r), at the launch of the Nigerian Image Project held at the State House, Abuja, last year. Pix: Joe Oroye

Business Trust

Finance

Shareholders endorse Trade Bank's capitalisation plans

Shareholders of Trade Bank Plc have endorsed the consolidation plan proposed by the Board of the Bank for the purpose of achieving an effective and successful merger exercise ahead of the December 2005 deadline set for the conclusion of the on-going banking sector reforms.

Similarly, the shareholders also gave their consent to the bank's recapitalisation plan for positioning it in a vantage position for the consolidation exercise.

According to a statement signed by its head, corporate affairs, Mr Tunde Olofmitila,



Charles Soludo, CBN Gov.

these and the election of Otunba Funsho Owoyemi and Mr. Tunde Imoyo to the Board of the Bank, were some of the major resolutions taken at the 17th Annual General Meeting (AGM), of the bank held last week in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital.

Shareholders who spoke at the meeting commended the Board for initiating merger talks with other banks for the purpose of scaling the N25 billion capitalization prescribed for all licensed banks by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). They also empowered the Board to increase the bank's authorized and paid up share capital as they deem adequate for the bank to meet its funding and capitalization requirements as directed by the regulatory authorities.

The statement further disclosed that the shareholders applauded the changes the new Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Tunji Adeniyi, has introduced since he assumed the mantle of leadership of the Bank, and hoped that with his antecedents as a seasoned, tested and robust banker, he would be able to turn the bank around and take it to greater heights.

They equally commended the bank for being bold and courageous to come out the way it did without posting what they described as "paper profit," and promised to continue to support the bank's initiatives, particularly with business patronage and strong participation in the up-coming rights issue.

Addressing the shareholders, the Bank Chairman, Alhaji Aliyu Salman, SAN, thanked them for their absolute confidence in the Board and for their commitment to stay with the bank at all times. He expressed delight at the deep understanding shown by the shareholders on emerging issues associated with the on-going consolidation exercise, and promised that the Board would work round the clock to put smiles on their faces.

Salman according to the statement, disclosed that the Bank was intensifying efforts on the recovery of outstanding loans, and urged all those who are indebted to the bank to pay up for the bank to serve them better, particularly as whatever is paid in now automatically forms part of the Bank's income.



Badiya Abdullahi of Government Girls Arabic Secondary School, Gusau Zamfara state receiving her prize from the director-general of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), Dr. Ndi Okereke-Onyiuke during the fifth annual national essay competition organised by the NSE at the Yar'adua Centre Abuja...late last year. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Customs collects N45bn in Tin Can Island

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Tin Can Island Port (TCIP) Apapa, Lagos, from January to December 2004, raked in a total of N45,037,223,460.87 into the coffers of the federal account as against the N56 billion revenue target set for the command.

A break-down of the import duty and fees shows that the command collected N3,714,396.150.57 in Janu-

From Adelenwa Bamgboye Correspondent (Lagos)

ary; N3,801,940,001.40 in February; N4,713,028,079.44 in March; N3,439,690,320.45 in April and N2,470,836,470.89 in May.

Others include N2,373,981,478.15 in June; N3,374,305,161.51 in July; N4,271,063,505.27 in August and N4,808,644,881.97 in September.

The rest are N3,552,551,958.08 in October, N4,669,242,560.23 in November and in December N3,842,543,792.91 was collected as revenue altogether, N45,032,223,400.87 was collected within that period.

It would be recalled that the revenue performance of the NCS was negatively af-

ected in 2004 by increase in the number of prohibited goods, concessions granted to bonafide manufacturers and assemblers, duty exemption and waivers, and ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme.

An analysis of the revenue figures reveals that the lowest amount was collected in June was N2.3 billion and May N2.4 billion while the highest was collected in the month of March which was N3.7 billion.

According to an impeccable source, some of the daunting problems that has impeded optimal performance of the NCS is the consistent gross under-funding which it has suffered over the years.

To this end, the federal executive council has approved the cost of collection approach to funding the NCS with effect from this year.

Manny Bank gets new MD

Many Bank Plc board of directors has named Mr. Theo Chika Ohiagu as its new managing director/chief executive officer, the new MD is expected to manage among other things, the banks consolidation effort which is already in progress

It would be recalled that Manny Bank Plc is among the four banks, (the others being First Atlantic Bank Plc), Assurance Bank Ltd and Guardian Express Bank Plc which late last year, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the purpose of merging to form a new bank, Astra Bank Plc.

On the other hand, investors in the capital-market seem Tuesday, to be reacting to the ongoing transformations in the bank as 1.8 million shares of the bank valued at N2.3 million exchanged hands on the floor of the exchange in 31 deals.

This resulted to the fact that the bank's shares which opened on the day in review, at N1.18k, closed at N1.23k resulting in a gain of N0.05k that day.

Mr. Ohiagu the new MD

of the bank, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics/Business Administration and political science from Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri USA and a master degree in Business administration from Northwest Missouri State University.

According to a release from the bank, the new helmsman began his banking career at First National Bank, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA (1977-1979) where he served as credit analyst and internal auditor before returning to Nigeria.

The statement said that since his return, he has worked in and outside the banking industry serving at ICOM Ltd (Merchant Bankers), Ivory Merchant Bank Ltd, Commercial Bank (credit Lyonnais Ltd), ACB International Bank and Centre Point Bank Plc etc.

His last point of call after serving in top executive positions of the above named banks was as an adviser to the Rivers State Administrator on Revenue Generation/Mobilisation and later the managing partner-Thornet Limited, a financial service/consultancy firm.

Senator charges accountants on ethical standards

Senator Haruna Garba, a senator representing Gombe north senatorial district has advised accountants in the country to maintain ethical standards and avoid being used as tools, by public officials, to siphon public funds.

In a press statement signed by the senator, who is also an accountant, he urged accountants to regularly advise their bosses not to loot public treasuries.

"A situation where we hear of monies are being siphoned to private coffers of individuals must be stopped. I don't believe accountants can vindicate themselves from these messy deals," he said.

The senator added that he could not understand why the public only blames "the bosses" for financial crimes committed and "keeping quiet on the complicity of professional accountants in allowing their bosses to siphon public/private funds."

According to him, it is not possible for someone to "siphoned even N1 million with-

out the accountant facilitating that."

He emphasised the right of Nigerians to know how public money is diverted into private accounts and called for the urgent need for it to stop.

Investors scramble for IMB Bank's shares

Transactions on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) Monday saw the IMB International Bank Plc's shares topping the charts in turnover column as 11.2 million of the bank's shares exchanged hands in 46 deals worth N7.7m.

The development made some analysts whom *Business Trust* sought their comments to conclude that new big time investors maybe buying into the bank which has close ties with African Petroleum Plc.

IMB's performance was over 40 percent of the entire turnover volume of the banking sector which stood at 31.38 million and N182.72 million in turnover value.

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc and First Bank of Nigeria Plc

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

however led the sector in terms of turnover value at N54.03 million and N48.35 million respectively.

Following the banking sector was the Conglomerates Sector with 1.8 million shares in turnover volume worth N20.57 million while the Petroleum (marketing) sector was second to the banking sector in terms of turnover value, haven traded 763,539 worth N74.05 million in 527 deals.

On the whole, 41.7 million shares was traded on the first day of this week on the floor of the exchange worth N410.7 million in 4,031 deals.

Top gainers in the period in review include Total Plc. Its share price opened at

N187 and closed at N183 (N5) others include Guinness Plc (N4.49), Cadbury (56k) SK Beechem (41k) 7Up (35k), Presco (32k) and DN Meyer (23k) etc.

Top losers include Nigeria Breweries (78k) Conoil (50k), CCNN (36k), CFAO (30k), UAC Prop (19k) Niger Ins (18k) etc.

Meanwhile Guaranty Trust Bank Plc which shares had been in technical suspension as a result of the merger bid between it and Inland Bank Nigeria Plc has since resumed activity and the share price Monday moved upwards to stand at N12 per share.

Activity in the shares of GTB saw total of 2.7 million of the bank shares exchanging hands valued at N32.69 million.

Business Trust

International

Russia reveals China's role in Yukos' split up

Russian authorities have disclosed that China lent Russia \$6bn (£3.2bn) to help the Russian government re-nationalise the key Yuganskneftegas unit of oil group Yukos.

The Kremlin said on Tuesday that the \$6b which Russian state bank VEB lent state-owned Rosneft to help buy Yugansk in turn came from Chinese banks.

The revelation came as the Russian government said Rosneft had signed a long-

term oil supply deal with China.

The deal sees Rosneft receive \$6bn in credits from China's CNPC.

According to Russian newspaper Vedomosti, these credits would be used to pay off the loans Rosneft obtained to finance the purchase of Yugansk.

Reports said CNPC had been offered 20% of Yugansk in return for providing finance but the company opted for a long-term oil supply deal instead.

Analysts said one factor that might have influenced the Chinese decision was the possibility of litigation from Yukos, Yugansk's former owner, if CNPC had become a shareholder.

Rosneft and VEB declined to comment.

"The two companies (Rosneft and CNPC) have agreed on the pre-payment for long-term deliveries," said Russian oil official Sergei Oganessian.

"There is nothing unusual that the pre-payment is for five to six years."

The announcements help to explain how Rosneft, a medium-sized, indebted, and relatively unknown firm, was able to finance its surprise purchase of Yugansk.

Yugansk was sold for \$9.3bn in an auction last year to help Yukos pay off part of a \$27bn bill in unpaid taxes and fines.



The vice president African region of World Bank, Mr. Gobind Nankani (right) and his wife Helen Nankani (middle) with Hafez Ghanem, the country director of the World Bank in Nigeria (l), during their courtesy visit to President Obasanjo at the state House, Abuja ...late last year.

Pix: Joe Oroye

Advertising revenue

boosts Google

Google has thanked strong advertising revenues over the Christmas period for a seven-fold rise in quarterly profits.

The world's most popular internet search engine achieved net profits of \$204.1m (£108m) in the three months to 31 December.

Way ahead of market expectations, this compares to the \$27.3m profits the company made a year earlier.

Total fourth quarter turnover jumped to \$1.03bn from \$512.2m, again beating analysts' estimates.

When Google first floated back in August, its shares debuted at \$85.

"Revenue is well ahead of anybody's expectations," said Barry Randall, portfolio manager at First American Technology Fund.

Founded in California just six and a half years ago, Google has firmly established itself as the market-leading internet search engine.

Building on a very easy to use and efficient search facility, a wide range of businesses now bid for the right to have their text-based advertisements displayed alongside Google's search results.

For the whole of 2004, Google earned profits of \$399.1m from a turnover of \$3.19bn.

In 2003, the company earned \$105.6m, or 41 cents per share, on revenue of \$1.47bn.

In the US Google currently has a 34.7% share of the internet search engine usage, according to research by comScore Networks.

It is followed by Yahoo! with 31.9% and Microsoft's MSN on 16.4%.

Microsoft is working hard to increase its share and catch up with Google.

Hours before Google's quarterly results, Microsoft unveiled the finished version of its new home-grown MSN search engine.

The revamped engine indexes more pages than before, can give direct answers to factual questions, and features tools to help people create detailed queries.

G7 meeting focuses on China's economy

A key focus of the upcoming G7 meeting in London will be invited guest, China, with finance ministers eager to hear how Beijing plans to solve some of the nagging doubts about its economy.

China, the newest economic powerhouse, is a rising force that some analysts predict will overtake Japan, the European Union and even the United States within two decades.

The world's most populous country has averaged stunning 9.4 percent growth from 1979 to 2003, helping lift more than 400 million Chinese out of poverty as market-based reforms have driven its formidable transforma-

tion.

After notching up 9.5 percent growth last year, up from a revised 9.3 percent in 2003, China's economic czars again face the somewhat enviable problem of making sure the 1.65-trillion-dollar economy does not grow too fast.

Last year, China managed to allay some of the serious concerns about its economy overheating as it reined in easy credit that was fuelling a production boom and causing prices to rise.

The Group of Seven's invitation to meetings in London Friday and Saturday reflect China's growing economic clout but also concerns about how it will further integrate an economy that is still protected by the state.

Central to the debate is China's currency.

The yuan has been fixed since 1994 at around 8.28 to the dollar after a devaluation of about 50 percent that year, a move which in no small part fuelled the astonishing export-led growth of the country.

It has also increasingly aggrieved its trade partners, especially the United States, who argue that the yuan is now being kept artificially low to make exports cheaper and imports more expensive.

The United States record 148 billion dollars trade deficit with China in January to November last year has only lent weight to Washington's argument.

European bank to keep interest rates on hold this week

Although the US Federal Reserve looks set to raise its key interest rates this week for the sixth time in a row, the European Central Bank (ECB) is expected to hold its rates steady until much later this year, ECB watchers said.

In a survey of 30 economists by AFP and its financial news subsidiary AFX, all 30 said they were

betting on the ECB holding eurozone borrowing costs steady when its decision-making governing council convenes for its regular monthly meeting on Thursday.

The widening interest-rate gap on either side of the Atlantic reflects the deepening growth differential — the US Fed is expected to tighten rates by a further quarter point to 2.50 percent to rein-in inflation as the

US economy continues to grow steadily.

But the euro bank is expected to leave rates unchanged at 2.0 percent, where they have been since June 2003, amid only at best mixed economic data for the single currency region.

A member of the guardian of the euro's governing council, Banque de France chief Christian Noyer, said in a radio interview last week:

"We currently consider that interest rates are at an appropriate level, at a good level."

ECB watchers believe eurozone rates are likely to remain where they are until much later this year.

"The ECB will have to raise rates in the medium term to preserve its credibility and nip inflation expectations in the bud. But it will wait until the recovery is stronger and confidence is more stable" before doing so, said Commerzbank economist Michael Schubert.

The EU Commission itself said this week that area-wide business confidence was currently still being undermined by economic uncertainties and high oil prices.

Economic sentiment in the 12-country eurozone edged up by a meagre 0.4 points to 100.6 points in January, falling short of analysts' expectations.

Higher interest rates in the US could help support the dollar, since investors would get a bigger return on their money than in euro-denominated assets. And that, in turn, could ease some of the problems facing eurozone exporters.



A caption from the Annual General Meeting (AGM), of Astralajica Nigeria Ltd. held on the 15th of December 2004. From Left: Mr. Chris Mbagwu (general manager), Gregory Enahoro (managing director) and Mrs Bukola Enahoro (finance director)

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	1	2.83	408	1,154.64
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.78	300	234.00
THE OKOMO OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	14	16.98	67,998	1,135,376.28
PRESKO PLC.	7	10.50	21,000	220,500.00
Sector Totals	23		89,706	1,357,264.92
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	18	2.07	295,430	597,936.70
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	4	7.22	18,712	135,100.64
Sector Totals	22		314,142	733,037.34
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	4	3.42	30,008	102,627.36
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	21	6.63	79,306	525,798.78
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	5	3.41	7,800	26,598.00
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	22,400	87,360.00
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	2	1.92	295	566.40
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	5,000	11,300.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	389	24.49	1,398,847	33,187,144.97
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	30	1.56	216,591	339,030.91
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	274	11.60	2,311,273	27,376,772.26
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	15	0.66	1,171,600	775,223.41
HALLMARK BANK PLC	1	1.86	40,000	74,400.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	40	0.64	2,950,896	1,902,370.53
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	23	1.33	1,403,600	1,879,089.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	8	7.81	1,398,160	10,919,629.60
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	15	0.75	101,333	75,999.75
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	43	1.29	2,753,667	3,546,230.43
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	7,100	19,880.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	8	6.30	293,018	1,846,013.40
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	20	1.28	2,889,297	3,698,300.16
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	36	7.41	609,641	4,517,439.81
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	6	1.78	464,097	826,202.66
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	73	10.00	2,874,112	28,741,120.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	326	20.06	1,326,073	26,526,961.63
WEMA BANK PLC.	8	3.93	79,889	313,963.77
ZENITH BANK PLC	106	14.17	1,064,517	15,084,205.89
Sector Totals	1,458		23,498,520	162,404,228.72
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	171	101.80	219,461	22,302,831.57
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	1	0.90	600	540.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	439	33.50	1,260,062	42,853,947.27
Sector Totals	611		1,480,123	65,157,318.84
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	56	24.00	173,090	4,150,648.48
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	3	4.73	25,067	118,481.11
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	16	7.20	221,387	1,595,852.57
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	29	11.02	103,497	1,144,929.70
Sector Totals	104		523,041	7,009,911.56
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	19	5.15	117,874	617,442.78
CAP PLC.	5	6.65	37,016	248,706.45
D. N. MEYER PLC.	9	5.25	22,142	115,358.45
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	3	3.70	10,697	41,378.90
Sector Totals	36		187,729	1,022,886.58
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	9	1.31	27,996	36,674.76
THOMAS WYATT NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.38	50	19.00
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	1	0.87	3,000	2,730.00
Sector Totals	11		31,046	39,423.76
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	8	1.20	300,349	366,158.91
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	2	5.86	10,624	59,356.64
JOHN HOLT PLC.	11	0.95	39,489	38,368.55
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	158	16.50	1,250,855	20,762,287.17
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	86	13.60	663,562	8,996,282.55
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	1	1.19	800	952.00
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	64	14.17	251,454	3,563,103.18
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	4	1.18	22,468	26,986.64
Sector Totals	334		2,539,601	33,813,495.64
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	1	0.90	675	607.50
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	12	14.62	102,500	1,502,029.60
Sector Totals	13		103,175	1,502,637.10
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	11	0.85	90,500	76,909.00
Sector Totals	11		90,500	76,909.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	30	24.00	111,090	2,665,158.65
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	172	57.00	329,821	19,400,202.35
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	31	16.61	92,146	1,530,545.06
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	54	53.75	196,854	10,632,324.32
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	59	146.51	57,498	8,441,782.25
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	1	15.03	262	3,937.86
Sector Totals	347		787,671	42,673,950.49
FOOTWEAR				
FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES MAN. PLC.	1	0.35	5,000	1,750.00
Sector Totals	1		5,000	1,750.00
HEALTHCARE				
ABOSELDEHYDE LABS. PLC.	1	0.62	1,000	620.00
CHRISTLIEB PLC.	1	0.52	2,332	1,212.64
EKOCORP PLC.	1	1.04	16,000	16,640.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	14	3.30	319,591	1,071,213.71
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	8	5.68	61,103	346,230.04
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	16	3.46	149,584	496,996.51
PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	1	4.70	1,500	7,050.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	20	8.80	97,761	852,365.18
Sector Totals	62		648,871	2,792,328.08
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	8	1.06	172,300	174,173.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	5	2.98	25,613	73,440.92
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	30	3.59	763,660	2,727,598.16
Sector Totals	43		961,573	2,975,212.08
INSURANCE				
AIIICO INSURANCE PLC.	9	2.06	156,334	319,733.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	16	1.02	903,100	914,162.00
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	2	1.38	100,000	138,000.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	10	1.90	214,185	428,598.81
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	4	3.13	16,250	50,862.50
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	5	1.97	189,478	373,271.66
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	7	4.03	43,126	173,302.12
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	1	1.67	2,000	3,340.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	12	1.03	369,305	376,300.04
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	2	2.86	4,000	11,440.00
Sector Totals	68		1,997,778	2,789,010.13
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	8	1.61	136,240	219,921.12
NIGERIAN ENERGY SECTOR FUND	1	889.00	45	40,005.00
Sector Totals	9		136,285	259,926.12
PACKAGING				
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	2	1.16	15,000	16,800.00
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	1	1.29	2,986	3,851.94
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	1	4.70	1,000	4,700.00
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	4	0.74	77,205	57,131.70
VAN LEER CONTAINERS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	2.29	1,246	2,853.34
Sector Totals	9		97,437	85,336.98
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	13	0.81	666,590	539,937.90
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	123	66.40	225,663	15,063,276.68
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	18	2.04	305,603	623,430.12
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	63	180.05	109,681	19,998,241.09
CONOIL PLC.	54	123.99	33,093	4,102,186.73
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	32	162.00	16,491	2,660,425.70
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	39	179.00	105,696	18,950,203.04
OANDO PLC.	157	93.60	128,458	12,072,442.60
Sector Totals	499		1,591,275	74,010,143.86
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	1	2.22	576	1,278.72
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	1	1.80	8,000	14,400.00
Sector Totals	2		8,576	15,678.72
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	29	8.60	476,536	4,232,799.10
Sector Totals	29		476,536	4,232,799.10
TEXTILES				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.46	20,000	9,200.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	11	2.73	74,476	202,903.08
Sector Totals	12		94,476	212,103.08

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
NB	1,260,062.00	42,853,947.27	439
UBN	1,326,073.00	26,526,961.63	326
INTERCONT	1,398,160.00	10,919,629.60	8
FIRSTBANK	1,398,847.00	33,187,144.97	389
INLANDBANK	1,403,600.00	1,879,089.00	23
GUARANTY	2,311,273.00	27,376,772.26	274
MANNYBANK	2,753,667.00	3,546,230.43	43
UBA	2,874,112.00	28,741,120.00	73
OWENABANK	2,889,297.00	3,698,300.16	20
IMB	2,950,896.00	1,902,370.53	40

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	143.00	146.51	+3.51
TEXACO	160.10	162.00	+1.90
FIRSTBANK	23.60	24.49	+0.89
NBC	53.00	53.75	+0.75
PZ	13.15	13.60	+0.45
GUINNESS	101.51	101.80	+0.29
DNMEYER	5.00	5.25	+0.25
BCC	4.51	4.73	+0.22
ROYALEX	3.84	4.03	+0.19
VITAFOAM	3.42	3.59	+0.17

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	182.00	179.00	-3.00
CADBURY	58.99	57.00	-1.99
MOBIL	182.00	180.05	-1.95
UNIPETROL	95.01	93.60	-1.41
NB	34.30	33.50	-0.80
ZENITHBANK	14.91	14.17	-0.74
AP	67.00	66.40	-0.60
LEVBROS	17.00	16.50	-0.50
GUARANTY	11.98	11.60	-0.38
CAP	7.00	6.65	-0.35

Oil prices drop below \$47

Oil prices slipped below \$47 a barrel yesterday, well off recent peaks as traders braced for another increase in US crude oil inventories. U.S. light crude was down 21 cents at \$46.91 a barrel, deepening Tuesday's more than \$1 drop. Prices have retreated swiftly from last week's high near \$50, but have not broken free of the \$46-\$50 range for nearly three weeks. London Brent crude dropped 28 cents to \$44.54 a barrel.

Relief over OPEC's decision at the weekend to maintain current production levels has been tempered by the possibility that the cartel could still act swiftly to cut production ahead of the second quarter, when winter demand ebbs, traders said.

Forecasts for a fourth consecutive build in this week's U.S. crude oil inventories — already sitting 9 percent higher than a year ago — added weight to the bearish bias.

"The oil complex has consolidated ahead of Wednesday's inventory data, which we expect to likely spark additional profit-taking if the crude build is as substantial as expected," said brokers Refco in a report.

According to a Reuters survey of analysts, U.S. crude inventories rose 1.5 million barrels in the week to Jan. 28 as imports flooded in and refiners slowed rates for maintenance work.

The US Department of Energy releases its data at 10:30 a.m. EST.

Analysts also forecast U.S. distillate stocks, which include heating oil and diesel, to fall by 2.4 million barrels after a cold snap hit the Northeast region, the

Career opportunities for lawyers in the oil and gas industry?



Our client, a leading oil and gas industry player desires to employ seasoned lawyers with corporate and commercial law experience into middle and senior level positions.

The successful candidates must have extensive knowledge of local and international oil and gas industry law and regulations as well as an understanding of environmental and land statutes.

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(Reference No: MI01):

- Must have a minimum 5 years post call legal experience.

Candidates applying for the position of Senior level experience lawyer

(Reference No: SL01):

- Must have a minimum 15 years post call legal experience.

Method of Application

Interested applicants should send a detailed Curriculum Vitae containing the following details in this order:

- Full names
- State of Origin
- Contact address with street numbers (not postal address)
- Daytime telephone or mobile phone number
- E-mail address
- Date of birth/age
- Institutions attended and

qualifications obtained (must include class of degree) with dates, starting with the most recent

- Professional qualifications
- Detailed work experience

Applications should be addressed to:

The Recruitment Manager,
PMB 80085,
Victoria Island,
Lagos,
Nigeria

All applications should reach the above addresses NOT LATER THAN 3rd March, 2005. The reference number MUST be quoted on the envelope.



Federal Republic of Nigeria
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PRIVATISATION
 Secretariat: Bureau of Public Enterprises

PRIVATISATION OF KADUNA REFINING AND PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY
SELECTION OF PRIVATISATION ADVISERS

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), wishes to engage advisers to assist Nigeria's National Council on Privatisation (NCP) for the privatisation of one of the Nation's Petroleum Refineries:

Kaduna Refining and Petrochemicals Company Limited (KRPC): The refinery is located in Kaduna was commissioned in 1980 to supply petroleum products to Northern Nigeria with a capacity of 50,000 B/D. In 1983, the capacity was expanded to 100,000 B/D by adding a second 50,000 B/D crude train dedicated to the production of lubricating oils (lubes). In 1986, the capacity of the first crude train was expanded to 60,000 B/D. The expansions have increased the current nameplate capacity of the refinery to 110,000 B/D.

The scope of work for the selected advisers, to be led by an investment Bank shall include:

- I. Familiarisation with state of sector policy implementation and elaborate analysis of KRPC in areas of: (a) engineering/technical assessment, (b) financial assessment (c) assessment of marketing, human resources and corporate governance.
- II. Assessment of Investor's interest.
- III. Review and development of sales strategy
- IV. Legal services related to preparation and facilitation of transactions.
- V. Preparation of bidding documents and sales prospectus.
- VI. Assisting the NCP in the bidding process (bidding structure, pre-qualification, due diligence, shortlist, negotiation and conclusion of the transaction).

Submission for Expression of Interest

The NCP now invites eligible advisers to indicate their interest in providing the above-mentioned services. The advisers required must be in a consortium led by an investment/financial advisor, which must include firms with competencies covering the additional range of services contained in the scope of work above. These may include the following:

- Investment Bank (Lead Adviser)
- Legal Adviser
- Accounting Adviser
- Technical/Engineering Adviser
- Environmental Adviser

Expressions of Interest from prospective advisers should specify the following minimum information as basis for qualification.

- Evidence of track record in similar assignments carried out Worldwide and especially in developing Countries and Africa in the past five years including role of firm (if in a joint venture) description of outcome and references of officials in assignments cited.
- Indication of the availability of appropriate skills among staff.
- Adequacy of overall approach to the assignment.
- Details of consortium members and a letter from each member confirming their participation in the Consortium.

The selection and contracting of the advisory firm or consortia will be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers. January 1997 (revised September 1997 and January 1999).

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in six (6) copies (one original and five copies) in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Expression of Interest: Privatisation of Warri Refinery" and delivered not later than 1700 hours Nigerian time (1600 GMT) on Friday 18th March 2005 to the address below.

Dr. Julius J. Bala
 Director General, Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE)
 Member/Secretary, National Council on Privatisation
 Hamza Zayyad House, 1, Osun Crescent, Off IBB Way
 Maitama District, Abuja FCT, Nigeria
 Tel: 234-9-4134670, 4134656, 4134636 - 46
 Fax: 234-9-4134671 - 2
 E-mail: jbala@bpeno.org
Attention: Director (Project Team A)

Late Submissions will be rejected

Interested firms may obtain further information at the address above from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday through Friday (except public holidays) or send an e-mail to:

Email: ggofwan@bpeno.org
Email: hussman@bpeno.org

Recalling moments at the Maiduguri pr

From Isa Umar Gusau
Correspondent (Maiduguri)

Perhaps, the late radical musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, would have in his own manner described the situation as "suffering and smiling." The description would have fallen short of portraying the situation at the Maiduguri pre-hajj camp. Apty described, it was jubilation in agony for the over 3000 intending pilgrims.

Moments that characterised the situation of the intending pilgrims airlifted from the Maiduguri airport to Saudi Arabia for the just concluded 2005 hajj were definitely much more serious than Fela's own description of Nigerians' situation: "suffering and smiling." They slept in the cold and dusty weather far away from their homes, families and relations. They struggled amidst joy to fulfil their desire to perform the hajj as a pillar of the Islamic religion. They, therefore, seemed ready for all moments.

The moments indeed began with a harsh atmosphere which was, though, avoidable. Rather than gathering them at the already well developed befitting hajj camp with hostel accommodation, water, electricity and hajj lecture opportunities used in the past, the 3119 pilgrims were made to converge at a transit camp situated around the Maiduguri International Airport. "Last year we had cases of illnesses that arose from pilgrims being exposed to cold weather. So this time, we would not expose our pilgrims to this cold weather, but in hostels," the executive



Intending pilgrims going about their business in a normal day at the camp

secretary, Borno State Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Kalli Imam, assured prior to the commencement of the hajj exercise.

But that assurance was not fulfilled as the pilgrims were gathered at the transit camp in Maiduguri International Airport where they sojourned for two to three weeks as they waited for their air lift. They were in groups.

One of the groups was comprised those who came from local government areas located far from Maiduguri. They were farmers, craftsmen or businessmen. They seemed illiterate. Many of them had no powerful relations who could

penetrate the hajj travelling processes, beginning from obtaining travelling documents, getting screened and boarding the limited available aircrafts most of which airlifted the pilgrims at intervals of 40 hours between two airlifts.

These pilgrims sat behind their luggages in the cold weather. The few canopies provided by the pilgrims welfare agency could not adequately shelter them. They endured all hardships and often engaged in group discussions to while away the time. When it was time, they hastened for prayers, seeking God's intervention in their suf-

fering. Whenever any aircraft was expected, screenings would suddenly commence. At one of such moments some officials from the pilgrims welfare board made a roll call of the intending pilgrims from the register compiled according to the time of arrival of each intending pilgrim at the camp. "Kabir Ibrahim" a pilgrims name was called.

One of Kabiru's relations jumped in jubilation and hugged him. That signalled the beginning of his journey to Saudi Arabia. All other pilgrims listened curiously, praying in their minds not to be left behind. Whenever a name was

called, some of them would hold their chest as they keenly looked at the lucky pilgrim who walked with excitement towards the screening hall.

The other category of pilgrims constituted the elites, who had their ways of scaling through the entire process. They did not have to sleep on the bare ground, because they had their vehicles or those of relations and friends who spent time with them at the camp. So their cars became their homes. They slept inside as they raised the glass to shield them from the cold weather. In the morning they rushed for prayers, then break-

fast after brushing their teeth. All the intending pilgrims seldom took bath although there was abundant water, perhaps due to the cold harsh and of comfortable bath rooms. Those of them who had their bath, were recipients of campaign materials as bathing soap packaged in sachets bearing the pictures of the state governor and the secretary of the state's pilgrims welfare office. The package carried farewell messages to the pilgrims.

The other category of the pilgrims, was made up of those "connected" or related to the powers that be. They did not only enjoyed routine activities such as bathing in their homes, they had comfortable night rest. They were wives or relations of commissioners, permanent secretaries, legislators or top politicians.

As they stayed at home their travelling documents were screened, and boarding pass collected on their behalf. They were briefed occasionally on phone, and finally called for boarding on the arrival of aircraft. For some of them who could not afford to remain at home, their names were whispered to those announcing names via the public address system, or written on a piece of paper and attached to the list of the registered names. So they had their names mentioned with ease as they emerged from the crowd and gaily walked in for screening.

The situation seemed unbearable for other pilgrims. On Wednesday 12th of January, the pilgrims went wild at about 5.00pm. They blocked the entrance into the screening hall



Intending pilgrims in a queue to board the air of the contingency aircraft contracted from Trans Air Ltd.



Intending pilgrims struggling to be screened

re-hajj camp

protest to the favouritism perpetrated by the screening officials. "No body is going inside. How can we be here all days? Some people would not come and have their ways into the hall for screening?" Udu Dam Makari, a protesting pilgrim lamented.

The situation became worse, not even the detachment of soldiers and police could calm the pilgrims, as members of some voluntary organisations engaged in facilitating the hajj operation members watched the situation keenly. This situation compounded the problems for the hajj officials. First, they began to witness delays and failed schedules in the arrival of aircrafts, secondly they had the visit of the National Amirul Hajj re-scheduled three times. Then came the anger by pilgrims. There was not any screening that night since there was no signal about the coming of an aircraft. By midnight, the protesters gave up and left for sleep.

The following day, information about the arrival of the National Amirul hajj, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, brought relief to the pilgrims. During the visit, Senator Mantu assured, no single pilgrim would be left behind. I assure you that we have a contingency arrangement I have given between now and tomorrow to IRS to airlift all its pilgrims, other wise I could make another arrangement," Mantu announced.

There was ovation and cheers from the crowd. The pilgrims had moments of hope. Their dreams of performing the 2005 hajj appeared realised. Then came a traumatising

statement from Mantu, which re-launched the intending pilgrims into rigorous prayers. "Hajj is an act ordained by Allah. It is a call by God. If Allah has wished you to perform this year's hajj, you would do so, if Allah has not wish any of you to perform hajj you cannot," Mantu said. "What is this man saying? May be he knows already that there is poor arrangement, that we cannot all be airlifted. How can you at this moment be talking of God's call or not? The fact that we are here as intending pilgrims confirms that Allah has already called us," an elderly intending pilgrims said aloud, soon after the Senator Mantu had left the scene. •

There were moments of desperation and fear as the date for closure of the King AbdulAzeez International Airport, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, drew closer. The pilgrims waited and they surrounded anyone with any piece of information regarding the hajj.

During all such moments some officials at the airport, pilgrims welfare board, security personnels, some Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and officials of the Nigerian Immigration Service, made brisk business. Desperate pilgrims offered some cash to such officials to have easy access to screening to enable them board aircrafts to the holy land for the hajj exercise.

Public eateries especially where rice, tuwo, kasai bread and tea were sold in and around the camp also made brisk business by raising the cost of meals.

A cup of tea and a sizeable



A Trans Air plane contracted for the intending pilgrims airlift

slice of bread cost between N40 to N50, suya sellers sold sticks at N200.00, while other food sellers sold a plate at N150.00 or above.

Some of the food sellers even secured tents and came in with electronic sets to conveniently occupy their stands at their allocated pavilions.

Some other traders engaged in the sale of items such as sleeping mats, caps for cold weather, kettles with most them increasing the price of their items.

The Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) received N50 as gate fee from each vehicle. The collectors of the money manipulated the situation and started collecting such fee from vehicles conveying pilgrims, their friends or relations who went through

the Maiduguri International Airport gate towards the hajj camp.

Teenagers were not left behind in the business. They assisted the pilgrims in washing their clothes or carrying their luggage towards the aircrafts which boarded passengers about a kilometre away for a pittance. The teenagers lifted the luggages of over 200 pilgrims who were airlifted every day. Especially on Monday 17th January and the preceding day, there were 2 aircrafts with four airlifts, the days were busy, for the teenagers and pilgrims who rushed towards aircrafts in order not to be left behind.

Those final moments were traumatising for the over 500 pilgrims as they despairingly watched the Trans Air Ltd

plane flying away with a batch of their fellow pilgrims and never returned.

Throughout the Monday night through Tuesday morning, not only the pilgrims but even top government officials were in a state of confusion, especially those who constituted the Amirul hajj team. "We all awaited the coming of a 747 Kabo aircraft and a smaller aircraft to airlift the rest of 730 pilgrims, including the state's governor, the Amirul hajj and members of his team" recalled the executive secretary, Borno State Pilgrim Welfare Board, Alhaji Kalli Imamm shortly after the last aircraft had left Maiduguri for Jeddah on Monday.

So, many were left behind comprising the Amirul hajj, the pilgrims welfare secretary, and

even the zonal hajj coordinator. While it was apparently acceptable by the Amirul hajj team among others, the moment was devastating for many pilgrims.

It was a moment when the joy of some intending pilgrims was replaced by despair, a moment when the desire to wear the twin white garment (Ihram) was replaced by the resignation to fate and remaining in normal clothes, a moment when the desire to reunite with friends and relations already in the holy land gave way to grief.

"Would my life be spared to next hajj, or will I have the same opportunity? Only Allah knows" Abdullahi Shehu, one of the disappointed intending pilgrims asked rhetorically and emotionally, as he wept on Tuesday morning.



Waiting pilgrims awaiting their fate



The National Amirul Hajj for the 2005 hajj exercise, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, addressing the intending pilgrims.



IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHITE PAPER ON THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE ALIENATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AS ESTATE SURVEYORS AND VALUERS/CONSULTANTS FOR THE VALUATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY IN LAGOS

The Implementation Committee charged with the responsibility of disposing through sale some selected Federal Government Landed property in Lagos is currently in the process of valuing the affected properties before their disposal. In order to ensure transparency and accountability of the exercise, the Committee hereby invites qualified, experienced and registered Estate Surveyors and Valuers/Consultants to express their interest in the valuation of the properties.

The scope of work is the valuation of Federal Government landed properties in Lagos.

Interested Estate Surveyors and Valuers are requested to supply the following:

- i) Evidence of membership of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers
- ii) Evidence of registration with the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria
- iii) Evidence of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- iv) Evidence of tax payment for the past three years
- v) Evidence of similar jobs executed in the recent past
- vi) Company profile including staff strength, qualifications and experience

Successful applicants will be contacted and will be expected to immediately report to the Committee Secretary for briefing. All applications in five sets should be sealed, marked CONFIDENTIAL, and addressed to:

The Secretary,
Implementation Committee of the White Paper on the Commission of Inquiry into the Alienation of Federal Government Landed Property,
1st Floor, Federal Secretariat Phase 1, (Room 1A 1.30)
Abuja.

All applications must reach the Committee Secretariat on or before 8th February, 2005. Those who applied before this advertorial should resubmit fresh applications in accordance with these guidelines.


Prof. E.T. Ahire
Committee Secretary



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SPECIAL GUESTS AT OPENING CEREMONY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005

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- PRESIDENT, MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA.
- PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, MINES AND AGRICULTURE.
- PRESIDENT, LAGOS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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Science & Education



Prof Abdullahi Mahdi, vice-chancellor, Gombe State University, (right), discussing with Dr. P. B. Madakson, associate technical engineering ABU, at the official visit of the director-general International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Dr Mohammed El-Baradei to the centre for energy research and training Zaria...recently.

US envoy commissions school project

The United States embassy in Nigeria has commissioned Saint Theresa School in Bwari, Abuja, built at a cost of N28 million by the American defence department and donated to the Bwari community.

Counsellor for public affairs in the US, Mrs. Claudia Anyaso who performed the dedication of the school said the project was constructed with a grant of \$200,000 pro-

vided by the office of defence corporation of the US department of defence.

According to her, the school was constructed under the department of defence's combined humanitarian assistance project.

Under this program, she said projects that can be executed include construction or repairs of schools and orphanages, drilling of boreholes and wells, refurbishing medical facilities,

training in refugees repatriation operations and the construction and repairs of public facilities.

"As important as this new school is, it is only a building. Without talent, energy and dedication of the teachers, staff, parents and children, it is a useless structure," Mrs Anyaso said.

She however, expressed the belief that the students and teachers will put the school to excellent use.

Before the construction of the school by the US department of defence, the school had been located in a church hall in Bwari and though land had been acquired for building of the school there were no funds to execute the project.

The \$200,000 US grant therefore, provided the much needed resources to make the construction and completion of the school possible, which will serve the entire Bwari community.

NUC disburses N12bn to varsities

The federal government has released the sum of N12 billion to universities for the completion of abandoned projects and the provision of new infrastructure.

Executive secretary of the National University Commission (NUC), Professor Peter Okebukola who disclosed this said the N12 billion was for capital project in the 2004 budget and the commencement of the learning pilot project.

He said the projects to be executed passed through due process before funds were released for the implementation.

Some of these projects according to the NUC secretary, are the completion of the central library complex and research laboratory at the university of Nigeria, Nsukka, rehabilitation of library theatre, faculty of law, department of biological science, veterinary science, faculties of medicine and engineering and rehabilitation of roads.

Others projects include of education blocks at the university of Jos, as well as the upgrading of access road and car park at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, comple-

tion of administrative and library building complex phase II at the university of Port Harcourt and in other universities.

Professor Okebukola thanked the president, the ministers of finance, education, members of the National Assembly for the high injection of funds into the federal university system since 1999.

LG to employ 100 teachers

The Ngaski local government council Kebbi State has recruited over 100 primary school teachers to beef up the number of teachers in the council area.

Disclosing this to newsmen in his office, the council chairman, Alhaji Tanko Sunupu Ngaski, said the decision became necessary in view of the fact that some newly constructed primary schools had no teachers.

"When we came in we were able to construct additional classrooms in some existing schools, but we real-

ised that there was the need to employ more teachers in such schools," he said.

Alhaji Ngaski, further recalled that the council unanimously agreed to employ the 100 teachers which will mean an additional N2.5m deduction from the councils allocation to pay the newly employed teachers.

He however disclosed that only persons holding the grade II teachers certificate will be employed no matter their state of origin.

Higher Education This Week

By Dr. Isaac N. Obasi, zikobasi@yahoo.com

The hostel privatisation crisis (II)

In the first part of this article, we stated that one of the guiding tenets of this column is that public policies should be evidence-based. Such policies we however contended should reflect the principle of equity. The task therefore of making the hostel privatization policy wear a human face is what we think is the greatest challenge facing policy makers now rather than on the issue of whether there should be a policy shift or not. This column believes that the time for a policy shift in the management of the hostels has come given our historical experience in the mismanagement of the entire Nigerian political economy. But what type of privatization policy are we advocating for and why?

We advocate for a privatization policy that allows for the meantime a two-track policy on the management of the hostels. This would be elaborated in the next part of this series. But let us first of all restate the government policy on the privatization policy of the hostels. When the Honourable Minister of Education Prof. Fabian Osuji met heads of tertiary institutions in October 2004, he was reported as directing 'them to commence the process of handing over the management of their hostels to private estate managers' (see *The Punch*, Tuesday, January 25, 2005 via <http://www.punchng.com/education/article02>). Secondly, he asked them to 'encourage private developers and corporate bodies to build hostels on Build, Operate and Transfer arrangement' (Ibid). We were also told that the Minister gave the institutions December 31, 2004 as the deadline for the commencement of his directive.

This policy as captured briefly here is no doubt ambiguous in terms of what the implication of a privatized hostel policy means with respect to future hostel charges. As it should be naturally expected, the students have interpreted the policy as going to leave them at the mercy of private entrepreneurs who would eventually hike the fees out of the reach of many students. The Honourable Minister of Education has however said that the 'government has not directed the Vice Chancellors to handover the hostels to private estate managers in any indiscriminate manner' but should rather 'commence intense consultations with all stakeholders (including but not restricted to students, parents, alumni) with a view to designing modalities for the effective management of the hostels' which he rightly pointed out 'have for sometime been the most unsanitary parts of campuses and breeding grounds for many trouble makers' (see <http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=7855>). Even though this clarification came after the University of Lagos violent resistance, it is not likely to reduce the expected resistance to the policy. We should therefore expect that the resistance to this policy would still spread beyond the Universities of Lagos and Ibadan. It is this scenario that should guide further official initiatives and actions. But this anticipated resistance should not stop this opportunity for a policy shift. However, we advocate for a particular strand of privatization policy that should allay students' worst fears of impending exploitation by private estate managers who are in the first instance in business to make profit.

The students' fears are therefore legitimate but still the present way in which the hostels are managed is unacceptable as well as unsustainable. Apart from the filthy, un-habitable and as a result, the inhuman nature of the hostels presently, they are characterized by high level of price distortions as well as corruption. Only recently, one Dean of Students' Affairs in a first generation university, was unceremoniously removed from office partly on account of such corruption in hostel accommodation. The evidence is there that the prices paid for the hostels are highly abused and eventually distorted. Few students end up gaining from it while the actual ones that should

benefit from the present price level are schemed out through official designs riddled with corruption. Our study established this fact. And unfortunately students' union leaders and students' hall government officials are part of the mess in the reselling business of the accommodation slots. Right in my presence at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka some years back, students' hall government officials already accommodated were being 'allocated' rooms at the official rate which they turned around to resell to desperate students at cut-throat prices that may appear to be worse than the expected price by the private estate managers. Yet these students' leaders are the ones in the forefront of resistance to either the commercialization or privatization policy meant to provide decent living environment.

How then do we address the genuine fears of students that they are going to be left at the mercy of future exploitative private entrepreneurs? First a guiding principle should be identified. When a controversial policy of this nature is to be introduced, there should be measures on ground to address the problem of equity, manage and reduce shocks brought about by an increase in hostel fees and ultimately achieve a peaceful transition from the status quo to the new desired state. An incremental policy framework should provide a guide in this particular case than a rational comprehensive method that out-rightly proceeds on the ground that the rationale is enough evidence that the policy should be implemented. This is partly what we earlier meant by tampering the evidence-based character of a policy with the principle of equity. We shall elaborate on these in the next part of this article and then provide justifications as to why our personal experience in the management of the entire political economy of Nigeria provides the basis for our ideological shift on hostel management and the wider cost sharing issue in higher education within the broader context of genuine autonomy of the institutions.

Mourning Notes on Our Mother Mrs. Fidelia Nwaoluoma Obasi

With special thanks to the Almighty God, I humbly wish to inform readers of this column of the graceful death of my beloved mother Mrs. Fidelia N. Obasi. She died on Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at the age of 78 years in our hometown Ezuhu Nguru, in Aboh Mbaise LGA of Imo State.

She would mostly be remembered for her immense sacrifice and contributions towards the education of members of her husband's family at a time when it was a rare privilege to send someone to the secondary school. Her life is an instructive and eloquent testimony of the benefits associated with the practice of the extended family system.

Mrs. Obasi (Nee Emeneogu of Obeama Nguru in Nguru-Nwenkwo area) would be buried on Friday, February 11, 2005 after a church service at St. Charles Catholic Church, Ezuhu Nguru. She is survived by other children, daughters-in-law, many grand-children and relations, among who are Mr. Tony Obasi (based in Owerri), Mr. Emma Obasi (Aba), Rev. Fr. Longy Obasi (Chicago, USA), Mr. Steve Obasi (Aboh-Mbaise), Mrs. Theresa Nwaru (Ezinnihitte Mbaise) and Mr. Philip Obasi of the Voice of Nigeria, Lagos. May her gentle soul rest in perfect peace - Amen.

Dr. Obasi writes from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Southern Africa.

Science & Education

Islamic college to commence degree programme

The Justice Fati Abubakar College of Arts and Islamic Legal Studies, Minna, will

Open University organises media workshop

From Adelanwa Bamgboye
(Correspondent Lagos)

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has organised an orientation workshop on video and audio script writing for open and distance learning for its staff.

The workshop, according to a release by the university's chief image-maker, will begin Tuesday, and would last a week with 51 participants drawn from all departments of the university.

An international expert in television and radio production for education programmes, Dr. Jai Chandiram formerly of the Commonwealth of Learning, is to lead the team of experts from Canada to the workshop.

Participants at the end of the workshop would be expected to be able to select ideas, conduct research, develop objectives, write media briefs and develop a script.

The workshop was also structured to identify the teaching functions of various mass media, strength and weakness of the television medium for learning, amongst other learning centres.

soon commence the award of degree certificates.

Speaking to reporters in Minna, the Provost of the college, Alhaji Abubakar Dauda, said arrangements had reached advanced stage with the authorities of Bayero University, Kano, to start the programme.

He disclosed that the institution was recently given a face-lift, during which water, electricity and other infrastructure were provided.

Alhaji Dauda said the facilities have been aided by the intervention of the Education Tax Fund which also funded the expansion of lecture halls.

These facilities, the provost declared, have motivated Bayero University authorities to endorse the affiliation of the institution.

According to the provost, when the degree programmes finally begins, courses like Hausa and Arabic, Sharia and common law as well as sandwich courses would be taught.

He said since the establishment of the college, there has been no case of cultism as high standard of discipline is observed.



The minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji (r) in a warm handshake with the executive secretary NUC, Professor Peter Okebuola (l) during the presentation ceremony of licences to private universities held in Abuja, recently.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

Japan to rebuild destroyed schools in Plateau

From Jibril Daudu,
(Regional Editor Jos)

Japanese International Corporate Agency (JICA) has come to the assistance of the Plateau State government to reconstruct some primary and secondary schools destroyed during the ethno-religious crises in the state.

In a partnership venture, JICA will construct 147 classrooms in 14 local government areas of the state for primary school children under a JICA, UBE

and SPEMB joint venture programme.

In addition, the Japanese government will construct three classroom blocks each in 26 schools across the state, totalling 78 blocks.

A representative of the Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Mizotani, who disclosed the arrangement during a courtesy call on the Governor Chief Joshua

Dariye yesterday in Jos, pleaded with the state government to fulfil its own part of the agreement to enable the project to progress as planned.

Governor Dariye pledged the cooperation of the state government in fulfilling its own part of the counterpart funding, and hailed JICA for its long standing relationship with the Nigeria government since the return of democracy in 1999.

He lauded the Japanese government for its interest in Nigeria and Plateau State in particular, saying such interest would go a long way in cementing the relationship between the two countries.

Dariye assured that the state had put the unfortunate experience of the sectarian crises behind, and is now striving to forge ahead because, according to him, the joy of democracy is the immediate dividend.

Kwara distributes N26.2m education materials

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo
Correspondent Ilorin

The Kwara State Governor, Bukola Saraki, has distributed instructional materials worth N26.2 million to 120 secondary schools in

the state.

Speaking at the event, the governor said the materials were procured to aid teaching

and learning.

Governor Saraki, who was represented by the head of service, Alhaji Daibu Kawu, disclosed that the government intends to renovate 432 additional classrooms, and build 141 new ones with a view to meeting the target of 45 students per class room by 2007.

"In line with that target, efforts are in top gear to infuse more teachers into the system through the re-introduction of the rural voluntary teaching scheme," the governor added, and urged schools that received the instructional materials to ensure their proper maintenance.

Governor Saraki said as part of efforts to improve the school environment and create a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere, government last year renovated 464 dilapidated classrooms and built 15 new ones in secondary schools across the state, while science equipment were distributed to 30 secondary schools, and

other instructional materials to 60 schools.

In his address, the state's commissioner for education, Alhaji Saka Akanbi Isemi, charged the recipients of the materials to collectively shun hooliganism, cheating,

examination malpractices, cultism and other social ills.

He disclosed that besides the materials purchased by the state government, the ETF books for 2001 and 2002 would also be distributed to the benefiting schools.

Gov Akume bags honorary degree

The Senate of the University of Jos has nominated the Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume, for an award of an honorary doctorate degree of the university, which will be conferred on him on February 12, 2005.

In the letter of the award signed by the vice-chancellor of the university, Prof. Monday Mangwat, the Senate said it unanimously recommended Governor Akume's award to the minister of education who subsequently approved the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Letters Honoris causa on the governor.

Prof. Mangwat stated that in arriving at the decision, the Senate and the honourable minister took into

consideration Governor Akume's past and current services to the nation in various capacities.

He said they took cognisance of his contributions to the development of education in general, but particularly university education, which earned him the position of the best visitor of all state universities in Nigeria.

The vice-chancellor said the degree will be conferred on the governor during the forthcoming combined convocation ceremony scheduled for February 11 and 12, 2005 at the institution.

Born on December 27, 1953, Governor Akume holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and Masters in Industrial Relations from the University of Ibadan

Asagba decries secret cult menace in varsities

The chancellor, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, the Asagba of Asaba, Obi (Professor) Joseph Chike Edozien has decried the menace of secret cults and student restiveness in Nigeria's university campuses, just as the Ogun State Governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel advised students in the university to eschew all anti-social behaviour.

The duo of Asagba of Asaba and Ogun State governor, stated this respectively at the 12th convocation ceremony of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta.

According to him, some of the most prominent negative developments in university campuses today are the

By Kayode Ajibola (Stringer)
Abeokuta

menace of secret cults and students restiveness.

The Asagba of Asaba, was installed as the new chancellor of the university of agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) at the 12th convocation ceremony of the institution to replace the late Oba of Lagos, Oba Adeyinka Oyekan, who died last year.

Prof. Edozien, said the activities of cultist have often resulted in loss of human lives and destruction of property in university campuses. While opining that student restiveness and involvement in cultism, was due to the fact that the students are not fully kept busy with assignments or laboratory/workshop practices.

He said in order to

minimise the incidence of secret cults and students restiveness in our campuses, the various academic departments should endeavour to keep the students busy with academic work.

Prof. Edozien further advised that the nation's universities should on their part, expand their sporting facilities in such a way that the leisure times of students would be fully occupied with sporting activities aimed at taking their mind off criminal tendencies.

While given his response speech of the conferment of the honorary doctorate degree by the university of agriculture, Abeokuta the Ogun State governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel praised the university staff for taking the university to the top.

Science & Education

Ogun teachers threaten strike over unpaid allowances

The Conference of Secondary school tutors of Nigeria (COSST) Ogun state chapter has threatened to embark on strike if the state government fails to pay their outstanding, leave allowances.

This was contained in a communiqué issued at the ending of the Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting of the union and signed by the state president, Mr. Isiaka Yunusa, who said if the government refuses to pay teachers the said allowances secondary school teachers will embark on a week long warning strike starting yesterday.

Mr. Yunusa said the state government should pay outstanding, leave allowances of 2002 and 2004 across board on or before January 31, 2005.

He said should "the state government fail to pay the allowances at the expiration of the one-week sit-down strike, the teachers will then proceed on an indefinite industrial action."

The COSST president who said that teachers will not collect part payment of their allowances, added that henceforth the state government should come out with a definite arrangement for the payment of teachers leave allowances in subsequent years.

According to him "the state government should arrange for a stakeholders

By Kayode Ajibola, Stringer (Abeokuta)

meeting comprising of COSST, school principals, and others, to work out a comprehensive welfare package for teachers.

Mr. Yunusa disclosed that the state officers of the association had met with the state commissioner for education, the state house of assembly, the commissioner for finance and others without any positive action.

He debunked the recent claim of the commissioner

for finance in the state, Mr. Lekan Bello, who four weeks ago went air to inform the public that the leave allowance for secondary school's teachers had been paid.

Meanwhile, the Ogun state commissioner for information and strategy, Mr. Niran Malaolu, has said starting from Monday, the state government will commence the payment of five percent of the leave allowances to teachers in the state. He warned teachers in the state against embarking on strike which he said will not augur well for the education sector in the state.

UNAAB chosen for pilot hostel dev. scheme

The University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) has been selected as one of the few institutions for the pilot project on university hosted development scheme, event as 696 students graduated from the institution recently.

Disclosing this during the 12 convocation ceremony held at the university campus, the vice-chancellor, Prof. Isreal Adu said the university was allocated 10 hostel blocks, with each block comprising of three floors of 35 rooms per floor.

Prof. Adu explained that 12 developers have been appointed by the federal ministry of housing for the university, adding

that they have reported to the university and have taken possession of their respective sites.

The vice-chancellor who praised President Olusegun Obasanjo for given effect to the policy of private hostel accommodation for students by encouraging private developers to partner with universities on privatisation of hostel accommodation for students on build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis.

He charged the developers to work hard to ensure that they complete the projects on schedule.

Advising the new grandaunants, Prof. Adu urged them to be good ambassadors of the institution by excelling in their places of calling.

"I charge you to go into the world with courage, confidence and determination. It may not be easy but with much initiative and creativity; you will make it and it will be well."

Four eminent Nigerians including the Ogun state governor, Otumba Gbenga Daniel, Oba Adekaninbi Tella, the Olu of Ilaro and paramount ruler of Yewaland; Chief Olatunde Abudu, OFR an industrialist and Chief (Dr.) A. P. Leventis, chairman Leventis group of companies were honoured with doctorate degrees in recognition of their immense contributions to the university in particular, their professions and the society at large.

At the 12th convocation ceremony, 696 students graduated with bachelors, five masters, 12 doctorate degrees and 66 post-graduate diplomas.



Also addressing the gathering the director of the institute, Professor Ebenezer Adebisi Adebowale remarked that gains of agricultural research would ultimately translate into increased food productivity thereby

Technology transfer, panacea for Nigeria's food shortage -V.C

The only panacea to Nigeria's food shortage is technology transfer and commercialisation of agricultural breakthrough, the vice chancellor of the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Professor Roger Makanjola declared in Ibadan yesterday.

Professor Makanjuola made the declaration while addressing the opening ceremony of the year 2005 annual in house review of the institute of agricultural research and training in Ibadan the Oyo state capital.

According to the vice chancellor, the benefits derivable from technology transfer and commercialisation of agriculture, "can revolutionise the socio-political economy of the country.

"The inherent returns from the commercialisation of agricultural breakthroughs are many," he posited. For instance, he said the nation will be able to maintain self-sufficiency in food production while food

From Dele Ogunyemi, (Stringer) Ibadan

"This will also create more jobs and more importantly entrepreneur opportunities for the young adults that rely heavily on the government as the major employer of labour," the vice chancellor added.

Furthermore, he explained that commercialisation of agricultural technologies will increase productivity, reduce unit cost of production, bring about high per capita income, promote standard of living, better the social states of people and reduce importation of food and raw materials, thereby conserving foreign exchange.

BOOK PRESENTATION

The Organising Committee, on behalf of **ALHAJI AHMADU KURFI, MARADIN KATSINA** wishes to announce the public presentation of the following books:

- **MY LIFE AND TIMES: An Autobiography of Alhaji Ahmadu Kurfi**
- **NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS 1951-2003: My Role and Reminiscences**
- **THE BARONS: A Fiction**

All authored by Alhaji Amadu Kurfi

Venue: International Trade Fair Complex, Kaduna

Date: Saturday 5th February, 2005

Time 10 a.m prompt

CHAIRMAN OF THE OCCASION:
General Yakubu Gowon, GCFR

DISTINGUISHED SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR:

Alhaji Atiku Abubakar; GCON
Turakin Adamawa
Vice- President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

GUEST SPEAKER:
Chief S.B. Awoniyi, CON,
Aro of Mopa

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Organising Committee



OFFICE OF THE COORDINATING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

FCDA SECRETARIAT, BLOCK B, AREA 11, P.M.B.24, GARKI, ABUJA,
 NIGERIA. TEL: 09-3145095, FAX: 3145094

2nd February, 2005

**INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION TO TENDER FOR
 THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE 11 PROJECTS AT THE
 PROPOSED MAITAMA SECONDARY SCHOOL, ABUJA.**

The MINISTRY OF FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY is desirous of commencing work on Phase 11 projects at the proposed Maitama Secondary School, Abuja.

In view of the above, the Ministry is inviting competent and interested contractors for pre-qualification to tender for carrying out the construction works.

The works includes the construction of the following:≤

- i) Laboratory/Workshop
- ii) Block of classroom complex
- iii) Block of Hostel Complex
- iv) Refectory/Kitchen Block
- v) Block of 6 units 2 Bedroom flats
- vi) Block of 6 units 3 Bedroom flats
- vii) Block of 3-bedroom Bungalow (Principal's house)
- viii) Mosque
- ix) Church

TENDERING REQUIREMENTS

Interested contractors must submit the following documents:

- (i) Tax clearance certificate for the last three (3) years
- (ii) Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission.
- (iii) Evidence of current registration with FCDA in category "D".
- (iv) Verifiable list of similar and other jobs successfully executed with their locations.
- (v) List of equipment to be used for the project and their locations. State whether the equipment are on lease, hire or owned.
- (vi) List of key professional officers to be attached to the project and their qualifications. Enclose photocopies of professional certificates where applicable.
- (vii) Audited Account of the bidder for the last three years and bankers name for verification.

***Originals of documents (i)-(iii) above must be produced for sighting during opening session.**

The completed documents must be in a sealed envelope and clearly marked "PRE-QUALIFICATION TO TENDER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE 11 PROJECTS AT THE PROPOSED MAITAMA SECONDARY SCHOOL, ABUJA".

The Pre-qualification bid must be returned to **FCDA Tenders Board Secretariat, Room 243, Finance Block, Area 11, Garki, Abuja on or before 12 Noon on 18th February, 2005.** All bids will be opened on the same date by 2.00pm at FCDA Tenders Board Secretariat in the presence of all bidders or their representatives in attendance.

NB

This is not an invitation to tender. Full tendering will applied only to bidders that have been pre-qualified and found capable of executing the project.

Signed

AUWAL MACCIDO

Secretary, FCDA Tenders Board
 For: Coordinating Exec. Secretary

FCDA, Abuja

VACANCY

APPLICATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING VACANT POST IN KEBBI STATE FADAMA II PROJECT.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Position: Advisory services Officer

Overall Function of the Position.

The Advisory Services Officer (ASO) will be responsible for co-ordination and thematic leadership of the Advisory Services components activities in the State. He/She will further contribute to Project-wide co-ordination of the component's activities through interaction with ASOs of other States.

Specific Duties of the Position:

- Co-ordination of the activities of the advisory services component
- Liaise with the NFDO in all aspects related to the component
- Contribute to the preparation of SFDO annual work plan and budget
- Feed interested service providers data into the service provider registry maintained at NFDO
- Facilitate the contracting/co-opting of consultants for the evaluation of advisory services proposals submitted by services provider to user groups within an FCA
- Facilitate the contracting/co-opting of service providers for the preparation and implementation of cross-FCS advisory service activities.
- Ensure that operational guidelines for advisory service activities and other relevant materials are adapted/translated for use by FUGs, in collaboration with the SASOs of the States (to avoid duplication of efforts)
- Ensure Computerisation of information on advisory services proposals
- Make available and pro-actively disseminate useful information deriving from the MIS to relevant actors
- Arrange awareness and training workshops for potential service providers
- Identify methodological and subject matter backstopping and mentoring needs of facilitators, service providers and other actors involved in implementation of the component's activities.
- Facilitate periodic evaluation of the components activities in line with the requirements of the Project Implementation Manual
- Establish and maintain linkages with relevant other projects and institutions operation in the State

Reporting and Location:

The Advisory Services Officer will be based at the SFDO and will be involved in frequent travels to the field. He reports directly to the State Fadama Coordinator:

Qualifications Required:

- B.Sc/HND degree in agriculture, economics, agricultural extension or any related field (livestock husbandry, fisheries, ecology, natural resource management etc.). Possession of higher degree will be an added advantage
- Minimum of 5 years relevant experience
- Substantial practical experience in extension initiatives demonstrated familiarity with and fair for marketing and small-scale agro-enterprise management
- Demonstrated abilities as a team leader, net worker and manager
- Preference will be given to Female candidate.

Detail of contract:

Two-year contract renewable twice (i.e up to 6 years) based on performance.

CONCLUSION:

All completed application forms to be submitted to the Office of the Hon. Commissioner of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kebbi State on or before 12.00 Noon 14th, February 2005.

Signed.

Umar Faruk Udulu
 State Project Co-ordinator.

ABUJA TRUST

Theft: Four employees of security outfit remanded

Four employees of Techno-Crime Security Company have been remanded in prison yard for allegedly stealing 3,350 litres of diesel oil valued at two hundred and fifty-one thousand, two hundred and fifty naira (N251,250) belonging to the company.

According to the First Information Report (FIR) the accused persons, Fidelis Adeye,

By Saidat Tella, (Intern)

Benson Enebomha, Amos Jabi and Onah Christopher all male of the company jointly stole the petroleum product on January 24, 2005 from Model Primary School, Maitama and Mpape.

Though all the accused pleaded not guilty to the offence, contrary to section 79 and 289 of the penal code they were charged with, the

prosecution objected to the bail application made by the counsel to the accused persons.

Counsel to the accused prayed the court to release the accused on bail pursuant to section 341 (2) of criminal procedure code and 36 (5) of 1999 constitution.

Prosecution objected to the bail application on the ground that if they were admitted to bail at this stage, they would jeopardise police investigation of the matter.

Presiding chief magistrate, Othman Musa remanded the accused in prison custody and adjourned the case to February 8, 2005 for ruling.

Man arraigned for refusal to settle Nikon Hotel bill

A young man, resident at Gwarinpa estate, Abuja has been arraigned before an Abuja Chief Magistrate court for refusing to pay for food he ate at the Nikon Hilton Hotel restaurant, Abuja.

According to the first Information Report (FIR), the accused person went to the restaurant on January 31, 2005 and requested and ate varieties of food worth N1,800 that he could not pay for. The hotel's security officer therefore reported him to the Maitama police station.

The accused charged with cheating contrary to section 322 of the penal code pleaded not guilty to the charged offence.

The prosecution urged the court to caution the accused from further going to the hotel to eat.

The chief magistrate, Othman Musa, granted the accused bail and banned him from going near the hotel in the future and until the determination of the substantive case and adjourned sitting to April 6, 2005 for hearing.

Chief magistrate transfers 102 cases to FCT CJ

An Abuja Chief Magistrate sitting in Jabi, Othman Musa has said that the court will transfer about 102 abandoned cases to FCT Chief Judge Justice Lawal Hassan Gummi for fresh mentioning at Abuja High Court.

Othman who stated this in a chat with Abuja Trust said the court decided to transfer these cases following the lack of diligent prosecution by the police prosecutors.

According to him, 63 accused persons were charged with criminal conspiracy and

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, (Stringer, Abuja)

culpable homicide and 16 men charged with rape.

These cases, he said, suffered several adjournments for many years without proper due process.

The chief magistrate said he decided to transfer the cases to High Court to be re-assigned because he does not want the suspects charged with the said cases to continue suffering in prison. This, he said, will help FCT judiciary to reduce prison congestion.

Nursing mother bags 2 months prison term

A nursing mother and resident of Apo Mechanic Village Abuja, Mary Pius, was yesterday sentenced to two months prison term by an Abuja magistrate court sitting in Jabi for pouring hot water on a co-tenant, one Chinaza Egbu.

The accused mother who is nursing a six-month-old baby was sentenced to jail after she was found guilty of offence of causing grievous hurt contrary to section 242 of the penal code which he was charged with.

According to the police report, on January 26, 2005 Chinaza, who is living in the same compound with the accused went to Garki police station and reported that the accused person poured hot water on her as a result of which, she sustained serious injury all over her body.

The prosecution tendered the picture of the victim to the court as evidence against the accused. The prosecution further demanded that the accused pay the cost of treatment of the victim.

The Gudu Market in the Federal Capital Territory is expected to be commissioned in the first week of March 2005.

A statement from the Abuja Investment and Property Development Co. Ltd (AIPDC) made available to Abuja Trust, said the idea of the market was conceived in November 1999 because of the need to provide additional markets in the FCT.

Executive director of the AIPDC, Alhaji Mohammed Lawal Yusuf, has said that the implementation of the market was previously being done through a committee set up by the federal capital development authority (FCDA).

He said the market was late transferred to Abuja Investment and Property Development Company (AIPDC) in August 2004,

Gudu Market for commission March

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

when the construction works were at 65% completion stage.

Presently, the director said all construction works such as water supply, electricity supply; water disposal, walkways and landscaping are in progress.

Construction works are being jointly funded by the stall allottees with MFCT providing the infrastructure, and is expected to have been completed last week.

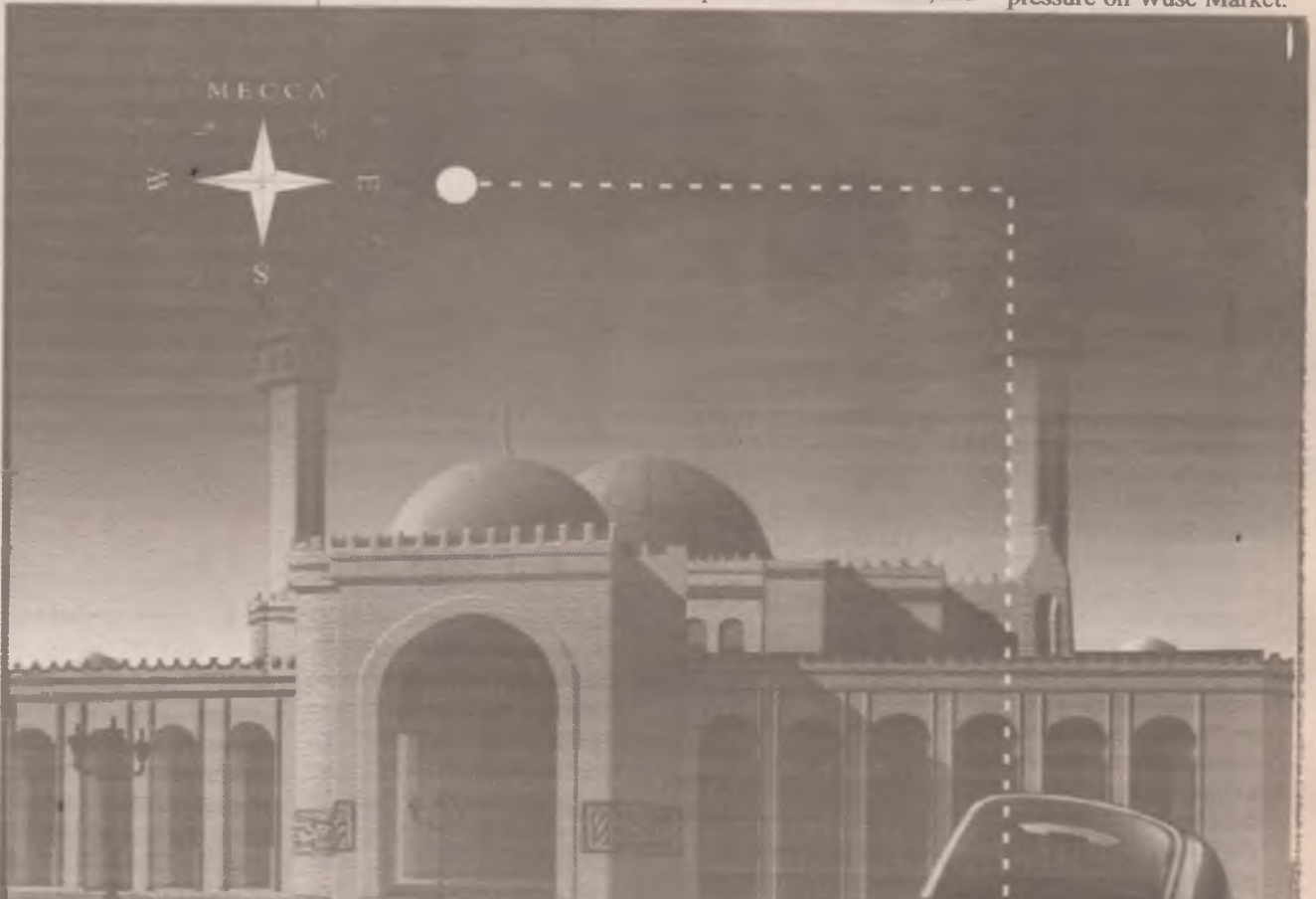
The AIPDC statement said that there are 618 shops in the market consisting of 96 warehouses to be sold at over N1.4 million each, 57 specialised shops at over N3.4 million, and

8 cold rooms at N1.9 million each.

Other facilities include 409 retail shops at N980, 712.87 each, 12 meat shops at N958, 530 each, 12 fish shops at N958, 530 each, and 24 open stalls at N552, 940 each.

In addition, the market is serviced by one telecom centre, one Cyber café, and ten restaurants, all built through public private partnership (PPP) while other markets are expected to accommodate 4,000 shops are through the built, operate and transfer (BOT) scheme.

The statement said that the construction of the shops of Gudu market is geared towards reducing the pressure on Wuse Market.



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DATE

Friday, February 4, 2005

Please note that the launch is strictly by invitation



Your faithful guide to Mecca

KANO TRUST

Students' scholarship gulps N144m

The sum of N144 million has been spent by the Kano State government for the payment of scholarship allowances to 22,000 students studying at various universities and other high institutions within and outside the country last year. The executive secretary of the state's scholarship board, Alhaji Lawan Saji Rano, dropped the hint recently.

Alhaji Lawan, who was briefing newsmen on the activities of the state's parastatals for the last year, pointed out that apparently realising that delay in the payment will not augur well for educational development of the state government, said government had earlier unveiled appropriate measures to ensure its smooth operation.

He conceded that prompt

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent (Kano)

payment of the allowances will enhance students' dedication, performance, and hard work.

While giving the breakdown on how the funds were shared, Alhaji Rano explained that law students received N100,000 each, bringing the total amount to N9.5 million; while three students studying abroad got over N5.5 million, adding that over N3.5 million has also been sent to them for this year's scholarship.

The scholarship boss disclosed that allowances for students in other universities had gulped N17 million, saying this will no doubt dispel students' fears and uncertainties as far as scholarship

allowances are concerned.

Commenting on the preparation for the payment of this year's allowances, the executive secretary observed that no fewer than 21,000 students are expected to benefit, stating that the number has decreased following low enrolment of the indigenes in universities.

KNSG pledges sufficient fertilizers for farmers

The Kano State Government has reiterated its commitment to supply fertilizers to farmers across the state in order to boost farming. Disclosing this in Bagwai local government area, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Alhaji Ahmed Garba Riruwai, who was represented by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Special Duties and chairman of

the committee on the distribution of fertilizers, Alhaji Hassan Sheriff Iliya, said that the main responsibility of the committee was to ensure that farmers in all the parts of the state had access to the supplies.

In his response, the vice-chairman of Bagwai local gov-

By Aliyu Saleh Machika,
Reporter (Kano)

ernment council, Alhaji Ahmed Abdullahi Kiyawa, thanked the state government for its efforts and advised farmers in the area to make best use of their privilege to restore the lost glory of the agricultural sector in the area.



Pupils from various Islamiyya and primary schools in Kano at a colourful parade in a function...recently

Association seeks reconstruction of Rimin-Kebe road

The need for the reconstruction of the Rimin-Kebe road in Ungoggo local council of Kano State has again been re-emphasised. The president of Rimin-Kebe Students' Association (RISA), Comrade Musa Shu'aibu in his *Sallah* message to the people of the area, called on Nassarawa, Ungoggo and the state government to jointly reconstruct the road.

Comrade Musa also called on the state government to immediately replace the water pipes, as according to him, the area is not enjoying the provision of water by the government.

The RISA president, who described the Rimin-Kebe road as the most deplorable road in the Kano metropolis, said that the road requires the state government's attention.

He disclosed that every

year, fatal accidents occur along the road due to its deplorable condition.

"I witnessed two occasions when buses had an accident as a result of the bad condition of the road during the raining season," he said.

Comrade Shu'aibu therefore called on the Nasarawa and Ungoggo local governments to jointly rehabilitate the roads linking Rimin-Kebe, Gawuna, Tudun-Murtala, and Gama quarters in the area.

He disclosed that the roads need urgent attention from both the state government, and the local councils involved before the next rainy season to avert the suffering faced by the people of the area. He expressed optimism that the Shekarau administration would take immediate action on the road as human development is part of its priorities.

Projects: KNSG, UNDP sign MOU

The Government of Kano State recently signed a memorandum of understanding on poverty eradication and good governance with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), according to which UNDP is to contribute seventy per cent of the 251 million naira earmarked for specified developmental projects in the state while the Kano State government contributes the balance of thirty per cent. Speaking at the sign-

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Reporter (Kano)

ing ceremony, the Kano State Governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekerau, described good governance as the only method to ensure transparency, honesty, and the judicious management of public resources. He said that the UNDP programme is in consonance with his government's vision of re-directing the state's human and material resources to-

wards the eradication of poverty. He called on the UNDP to articulate wider areas of co-operation.

Responding, the assistant resident representative of the UNDP in Nigeria, Professor Emmanuel Oladipo, expressed

satisfaction with the efforts of the state government in the area of youth empowerment and called for its sustenance. He pledged that the agency will work hand-in-hand with the Kano state government in implementing viable projects.

Board chairman tasked on leadership

The newly appointed chairman of the Kano State Environmental Planning and Protection Agency (KASEPPA), Alhaji Yakubu Ali Bashir, has been advised to adopt the spirit of trust and honesty in discharging his assignment. The advice was offered by a former principal of Kazaure Secondary School (now Kazaure Polytechnic), Alhaji Bashir Mansur Yola, at a reception organised in honour of the newly appointed chairman by a group of friends and well wishers. He said that only honest leaders could record achievements.

Alhaji Bashir Mansur Yola welcomed the appointment of Alhaji Yakubu Ali Bashir on behalf of the old students of

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent (Kano)

continue to offer him meaningful advice. He urged the new chairman to use his good office to revive the Kazaure Old Boys Association. The newly appointed chairman promised to carry them along in the discharge of his duties in order to benefit from their wealth of experience.



EKO TRUST

Lagos restructures teaching service for schools

The Lagos State government on Tuesday said it had approved a comprehensive restructuring of its teaching service at secondary school

By Olumide Bajulaiye,
Correspondent, Lagos

level where tutor-generals will head educational districts. In a joint press conference, the Commissioner for Education,

Professor Kunle Lawal, and his counterpart on Information, Mr. Dele Alake, said in the new policy, the state had created six educational districts, and made provisions for principals or qualified teachers to attain the position of permanent

district.

Lawal further said, "The inspectorate divisions of the ministry and the district will be strengthened to enable them to perform their statutory role under the reform. This reform is to be implemented immediately."

Alake said the state government had adopted the policy to give a chance to principals in the state to reach the pinnacle of their career, and in order to devolve power and administrative capacity to lower levels of the hierarchy. He said it is also to ensure that government policies are implemented faster and more efficiently, adding that the draft bill had been sent to the Lagos State House of Assembly to make necessary amendment.

FERMA destroys sanitation barricades built by LASG

The barricades put in place by the officials of the Lagos State government during the environmental sanitation exercise last Saturday have been destroyed by the task force of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA).

The place was hitherto used by men of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to load passengers to various destinations within the metropolis. The action was on the order of the special implementation assistant to the minister of works, in Eti-Osa local government area of the state, Mr. Wole Badmus.

Men of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) had last week besieged the park in company of armed policemen, and forcefully ejected members of the NURTW around 1pm. They also ordered the transport union officials to move away from the place because it was an illegal park.

Attempts by the latter to resist the move degenerated into a pandemonium, as the

policemen who were drafted to the place allegedly fired sporadically and shot tear gas canisters to disperse the union members and passengers from the park.

The Chairman of the Falomo unit of NURTW, Mr. Saka Adepoju, told our correspondent in an interview that the LASTMA men allegedly applied force to chase his members away from the place and took away 15 of their vehicles to an unknown destination.

Justifying the removal of the NURTW members from the place, the Chairman of Ikoyi/Obalende local government area, Dr. Folarin Gbadebo-Smith, said the activities of the union members constituted security threat to the corporate firms and residents in the area.

Gbadebo-Smith told our correspondent in a telephone interview that the council was in support of the position of the Victoria Island and Ikoyi residents association on the need to rid the area of miscreants; hence it would not allow the place to be turned into a park.



Lagos Gov Bola Tinubu

secretaries, like their counterparts in the civil service.

"The new policy has created six educational districts in the state. All secondary schools in Lagos State have been grouped into these six districts.

"Each district shall be headed by a tutor-general/permanent secretary to be appointed from the core of senior and experienced principals from the secondary schools in Lagos State," Lawal said.

According to him, the tutor-general/permanent secretary is the chief executive and accounting officer of each educational district, and will coordinate all activities of secondary and technical schools in the



Children having fun at the MKO International School, Ikeja during last Sallah celebration. Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Security breach: Securitymen threaten journalist

Again, the brutality of the military force was brought to fore on Monday, when a combined team of the State Security Service and the Directorate of Military Intelligence threatened to shoot a television video cameraman for trying to get a video shot of the chief security officer to the former head of state, General Sani Abacha, Col. Hamza Al-Mustapha, while alighting from a security vehicle that conveyed him to the court premises.

The former chief security officer, Lt. Colonel Mohammed Adeka, and Mr. Onuchukwu Okoric, who were charged with security breach against the federal government were specifically in court for prosecution reply to their request for certain documents to expedite their trial.

Al-Mustapha arrived at the court premises few minutes past ten in company of about ten heavily armed security men, who were led by a Lt Colonel.

A camera man who had gone to cover the event was barred and harassed by the security men who threatened to destroy his camera should he defy their order.

"If you snap again, I will fire you and fire your camera", one of the security men told at the cameraman.

However, the temperamental security men were soon called to order by

By Mohammed Shosanya,
(Correspondent Lagos)

their colleagues who demanded that peace be maintained.

Meanwhile, Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, told the Federal High Court to dismiss the application of Al-

ABC guest house robbery: Boy 19, charged to court

A 19 year-old armed robbery suspect was on Monday dragged before an Ebute-Metta Chief Magistrates' Court over an alleged robbery at the ABC Transport Company guest house, Lagos.

The accused person, Okechukwu Onukogu, A.K.A Mopol, and others at large run, were alleged to have conspired on 12th November 2004, at about 2.00am, at the ABC Transport Company Guest House, Amuwo Odofin.

The alleged offence, according to the police prosecutor, is contrary to section 5 (b), and punishable under section 1 (2) (a) of the robbery and fire arms (special provision) Act, cap. 398, Vol. XXII Laws of the Federation.

The suspect was arrested by the Festac Police Station before the case was transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti, for further investigation.

According to the police, it was the victims and the workers of the ABC Transport

Mustapha seeking certain documents and proof of evidence to aid his security breach trial. He wondered why Al-Mustapha who claimed he knew what was in the document, is now in dire need of the proof of evidence.

The court has slated February 7 for Al-Mustapha's counsel, Barrister Olalekan Ojo, to reply on point of law.

By Adelanwa Bamgboye,
Correspondent (Lagos)

Company that testified that the accused persons used gun and knife to attack them. Some of the items stolen include: wrist watches, GSM handsets, cameras, VCDs and cash totalling millions of naira.

The victims of the crime, who lost their property to the robbers include Ameachi Barnabas, Michael Obi, Adegoke Stephen, Emmanuel Conillus, Ezech Ifeoma, Peter Ogbona, Ihedioha Chrystenthus and Mohammed Usman.

When the matter was called for hearing on Monday, the trial magistrate, Mrs. Y. R. Pinhero, adjourned further hearing till 11th March 2005, saying that the Magistrate Court has no jurisdiction to try the robbery case.

She however ordered that the accused person be remanded in police custody pending the advice from the state Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).



The mass burial site of victims of the Ikeja Military Cantonment bomb blast of January 27, 2001 at Oke-Afa, Isolo, Lagos, during the blast's anniversary...recently.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF KANO STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE KANO JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT KANO

SUIT NO. K\271\2003

BEFORE: MUHAMMAD UMAR ALKALI.....JUDGE
BETWEEN:
DALA BUILDING SOCIETY LTD.....PLAINTIFF

AND
ALH. UMARU DANGOTE)
ALH. HAMZA. AHMED).....DEFENDANTS/RESPONDENTS
LINKS HOTELS & TOURISM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS LTD

COURT ORDER

Upon reading a Motion Ex-parte dated 19th day of January, 2005, together with an accompanying affidavit duly sworn to. And after hearing Mr. Nuraini Jimoh Esq. of Counsel for Plaintiff IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS
LEAVE is granted to the plaintiff applicant to Serve the 3rd Defendant/respondent with the writ of summons and all other court processes through substituted means by an advertisement in a National Daily Newspaper circulating within the jurisdiction of this court particularly New Nigeria or Daily Trust.

2. Subsequent orders and processes to be pasted on the Notice Board of the court.
Case adjourned to 22nd day of February, 2005
GIVEN UNDER THE HAND AND SEAL OF THE PRESIDING JUDGE

THIS 27TH DAY OF January 2005

PRESIDING JUDGE

THIS 27th DAY OF January 2005

DIRECTOR FOR LITIGATION

AMENDED WRIT OF SUMMONS
(UNDEFENDED LIST)
FORM 2

THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF KANO STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE KANO JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT KANO

SUIT NO. K\99

BETWEEN:
DALA BUILDING SOCIETY LTD.....PLAINTIFF

1) ALH. UMARU DANGOTE) AND
2) ALH. HAMZA. AHMED).....DEFENDANTS/RESPONDENTS
3) LINKS HOTELS & TOURISM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT LTD.

DEFENDENT:
ALH. UMARU DANGOTE NO. 3 HABU GUMEL STR. GIGINYU KANO
ALH. HAMZA. AHMED DANTATA HOUSE MURTALA MOHD WAY KANO
TO: LINKS HOTELS & TOURISM MANAGEMENT...
OFCONSULTANT LTD., KANO

In the KANO DIVISION.....of NIGERIA

You are hereby committed that within eight days after the service of this on you, inclusive of the day of such service, you do cause an appearance to be entered for you in an action at the suit of:

DALA BUILDING SOCIETY.....
and take notice that in default of your so doing the Plaintiff may proceed therein and judgment may be given in your absence.

Date this.....day of.....19.....

By Order of the Court REGISTRAR

And the sum of N..... (a) for such as may be allowed on taxation for costs, and also, in case the Plaintiff obtains an order for substituted service, the further sum of N..... (or such sum as may be allowed on taxation). If the amount claimed be paid to the Plaintiff or his legal practitioner or agent within four days from the service hereof, further proceedings will be stayed.

Provided that if it appears from the endorsement of the writ that the Plaintiff is resident outside the schedule territories, as defined by Exchange Control Act, or is acting by order or on behalf of a person so resident, proceedings will only be stayed if the amount claimed is paid into Court within the said time and notice of such payment is given to the Plaintiff, his legal practitioner or agent.

This writ was issued by.....NURENI JIMOH ESQ..... of.....AYODELE GAFAR & CO.
whose address for service is 10 BEIRUT ROAD, KANO agent for
DALA BUILDING SOCIETY LTD.....Legal Practitioner for the said Plaintiff who reside at
..... DAN HAUSA ROAD, NASSARAWA G.R.A.
KANO.....

ENDORSEMENT AS TO SERVICE

This writ was served by me..... at..... on the Defendant (hereinsert mode of service on.....the.....day of.....19.....

Signed
(ADDRESS):

NB: This writ is to be served within twelve calendar months from the day thereof, or if renewed within six calendar months from the date of the last renewal including the day of such date, and not afterwards.

The Defendant may enter appearance personally or by Legal Practitioner by handing in the appropriate forms, duly completed, at the Registry of the Judicial Division in which the action is brought, or by sending them to the Registry by registered post.

If the Defendant enters an appearance he must also deliver a defence to the Legal Practitioner to the Plaintiff within fourteen days from the last day of the time limited for appearance, unless such time is extended by the Court or a Judge otherwise Judgment may be entered against him without notice, unless he has in the meantime been served with a Summons for Judgment.

PARTICULARS OF CLAIM

The Plaintiff claims against the defendants jointly and severally as follows:

- 1. The sum of N1,216,243.35 being the current outstanding balance of the facility obtained by the defendants from the plaintiff on the 22nd day of July 1999 made up of the following:
a) Principal sum N500,000.00
b) Interest N716,243.35
2. 25% Interest thereon from 28th day of February 2003 till date of judgment and thereafter 10% court Interest till liquidation.

DATED THIS 17th DAY OF OF APRIL 2003

Signed

AYODELE GAFAR & CO.
PLAINTIFF'S SOLICITORS
10, BEIRUT ROAD

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF KANO STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE KANO JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT KANO

SUIT NO. K\271\2003

BETWEEN:
DALA BUILDING SOCIETY LTD.....PLAINTIFF

AND
1) ALH. UMARU DANGOTE)
2) ALH. HAMZA. AHMED).....DEFENDANTS
3) LINKS HOTELS & TOURISM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT LTD.

AMENDED STATEMENT OF CLAIM

- 1. The Plaintiff is a financial institution set up to, amongst others; grant short-term financial assistance, mortgages and loans to individuals and companies.
2. The 1st defendant is a businessman who also source for customer for the plaintiff. The 1st defendant applied, together with the 2nd defendant for a credit facility in the sum of N500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira Only) which facility was secured and guaranteed with the 2nd defendant's title document of the property situate at Sani Mainagge bearing Certificate of Occupancy Nos. LKN/RES/84/135. The 3rd defendant is the company with whom the 1st and 2nd defendant alleged were their principal and the principal beneficiary of the credit facility subject matter of this suit.
3. The Plaintiff avers that both defendants obtained the facility for their joint use and in furtherance of their common business purposes. The defendants promise to liquidate this sum "in a matter of weeks" or in two weeks.
4. The Plaintiff granted and disbursed the said sum of N500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira Only) via a Savannah Bank of Nigeria Plc Cheque No. 0291259 dated July 1999 in the name of the plaintiff official named Uba Musa Mohammed for withdrawal and release to the defendants. The 1st defendant received the said sum on the same date and acknowledged same.
5. The Plaintiff avers that it was part of the agreement that the facility shall attract interest at the rate of 25% interest per month.
6. Contrary to their undertaking, the defendants failed, refused and or neglected to liquidate this sum as promised or at all, despite repeated demand.
7. In response to the Plaintiff demand, the defendant has at various times, through their various solicitors, been passing the burden, of Liquidating the sum to one another and or to their joint business concern named Links Hotel & Tourism Management Consultant Limited the 3rd defendant.
8. The Plaintiff avers that the 1st defendant is the chairman and the 2nd defendant a director of the said Links Hotel & Tourism Management Consultant Limited the 3rd defendant.
9. The Plaintiff avers that the 1st defendant indeed acknowledged the receipt of the said facility without any indication of any agency at all.
10. The Plaintiff will also lead evidence to show that the 2nd defendant has at various times been personally held out to be the grantor of the facility in the said sum from the Plaintiff to their company, Links Hotel & Tourism Management Consultants Limited, the 3rd defendant in this suit. This includes inter alia the record of the Links Hotel & Tourism Management Consultants limited, Minutes of meeting, Request for Re-imbusement of Renovation costs and other claims, and the proceedings of the commission of inquiry set up by the Kano State Government to investigate, the Leasing Agreement of Daula Hotel.
11. The Plaintiff further avers that the defendants are all jointly and severally liable to the refund of this sum of money. The 1st and 2nd defendants are the alter ego of the 3rd defendant company named Links Hotel & Tourism Management Consultants Ltd. which company is presently moribund, not in any activities and has no assets of Its own at all, The defendants present effort at passing the bulk of repayment to their said company the 3rd defendant is aimed at frustrating the eventual recovery of the facility granted the defendants.
11b. The Plaintiff avers that the 1st defendant addressed a letter dated 17th August 2000 through his solicitors Messrs Salisu Sule Esq. to the 2nd defendant stating that he actually acted for the 3rd defendant on the undertaken that the 2nd defendant will liquidate the facility which none of the defendants have liquidated till date. The Plaintiff shall rely on the said solicitor's letter dated 17th August 2000 copied to the Plaintiff.
12. The Plaintiff, a financial institution, used the other depositors fund as facility granted to the defendants and is entitled to charge 25% interest on the facility granted the defendants.
13. The Plaintiff will rely on all documents directly and indirectly related to and mentioned in this suit and notice to produce all the originals or the documents which are in the possession of the defendants or their privies or principals or their said company is herewith given to the defendants. The plaintiff will rely on, but not limited to the following document at the hearing of this suit.
(i) Title documents on property situate at Sani Mainagge with Certificate of Occupancy No. LKN/RES/RC/84/135.
ii) The Deed of Assignment in respect of the property between Alh. Uba Akasin and the 2nd defendant.
iii) The Savannah Bank of Nigeria Plc cheque dated 22nd July 1999 for the said sum of N500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira Only) in favour of Uba Musa Mohammed.
iv) The acknowledge of the receipt of the said sum of money by the 1st defendant.
v) The Plaintiff's letters of demand to the defendant variously dated 4th August 2000, 17/10/2000, 04 July 2000 etc,
vi) The 1st Defendant solicitors reply (Dated 11th February 2002) to the Plaintiffs letter.
vii) Another 1st defendant solicitor letter dated 17th August 2000 to the 2nd defendant and copied to the plaintiff,
viii) The 2nd defendant's solicitor's letter dated 10th July 2000.
(ix) 1st Defendant's statement of Account and or ledgers with the Plaintiff.
x) The defendants various affidavit in support of the Notice of Intention to defend.
xi) 2nd Defendant handwritten note to the 1st Defendant dated 14/7/99.
xii) Revocation of leasing Agreement of Daula Hotel Request for Re-imbusement of Renovation costs and other claims report.
(xiii) The proceedings of the commission of inquiry on Daula Hotels.
(xiv) Any other document.

13b. Alternatively the Plaintiff pleads that all the three defendants took active and positive steps towards obtaining the facility from the Plaintiff and are all obliged to liquidate same with full interest. WHEREOF the Plaintiffs claim against all the Defendants jointly and severally as follows:

- 1. The sum of N1,216,243.35 being the current outstanding balance of the facility obtained by the defendants from the plaintiff on the 22nd day of July 1999 made up of the following:
(a) Principal sum N500,000.00
(b) Interest N716,243.35

- 2. 25% Interest thereon from 28th day of February 2003 till date of judgment and thereafter 10% court interest liquidation.
3. An order permitting the plaintiff to dispose off the property situate at plot 216 Aku Street, Sani Mainagge layout in the Dala Local Government of Kano State covered with Certificate of Occupancy LKN/RES/RC/84/135 (used as collateral for the facility) in liquidation of the judgment debt.
4. Cost of this action.

DATED this 28th Day of OCTOBER 2004.

FOR SERVICE ON:
1. THE 1ST DEFENDANT
C/O HIS SOLICITORS
IFEM M. O. & CO.
57, NEW ROAD, SABON GARI, KANO.

2. THE 2ND DEFENDANT
C/O HIS SOLICITORS,
OSHOMEKIE & OSHOMEKIE,
360, AIRPORT ROAD,
KANO.

PP: AYODELE GAFAR & CO.
PLAINTIFF'S SOLICITORS
10, BEIRUT ROAD,
KANO.

News

Briefs

Akume

The Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume, has charged parents in the state to give priority attention to the education and proper upbringing of their children.

Governor Akume gave the charge yesterday in Makurdi when eminent sons and daughters of Ushongo local government, led by the Ter Ushongo, Chief, Ambrose Iortyer, paid him a solidarity visit.

He said communal clashes as well as other unwanted behaviours from the youth would be a thing of the past, if they are properly educated and counselled.

Hajj

The Manager of Ilorin International Airport, Alhaji Garba Ringim, has suggested measures that could facilitate smooth and early return of Nigerian pilgrims from the Saudi Arabia Kingdom.

Speaking with journalists yesterday, the airport manager explained that the anxiety of relations of pilgrims would be minimised if the Saudi authorities could expand and improve the departure point at Jeddah usually used by Africans after the hajj exercise, for screening and weighing of their luggage.

"The area set aside for African countries is always chaotic, either for screening or weighing at Mecca or Jeddah," Alhaji Ringim noted.

He said so far, no casualties have been recorded since the arrival of the first batch, even as their relations keep vigil for the arrival of other batch of pilgrims at the Ilorin zone.

Kwara Budget

The Kwara State House of Assembly yesterday passed into law the state's 2005 budget estimated at over N37 billion.

The budget is made up of over N21 billion as recurrent expenditure, and N16 billion for capital projects.

Though passed with some amendment to avoid deficit, the house stressed the need for monitoring to ensure proper implementation.

The vigour with which states' ministries of health take the fight against HIV/AIDS strengthens the confidence for an effective health sector response to the pandemic, the Minister of State for Health, Princes Olufunke Adedoyin, has said.

Addressing a national consensus meeting and workshop for the development of the health sector strategic plan for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria Tuesday in Abuja, Princes Adedoyin further commended the

AIDS: Minister commends dev partners

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

technical and the financial supports from development partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS scourge.

The minister noted that the pandemic is impacting heavily on the socio-economic development of Nigeria, adding that food security is already threatened.

It is in view of the enormous consequences the spread of HIV/AIDS causes in the country that the minister pointed out that Nigerian government started mobilising all stakeholders across all sectors of the country in responding to the pandemic.

According to Princes

Adedoyin, the health sector is not limited to the federal and state ministries of health, but encompasses health service providers, many of them, she said, are doing wonderful work in health care provision to the people.

"In order to mount a robust and effective health sector response to the HIV/AIDS

pandemic in Nigeria, these groups must join forces with the ministries of health," she explained, adding that government has adopted a plan formulation process that is guided by principles that foster active involvement of stakeholders.

Ngige flags-off N1.28bn road contract

Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra State has flagged-off the construction of the 24 kilometre Awka-Ekiti-Nnewi-Utu-Ukpo-Orsumughu-Isseke road awarded at a cost of N1.282 billion.

The road contract was

FG signs N1.47 billion road projects in three states

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

The federal government has signed a contract for the rehabilitation of roads in Ekiti, Benue, Delta and Osun States, worth over N1.47 billion.

The road projects include the rehabilitation of Osogbo-Ilesha-Elesun-Odebode road in Osun State, awarded to Elvino Ltd at over N10.9 million, and Makurdi-Yandeu road in Benue State, awarded to Setraco Nig. Ltd for over N1.19 billion.

Other road projects include the rehabilitation of the Ado Ekiti-Otun-Kwara State border road in Ekiti State, awarded to Piccolo Brunelli Nig. Ltd at the cost of over N32 million, and the Agbor-Sakpoba-Ogharete road in Delta State, at a cost of over N142 million.

Minister of Works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, who signed the contract on behalf of the federal government, said the signing ceremony with representatives of the various communities attending, was a sign of commitment to include them since they are the direct beneficiaries of such projects.

The minister further reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to complete all federal roads and bridges that have attained 70 per cent and above, between now and early 2006.

Senator Ogunlewe said that a meeting of top officials of the ministry, including all zonal directors in the federal highways department, and the contractors would be

awarded to Setraco Nigeria Limited and is expected to be completed within sixty weeks.

Speaking during the flag-off exercise, the governor said that the government of Anambra State had reached an agreement with its Imo State counterpart to extend the road to Orlu in Imo State.

According to him, based on the agreement, the Imo State government would continue the road construction from Isseka, while the Anambra state government should stop work in it.

He said that the project when completed, would enhance the social and economic development between the two states and boost transportation in the area.

Speaking on the occasion, a first Republic Minister Chief Mbazulike Ameachi, said it was the first tarred road that passes through communities in Nnewi south local government, and regretted its neglect by successive governments in the state.



The Borno state's deputy governor, Adamu Shattima Dibal, assisted by the state's commissioner, Ministry for Poverty Alleviation, presenting a motorcycle to a beneficiary of the state's poverty alleviation programme, held in Bama LG A of the state recently

Duke refutes crisis with Obong

Against widespread allegations that the relationship between the Cross River State government and the Palace of Obong of Calabar was frosty, Governor Donald Duke has said that such allegations are

From Bassey Ita, Correspondent Calabar

trumped up by the imaginations of such matters.

Duke said neither he nor his administration had any form of disagreement with

the Obong of Calabar and Grand Patriarch of the Efik Kingdom, Edidem Professor Nta E'jah Henshaw (IV).

According to the governor, "the imagined disagreement exists only in the consciousness of those who have trumped up the allegation".

The governor's reaction came in the heels of a newspaper report (not Daily Trust), alleging a frosty relationship between him and the Obong. He said they were both misquoted by the media over a public statement credited to both of them at different fora.

The chief press secretary to the governor who signed the statement on behalf of his boss, said Duke's relationship with the Obong was cordial as "there has been no disagreement between them".

"Our attention has been drawn to a publication in some section of the national media alleging that His Excellency, Donald Duke, the Governor of Cross River State, has a disagreement with His Royal Eminence, the Obong of Calabar and Grand Patriarch of Efik Kingdom, Edidem (Professor) Nta Elijah Henshaw. Nothing can be further from the truth.

"While the governor was misquoted as describing the Obong as proud and stubborn, the Obong was also misquoted as alleging that the governor was behind those who attempted to dethrone him last year. We wonder whose interest is served by the mischievous,

SSANU condemns privatisation of campus accommodation by FG

The recent directive by the federal government to federal universities for the privatisation of hostel accommodation in their various campuses has been condemned by the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU).

SSANU rose from an emergency national executive council meeting recently rejecting the new government's policy, which it described as "ill-conceived and based on a wrong premises".

However, it suggested that "rather than outright handover of existing hostels built with public funds to private hands, the organised private sector should be encouraged to build and operate their own hostels alongside the existing ones in universities to ease the problem of accommodation."

The association attributed the crisis in some of the

new policy.

On the policy of encroachment into non-teaching duties by teaching staff, the association noted that the matter was an observation which needed to be immediately stopped for the general good of the system.

It also condemned the newly introduced contributory pensions scheme, especially as it affects the 1:1 contributory ratio between government (employer) and the worker (employee), and called for an urgent review to a 3:1 ratio as internationally accepted.

The association, whose communiqué at the meeting was endorsed by its national president, Barrister P.A.K Adewusi, and the national public relations officer, Comrade Citizen Ini Ekpo, commended the federal government's posture on the Tsunamis disaster, the National Political Reform Conference among other policies and however urged that the procedure for selecting or electing delegates to the conference must be fair and transparent to enable it to have legitimacy.

PUBLIC NOTICE
GAMBO SAWABA FOUNDATION
 This is to inform the general public that the above named Association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.
 The Trustees are:
 1. HAJIYA BALIKISU ABDULRAHMAN
 2. HAJIYA RASHIDAT ABUBAKAR
 3. ALHAJI MOHAMMED SANI
 Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5, P.M.B.198 Garki Abuja within 28 days of this publication.
 Signed:

News

Challenges before Ehindero

Mr. Sunday Gabriel Ehindero assumed office as the 22nd Inspector General of Police, though on acting basis, as his predecessor, Mr. Tafa Balogun, was shown the way out on an alleged financial impropriety which raised more questions than answers.

On assumption of office, Mr Ehindero visited some public officers to acquaint them with new modalities he had adopted in fighting crimes. He first changed the image of the force by introducing far-reaching policies amongst which is the scraping of the "Operation Fire for Fire". In its place, he introduced "Operation to Serve and Protect with Integrity".

The acting IGP also outlined a six-point agenda for his office.

He said: "There are certain issues we have to address: we have to train our men on how to relate with members of the public; and we have to minimise cases where our men manhandle people."

He decried the ugly trend where members of the public had to burn down police stations in the past because they were not satisfied with the quality of service provided by the force. While spelling out the

By Benjamin Auta

goals to be achieved by his office, Mr. Ehindero said he had ten point agenda which include upholding the tenets of democracy and the rule of law; effective crime control and prevention; combating economic and violent crimes; community policing and partnership with members of the public, among others.

During the first meeting called by the acting IGP to brief police commissioners on his ten point agenda, the Police Service Commissioner Chairman, Chief Simon Okeke, was called to address the audience. While speaking, he apparently justified the collection of N20 by policemen at checkpoints, saying that the collection was because of low salary and lack of allowances.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Police Affairs Minister, Chief Broderick Bozimo, said that the ministry would assure timely release of funds to the force for operational uses and salaries.

Some days later, the police team, led by the



Mr. Sunday Ehindero, the Acting A.I.G. of Police



Mr. Tafa Balogun

acting IGP, paid a courtesy call to the Police Affairs Ministry to brainstorm on the expected changes. He also met with mobile police squadron commanders from all over the federation, where he told them to turn a new leaf or be shown the way out.

He also hammered on dress code of mobile police men, who wear dark specs; drinking while on duty, and accidental discharges.

Mr. Ehindero issued stern warning to officers that he would not condone sharp practices in the force, and told them not to offer him "returns" which had been in vogue.

He further stressed that before he assumed office, collection of N20 was the norm, and justified by policemen at checkpoints who always say: "We buy fuel from this money; repair vehicles, and feed ourselves". To ensure

that the shoddy exercise was nipped in the bud, he immediately ordered the sum of N23 million to be released to the 46 police mobile force squadrons, with each having N500,000 for repair of vehicles, and other allowances.

Up until now, police commands used to have fuel depot. The underlining questions are: What happened to them? What about police printing press that used to produce files and writing sheets?

Maybe the IGP needs

to review the policy stipulating that not more than N5.00 should be in possession of any police man on duty;

he should also bear in mind the question of extra-judicial killings in the country. Indeed, Nigerians want to know who killed Bola Ige, Harry Marshal, Dikibo, etc.

Of course, drastic resolutions in the welfare of officers and men of the force should be resolved as it will be the engine that will produce the Nigeria Police Force of our dream.



PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (FMENV)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED QUARRY PROJECT FOR THE OBAJANA CEMENT COMPLEX BY DANGOTE NIGERIA LIMITED

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act No. 86 of 1992, which makes it Mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment of proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA Report submitted by Dangote Nigeria Limited.

Project Description/Location

The proposed project, located near Oyo-Iwa Village, will involve exploitation of abundant limestone deposit required for the Obajana Cement Factory located about 9 kilometres from the quarry.

VENUES OF DISPLAY

- i) Kogi State Ministry of Environment, Lokoja, Kogi State
- ii) Lokoja Local Government Area Headquarters, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iii) Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iv) FMENV Liaison Office, Games Village, Surulere, Lagos.
- v) FMENV Office, Plot 444, Aguiyi-Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

DURATION OF DISPLAY

Date: 12th January-10th February, 2005
Time: 8:00a.m. - 4:00p.m

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CLIQUE • NIGERIA

Inside Politics

NDP to drag Obasanjo to court over confab

The National Democratic Party (NDP), says it will challenge in court, the decision by the Obasanjo administration to constitute and hold the Political Reform Conference, describing the entire exercise as a wasteful venture that will lead nowhere.

The NDP national chairman, Alhaji Habu Fari, who made the party's opposition to the conference known in Abuja yesterday, said the national dialogue was an attempt by the Obasanjo administration along the ruling PDP to hide its deficiencies, failures and inability, to deliver on its electoral promises.

Alhaji Fari, in lending his voice to opponents of the conference stated that unsatisfied with the approach adopted for the dialogue and the agenda which he described as subjective, "we have no option than to seek legal redress against this flagrant violation of law and moral standing of this great country."

He expressed amazement that a conference of this magnitude can be organised without the participation of registered political parties, who by law are the institutional framework for sustainable democracy.

"There are 30 registered parties in Nigeria and recognising just three shows selective judgement and preferential treatment. Do we

now expect the participants drawn from the PDP point of view to prescribe dosages for other parties and allow same to be swallowed?

"This is the very fundamental defect of the conference. Secondly, the procedure being adopted by the organisers borders on

illegality and unconstitutionality in the sense that there was no law passed by the National Assembly to initiate, define the parameters and regulate the modalities for conducting the said political reform conference," the NDP national chairman said.

... as NCP berates Oshiomhole on confab

The National Conscience Party (NCP) has criticised the president of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, over his participation in the proposed conference on political reform in the country which the party described as unfortunate and unexpected.

In a statement signed by the national chairman of the party, Dr. Osagie Obayuwana yesterday in Benin city, the party said as a group of enlightened and professional bodies that is supposed to articulate and defend the interest of Nigerian masses, the NLC should have nothing to do with all government-sponsored programmes that are not people-oriented.

Dr. Obayuwana said the NLC's position is characterised by ambivalence suggesting that the congress

From Shehu Abubakar,
Correspondent (Benin City)

has derailed from its traditional position of objective criticism of anti-people programmes to backing government position even when such positions are inimical to the growth and development of democracy in the country.

"The debate at the moment revolves around whether two separate conferences should be organised or compromise should be reached between Obasanjo and the pro-sovereign national conference group. The NLC believes that it is Obasanjo that should yield ground to the superior argument of those clamouring for the election of participants, elimination of no-go-areas, the provision of a popular referendum and a general avoidance of an over-bearing government influence on the process as a whole. In other words, government should play no role beyond that of serving as facilitators."

The Benin-based lawyer and politician further said that NLC should have championed the agitation for the correction of the wrong position government took rather than clamouring to be part of the "gang up against democracy" which, he said, had put NLC's credibility into question.

Keep off Yoruba politics, YCE told

The faction of Ekiti state Council of Elders (ECE), headed by a chieftain of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Deji Fasuan, has advised the new leadership of Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) to remain neutral in the political affairs of the south-west geo-political zone.

The ECE in a communiqué issued on Tuesday in Ado-Ekiti after the meeting of its working committee, said the new leadership of YCE headed by General Adeyinka Adebayo (rtd), should take a cue from the immediate past leadership of the organisation which made a clear distinction between *Afenifere* as a cultural wing of the entire Yoruba nation and not a political party which *Afenifere* was turning itself into while Alliance for Democracy (AD) was almost turned into a wing of *Afenifere*.

The ECE then commended Governor Fasoye's administration for the excellent performance in moving Ekiti state forward and called on all those handling the project to be commissioned by President Obasanjo during his visit to Ekiti in April, to go the extra mile to complete the projects on time.

It also re-emphasised the

From Femi Oladipo,
Correspondent (Ado-Ekiti)

need for joint projects between the local governments and the state government as a potent way of upgrading the quality of the lives of the people at the grassroots.

2007: General Kontagora declares for presidency

Former minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Major-General Mamman Kontagora (rtd) has formally declared his intention to contest the presidency in 2007.

Declaring his aspiration at a press conference in Minna yesterday, General Kontagora stated that he had all the qualities needed to be the president of the country be it age-wise, education wise or experience wise.

Responding to the question whether he was aware of Ibrahim Babangida's presidential ambition, he replied that there was nowhere in the Nigerian constitution that kicks against even brothers from contesting for elective office.

He debunked the idea of fronting for somebody, saying that at his age he is above such manipulations.

The retired General further said that he was going into

From Kashima Sule,
Correspondent (Minna)

presidential politics with full force and energy if he gets the nod of his associates and supporters.

Meanwhile, Niger state governor, Engineer AbdulKadir Kure has urged General Mamman Kontagora to go to Abuja and seek for the actualisation of his presidential aspiration.

Reacting to General Kontagora's declaration, the Niger state governor said the former FCT minister had no political strength in Niger state to contest for the presidency.

"Although he was born in Niger, and educated here, but his political constituency is Abuja. When last time the Ramadan fast was observed, he gave the Abuja people grains and so he is an Abuja politician. Also he did the same thing to the Christian during the Christmas," the governor stated.

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Inside Politics

Periscoping the coming National confab

Many seem to have come to terms with the convocation of the federal government project on national political reforms going by the actions and comments on it in recent times. Many states have already selected their representatives to the conference. For instance, the Kaduna State government has already sent names of the delegates to represent it among who include second republic minister, Dr Umaru Dikko, and former Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Vice Chancellor, Prof Ango Abdullahi. Although the pan Yoruba socio cultural umbrella association, *Afenifere* has resolved to boycott the conference, the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) however said it would participate in it to properly articulate the views of the Yoruba people. Also various individuals have stressed the need to participate, and their reason is the country belongs to all Nigerians, and is not the property of only those in government, and as such, wherever the destiny and fate of the country is being decided, it is reasonable to participate to passionately oppose unpopular decisions and to endorse those that are in the interest of the generality of Nigerians.

Various interest groups and individuals had earlier, severally moved against the conference on grounds that the hand of the federal government, particularly on the selection of delegates was immense and domineering, and as such would adversely affect the credibility of whatever decisions that would be arrived at, at the conference. But despite the criticisms, it does appear that the conference might hold after all, and the level of participation might be more than is expected, probably because of the realisation that it is wiser to have a say in deciding your fate than to submit, line, hook and sinker, to the whims and caprices to some self appointed benevolent spirits.

Now that many have appeared to come to terms with the conference, what are

By **Hammeed M Bello,**
Senior Political Reporter, *Reps*

the likely issues to be discussed, and how are Nigerians likely to react to the decisions. Would the federal government, as is being alleged, impose its views and alleged agenda on the conference? Or would the conference after an improvised session, summarily adopt whatever dummy that is handed out to it as is being suspected in some quarters? It is very important for every true Nigerian to be concerned about the possible answers to questions like these because their collective destiny, especially politically, is about to be either nurtured or plundered depending on the sincerity or otherwise of the conveners. With the likes of the presidential candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) in the 2003 election, Chukwu Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, indicating intention to participate at the conference, one will live to see how the proceedings would be manipulated to achieve any hidden agenda as is being suspected.

President Obasanjo has already written the National Assembly requesting for the approval of the sum of N931, 721,615.28 budget for the conference billed to commence mid-February and to last for about three months. He said he forwarded the conference budget for inclusion in the 2005 Appropriation Bill, under the office of the secretary to the government of the federation.

The president recalled in his letter to the National Assembly presented on the floor of the House of Representatives on January 17 that he had on 7th December, 2004, inaugurated the presidential committee on the background paper for political reforms, which was mandated to identify the requisite steps for enriching Nigeria's political process, facilitating good governance, meaningful development and ensuring social justice for the people of Nigeria.

The eight-member committee had Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi,

Governor of Kaduna State as the Chairman and had since completed its assignment, and following the meeting of the council of state on Wednesday, 12th January 2005, which considered its report, the Federal Government had constituted a National Political Reform conference to address, according to the president, the following central elements of the reform agenda: "Constitutional Reforms; Political Party Reforms; Electoral Reforms; Judicial/Legal Reforms; Civil Society Reforms; Consensus Building; Police/prison System Reforms; and Reforms of the structure of Government/Governance."

Regarding the political party reforms, feelers are that the issue of one party state may feature prominently at the conference, but may most likely face intense opposition, especially from the opposition parties and those who perceive it as a gateway to entrenching or instituting dictatorship. Part of the judicial and legal reforms have already manifested in the approval, by the National Assembly, of the increase in the number of High Court and Appeal Court judges, each from 50 to 70.

The central focus of the conference is strongly suspected to be on the reforms of the structure of government and governance, and the considerations are most likely to be the introduction of regional government, a five-year single term for the position of the president, and the consideration of six vice presidents, one for each of the six geo-political zones in the country. Devolution of power among the federating units, so that the central government would be immensely stripped of overwhelming control and dominance is also believed to be a major subject of the conference. The options of confederation and a review of the presidential system currently being practiced, vis-à-vis the parliamentary system are all possible items to be debated at the conference.

The president's idea,

preferences or perhaps his expectations on how the reforms should be, is succinctly captured in his remarks at the launching of a book entitled *Party Politics and Power Struggle in Nigeria* by a member of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alh Iro Abubakar Dan-Musa on September 30, 2004, which held at the Yar'adua Centre in Abuja. "Nigeria's history is replete with examples of failed efforts at building well-led, well-organised, well-managed, and accountable political parties. In addition, the efforts at building truly national parties have suffered from the political hiccup of our society, not in the least poor leadership, political opportunism, corruption, lack of discipline, and philosophical bankruptcy. In addition, one must highlight the series of military interventions that often terminated democratic political experiments in our country.

"Plurality of parties is good for democracy and provides legitimating for the democratic process. However, it is also important that as a developing nation, we do not dissipate our meagre resources, energies, and efforts in nurturing structures that only create a nuisance value in the system. I believe that an individual who cannot find accommodation within few political parties must have a different understanding of party politics in a democratic society, more so when such political parties have no ideological differentiation. It is essential that we use existing opportunities for consolidating our democratic enterprise to achieve certain goals:

"Firstly, political party reform to ensure corporate ownership, management and financing of parties at all levels and to maintain party supremacy and discipline.

"Secondly, constitutional review to streamline the requirement for formation and registration as well as functioning of political parties. This should include processes for ensuring transparency, accountability, opportunity, equity and justice within and between political parties.

"Thirdly, electoral process must have inviolate integrity and there must be credibility of, and confidence in the process.

"Fourthly, we must learn from the errors of the past. Our experiences since the 1950s provide us with a rich menu on how to avoid political rascality, contain opportunism, check party gatekeepers, contain corruption, and ensure credibility with the electorate.

"Fifthly, we must return to those basic functions of



President Obasanjo



Gov. Makarfi

political parties outlined earlier. Parties are not formed just for the sole purpose of winning elections. They must mobilize, educate, train people as well as conduct relevant research. They must make progressive inputs into policy and must always subscribe in the large national ideals of promoting peace, harmony, stability, and development.

"Sixthly, we must learn from Iro Dan-Musa's volume on how to identify, contain or eliminate political treachery and indiscipline. There must be values to which we all subscribe and which must guide our interactions within and beyond the party. As you all know, indiscipline and ignorance even of party rules and constitutions have been the bane of our party political history.

"Seventhly, our political parties must see themselves as formidable bastions for research and analyses. They must establish research units where they cannot establish full sub-institutions on policy and research to look into comparative politics and draw lessons from other cultures and societies. Political parties

must be reservoirs of information on history of parties, students, workers, researchers, investors, policy makers and politicians. In the contemporary world of globalisation and high technology, political parties would become moribund or irrelevant if they do not take these issues seriously.

"Finally, political parties must, without distinction commit to the sustenance of the democratic process and to building democratic values. They must be seen as proponents of reforms, inclusion, gender equality, development, equal opportunity, and democracy. When they fail in this role, they sacrifice democratic consolidation and progress for political expediency and opportunism."

"Let me say a word on power struggle in Nigeria. Over the years, we had a weak economy and a weak and largely dependent economic elite that was very reliant on acquiring power to promote accumulation of private wealth. This was because in the old political arrangements, the leakages in the system were protected and at times widened to allow for such

The central focus of the conference is strongly suspected to be on the reforms of the structure of government and governance, and the considerations are most likely to be the introduction of regional government, a five-year single term for the position of the president, and the consideration of six vice presidents, one for each of the six geo-political zones in the country. Devolution of power among the federating units, so that the central government would be immensely stripped of overwhelming control and dominance is also believed to be a major subject of the conference.

Sports

Glazer plans revised United takeover bid

Malcolm Glazer is understood to be trying to reduce the amount of debt in his planned bid for Manchester United to one-third of the value of the offer. The plan is designed to persuade, or force, United's directors to give him access to the club's

sponsorship contracts and other detailed financial information.

United's board blocked access last year, arguing that Glazer's first £800m proposal was so overburdened by debt that it would expose the club to unacceptable risks.

Under the first proposal,

debt represented about 70% of the value of the offer. It is understood that Glazer, advised by the investment bank NM Rothschild, now envisages a roughly even split between debt, equity (which mainly comprises Glazer's existing 28.1% stake) and a form of "preferred" or enhanced equity.

Glazer and Rothschild are thought to be still at least a fortnight away from being able to present a firm proposal to the United board.

The debt element, though, has already been arranged in principle. JP Morgan is understood to be willing to lend the required sum of £250m-£275m, even though the bank resigned as Glazer's adviser last November after the American ignored its advice not to vote three United directors off the board. As before, the loan would be subject to a satisfactory inspection of United's books.

The preferred equity element will be the most controversial. Its precise nature is unclear, but it appears investors in these shares would be entitled to additional rights above conventional shareholders.

If those rights are similar to lenders' rights, however, United's directors could argue the preferred shares could more properly be regarded as debt and that the proposal has hardly changed in terms of leverage. Equally, Rothschild and Glazer will be aware of that trap and know the new

proposal has to be sufficiently different from the first.

Yesterday Glazer's camp tried to dampen the current speculation by saying that no comments in the press attributed to "any member of the family or person associated with the family" had been authorised. The statement was partly encouraged by the Takeover

Panel, the City's policer of deals.

Rothschild's office in Manchester has received the expected hostile reaction from some United fans. There have been attempts to jam the office's email and telephone systems and pictures of Rothschild's Manchester directors were posted on several websites.



Glazer is still interested in buying Manchester United

Tomjanovich 'may leave LA Lakers'

LA Lakers head coach Rudy Tomjanovich is close to leaving his post because of ill health, according to a statement from the team.

Tomjanovich has been in charge since last July, but has missed recent matches with a stomach virus.

"He's considering several options and resigning is one of them - that decision has not been made," said LA Lakers spokesman John Black.

"He won't coach, he's not feeling well. This has nothing

to do with cancer."

Black added there would be no official statement on Tomjanovich's future on Tuesday.

Tomjanovich has previously suffered with cancer, a condition which forced him to stand down as coach of the Houston

Rockets in 2003.

He led the Rockets for more than 11 years and won back-to-back NBA titles in 1994 and 1995.

Lakers assistant coach Frank Hamblen stood in for Tomjanovich in the team's 101-90 win over the Charlotte Bobcats on Tuesday.

Langer turns down second term as Ryder Cup captain

Bernhard Langer has ended speculation he would consider staying on as European Ryder Cup captain for 2006.

The 47-year-old German, who led Europe to a crushing victory by 18-1/2 points to 9-1/2 over the United States at Oakland Hills last September, announced on Wednesday he intends to play his way on to the team for the next matches.

"I wish to end all speculation that I will serve a second term as captain," Langer said in a statement released by the European Tour.

"I have officially informed

the European Tour tournament committee through the chairman, Jamie Spence, that I have every intention of being a playing

member of the 2006 European team.

"Both my wife Vikki and I have the most wonderful memories of the week in Detroit - memories that will

never fade - but playing golf remains number one on my priority list. I have made a solid start to this year and I intend to play a full sche-

dule."

The 2006 Ryder Cup will take place at the K Club in County Kildare, Ireland from September 22-24.



Tomjanovich

Els goes for four successive wins

Ernie Els will join a select group of golfers if he wins the Heineken Classic which starts in Melbourne on Thursday.

The South African has won the event three years in a row, and could become only the fifth player to win the same event four years running.

Els said: "This is one of my favourite weeks in the schedule, hopefully I can get in the groove here and win again."

Low scoring is expected at Royal Melbourne, with golfer Stuart Appleby saying a round of 59 is possible.

That is despite modifications to the course by tournament officials aimed at making it harder.

Australian Appleby said: "It would be sad if someone came in and shot a 59 around here. It would be sacrilege because that's not what Royal Melbourne is about."

Ernie Els' first round 60 last year suggests that not only is that possible, he could be the man to shoot it.

"The high point of playing here has to be my first round in 2004. I was 12-under-par after 14 holes, by which time the magic number 59 was in my head," the South African said.

"Even though I missed the birdie on the last it's probably as close to the perfect round of golf as I've ever played."

Only four golfers in history have won the same tournament four years in succes-

sion, and Tiger Woods' victories in the Buick Open between 2000 and 2003 make the American the only player in the modern era to achieve it.

The other legendary golfers to do so are Tom Morris Jr, Walter Hagen and Gene Sarazen.

Aiming to stop Els joining that group will be Australians Greg Norman and Adam Scott, with Colin Montgomerie also playing following his second place at the Caltex Masters in Singapore last week.

However, tennis player Scott Draper missed out on a place after failing to come through qualifying on Monday.



Els looks forward to winning the Heineken Classic

Rivaldo weighs up his options after walkout

Brazilian striker Rivaldo, who walked out of the stadium after being substituted last weekend, has said he will wait until the end of the season to decide on his future at Greek club Olympiakos Piraeus.

"When the championship finishes, I'll think about my future," the 32-year-old World Cup winner told the Greek daily newspaper Kathimerini.

"I'll stay until the summer to win titles and then we'll see."

Rivaldo, who signed a two-year contract with the club last July worth 1.8 million euros (\$2.35 million) a year, was angered by coach Dusan Bajevic's decision to substitute him at halftime during Sunday's match against Aris Salonika.

He left the stadium immediately and did not turn up

for training on Monday, although the club has denied reports of any great disagreement with the coach.

"With regard to articles which spoke of a problem in the relations between our footballer Rivaldo and our team's coach Dusan Bajevic, Olympiakos FC wants to clarify that no such issue exists," said a statement issued by the club.

It added that Rivaldo's absence from training on Monday was due solely to a family matter and that he had received permission from the technical staff.

Olympiakos, who won the Greek title for seven straight years before Panathinaikos took it from them last season, are currently top of the league with a three-point lead and a game in hand over second-placed AEK Athens.

Sharapova made to battle in Japan

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova recovered from a sluggish start to defeat Venezuela's Maria Ventokabchi 7-6 6-0 at the Pan Pacific Open.

The Russian was pushed all the way by the world number 50 but stepped up her game to win a first-set tie-break 7-3.

Sharapova, the Tokyo event's second seed, went on to comfortably close out the match in one hour, 22 minutes.

Defending champion Lindsay Davenport, runner-up at last week's Australian Open, opens her campaign on Thursday.

Meanwhile, there was some home success on Wednesday as Japanese duo Akiko Nakamura and Akiko Morigami advanced.

Nakamura defeat compatriot Ryoko Fuda 3-6 6-4 6-2, while Morigami downed Maria Sanchez Lorenzo of Spain 6-4 6-1.

Sports

HIGHBURY CLASSIC FALL-OUT

Arsenal's big guns found wanting on big stage again

The last time Arsenal conceded four goals at home, they followed up by beating Manchester United twice within three weeks.

That was in November 2001. How Arsene Wenger must wish his team could erase as quickly memories of Tuesday's 4-2 defeat by arch-rivals United that left the north London side's title hopes in the gutter.

Once again, the English champions' spine buckled when it mattered most.

With leaders Chelsea eight points clear with a game in hand, the heavyweight showdown between two sides who have shared the last nine Premier League crowns did not have the same relevance as recent skirmishes.

Season-defining it could be all the same. While Alex

Ferguson's United live on in the hope of Chelsea slipping up, Arsenal must seek glory on other fronts and grapple with a crisis of confidence.

Worryingly for Wenger, his big-name players appear to have forgotten how to perform on the big stage.

A painful 2-1 loss at Highbury against Chelsea cost them a place in the Champions League semi-finals last season.

Then a now infamous 2-0 defeat to United at Old Trafford in October ended the champions' unbeaten league run one short of a half-century.

Wenger was in no doubt where Arsenal's problems lay. "Just now overall we concede too many goals to challenge for the championship. We've conceded 29

goals now (in 25 games — compared to 26 all last season)," he said.

"We concede so many goals because, as I said, at the start of the season we were a little bit too casual. We conceded two — we scored three. We conceded three — we conceded four or five.

"And then slowly the confidence drops, good habits drop, and suddenly you are confronted with a problem."

Arsenal's talismanic striker Thierry Henry has suddenly lost his goal-scoring touch. The Frenchman has not scored this year and has gone seven games without a goal, yet Wenger is not worried.

"I am personally not worried about it at all, because he gave two goals.

You look at his record, there's nothing to worry about," said Wenger.

"He's played 180 games, he scored 125 goals in the Premiership. There's always periods when you score a little bit less."

With Arsenal's defence plugging leaks and Henry misfiring, perhaps the only player with a wry smile on Tuesday will be out-of-favour goalkeeper Jens Lehmann.

Having lost his place to Manuel Almunia, the German will be hoping for a swift recall after the former Celta Vigo keeper was at fault for United's third goal.

The Spaniard raced like a headless chicken away from his goal to intercept Ryan Giggs, only for the Welsh winger to pick out an unmar-

ked Cristiano Ronaldo for the simplest of finishes that put United ahead on 58 minutes.

The 35-year-old German, who has featured in Arsenal's FA Cup campaign this year, last started a league game at the tail end of November, when he was beaten by Neil Mellor's last-gasp winner that handed Liverpool a 2-1 victory at Anfield.

Lehmann will be championing at the bit to regain the number one jersey with Arsenal facing Bayern Munich in the first knockout round of the Champions League later this month, putting the bitter rivalry for the Germany goalkeeping role between Lehmann and Bayern's Oliver Khan back in the spotlight.



Dennis Bergkamp celebrates his goal against Man. United

No title for Arsenal, say Ferguson, Wenger

Manchester United have knocked champions Arsenal out of the title race with Tuesday's emphatic 4-2 victory at Highbury, according to both teams' managers.

Asked if Arsenal were out of the running, Ferguson told Sky Sports News: "I think so. Both managers said before the game that whoever lost had no chance of the title and I believe that today."

Two second-half goals from Portugal winger Cristiano Ronaldo and another from substitute John O'Shea turned a possible defeat into a rout for the

visitors and lifted United into second place, eight points behind title favourites Chelsea.

"We've come from behind twice, it shows the measure of the team in terms of character and determination," added Ferguson. "There are no wimps in my team and they showed that tonight."

"It was a fantastic performance."

As for United's chances of denying Chelsea their first championship in 50 years, Ferguson said: "We could win every game right to the end of the season and not win

the title.

"But I think the most important thing is that we showed we're on great form ourselves and, on that form, we must have a chance if they slip up."

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger agreed with Ferguson's analysis.

Asked if Arsenal were out of the title race, Wenger said: "It looks like it, yes. We'll not give up but we are now too far (behind)."

The Frenchman pointed the finger at his team's defending but stopped short of singling out Spanish goalkeeper Manuel Almunia after his rash judgement in trying to tackle Ryan Giggs led to United's third goal.

"We had to work hard for our goals but they did not have to work hard for their goals," Wenger said. "The third goal was a killer mentally, we never recovered from that."

"We are disappointed tonight but we have to

recover."

Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira, who opened the scoring after eight minutes, made it clear United had deserved their win.

"Today we lost to a better team, all credit to them," said the French midfielder.

"But we are going to fight until the last game of the season and second place is still quite important for the (automatic) Champions League slot. We are going to keep going."

"We are a strong team mentally. Of course, we are quite disappointed with the way we played and the result of the game, but we have to respond. We have to bounce back."

Paying tribute to United's performance, Vieira said: "They didn't panic even when we were leading 2-1, they were passing the ball quite well and they showed a lot of experience."

"They were patient and they worked really hard for each other."

English FA takes no action over tunnel incident

The English FA will take no action against Arsenal or Manchester United over a tunnel incident before Tuesday's tempestuous league clash at Highbury.

Television cameras caught United captain Roy Keane furiously shouting and pointing at Arsenal skipper

Patrick Vieira in the tunnel as the players walked out for the start. Referee Graham Poll was forced to intervene.

United manager Alex Ferguson told Sky Sports after United's 4-2 victory that Vieira had started the latest bout of trouble between the two clubs.

The FA said in a

statement that Poll was satisfied he had dealt with the incident at the time.

"We have received a report from referee Graham Poll following last night's Arsenal v Manchester United Premier League fixture in relation to an incident in the tunnel prior to the match," the FA said.

"He has confirmed that he is satisfied that he dealt with the incident at the time. Therefore no further action is required."

United's victory moved them into second place behind leaders Chelsea and probably ended Arsenal's hopes of defending their title.

Vieira denies Neville threat

Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira has denied threatening Gary Neville before the 4-2 defeat against Manchester United.

Vieira was accused of trying to intimidate Neville as the two teams lined up in the tunnel before the game.

The Frenchman then clashed with United captain Roy Keane and referee

Graham Poll had to separate the pair.

"Patrick Vieira is 6ft 4in and having a go at Gary Neville. So I said, 'have a go at me,'" Keane said Wednesday.

"If he wants to intimidate our players and thinks that Gary Neville is an easy target, I'm not having it."

However, Vieira insisted: "I didn't threaten anybody.

They are big enough players to handle themselves.

"I had a talk with Roy Keane and that's it. Gary Neville is a big lad, he can handle himself."

The fuse was lit for another torrid encounter, with Mikael Silvestre sent off with 20 minutes left for head-butting Freddie Ljungberg.

United nevertheless seized command in the

second-half and having twice come back from going behind, Cristiano Ronaldo put them ahead before John O'Shea lobbed a late fourth in what was eventually a comfortable victory.

Chelsea can now extend their advantage over Arsenal to 13 points by winning at Blackburn on Wednesday, even if Vieira refused to give up just yet.

"It will be difficult, of course. Chelsea need to lose points and we have lost at home to one of our main rivals," insisted the midfielder.

"But we just have to go on and try to win our next game, and not think about Chelsea or United. We just have to improve on how we played."

However manager Arsene Wenger was more realistic.

"It is Chelsea's title now. Manchester United still have a slight chance but there is too much for us to do," he said.



Ferguson

Ferguson points finger at Vieira

Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira and his Manchester United counterpart Roy Keane were involved in a verbal bust-up before Tuesday's dramatic Premier League encounter at Highbury.

United went on to claim a famous 4-2 victory and move into second place behind runaway leaders Chelsea, but the action began even before the first whistle had sounded.

Television cameras cau-

ght Keane furiously shouting and pointing at Vieira in the tunnel as the players walked out for the start with referee Graham Poll forced to intervene.

United manager Alex Ferguson told Sky Sports that Vieira had started the latest bout of trouble between the two clubs.

"I've heard different stories. Patrick Vieira has apparently threatened some of our players and things like

that," he said.

"So he was well wound up for it," the Scot added with a laugh.

Keane said: "If people want to intimidate some of our team mates, let's have a go at some of the other players. They think Gary Neville is an easy target, but I'm not having it."

France international Vieira, who gave Arsenal the lead after eight minutes, would not be drawn on the spat with Keane.

Farewell Honours
 for our **Unforgettable**
Mama!



Lying-in-State

Date: Friday, February 04 - Saturday, February 05, 2005
Venue: Family Residence - 20, Byefield Street, Lokoja.

Christian Wake-keeping

Date: Friday, February 04, 2005
Time: 7.00p.m. - 9.00p.m.
Venue: Senator Ogbaha's Residence, GRA, Lokoja.

Funeral Service

Date: Saturday, February 05, 2005
Time: 10.00a.m.
Venue: Cathedral Church of Holy Trinity, Lokoja.

— Children —

MRS. BEATRICE L. PWAJOK
SENATOR TUNDE OGBEHA
MRS. GRACE GOT

— Grandchildren —

MS CAROL PWAJOK
MR. DINJU PWAJOK
MR. JUCHONG PWAJOK
MR. SIMBABI OGBEHA
MR. TENG PWAJOK
MISS MAFENG GOT
MISS LARABA OGBEHA
MISS JOY GOT
MASTER NDANUSA OGBEHA
MASTER BALA OGBEHA
MASTER SELE GOT

SUSAN PWAJOK
Great Grandchild
for the family

Chief (Mrs.) Priscilla Rakiya Ogbaha (Nee Johnson)
(Aged 81 years)

Died - Saturday, January 22, 2005

• Virtuous woman • Caring mother • True companion • Friend indeed

Sports

Eaglets upbeat ahead of Meridian Cup

Captain and goalkeeper of the Golden Eaglets, Okechukwu Odah, have promised the nation a memorable outing at the 5th edition of the UEFA/CAF Meridian Cup kicking off in Turkey on Thursday.

The tournament, an eight-team event between the top four European and African Under-18 sides, will be played on a round-robin format with each side playing four games before the tournament comes to an end a week later.

"We are not under pressure of any kind, as we are looking forward to victory at the Meridian Cup," Odah told KICK OFF. "Our morale is high, and we are confident in our ability to win. With cohesion in the team now, we hope to do well this time," he added.

On the absence of erstwhile captain of the side, Daddy Bazuaye, the tall shot-stopper said: "No doubt, we will miss him because he contributed a lot to the growth of the team, but

notwithstanding, the coach knows better."

Other squad members dropped from the Turkey-bound team include Inasime Emine, Adamu Baba Sule, Emmanuel Idehen and Gerald Onyechiri.

The Eaglets left Lagos for Turkey on Tuesday night, hoping to erase memories of the last three editions where Nigeria failed to match its Cup-winning performance of 1997.

Nigeria play their first

game of the contest against Portugal on Thursday, while the second match comes up two days later against hosts Turkey.

The Eaglets will square up to France and Spain in the last two fixtures.

...depart for Turkey

The Golden Eaglets departed last night for Turkey to participate in the Le Meridian Cup tournament.

The squad, which

By Patrick Andrew,
Senior Sports Reporter

recently defeated Angola to book a place in the African U-17 Championship for Gambia is to play their opening match against Portugal tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Sports Ministry has assured that the allowances of the team will be paid since UEFA is responsible for the flight tickets and accommodation of the squad.

NFA chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima confirmed yesterday that the money needed for the players entitlements had been procured and was to be taken to the team before the departure of the flight last night.

Anne Chukwu, the acting

spokesperson of the NFA, said a contingent of 24 comprising 18 players and six officials is to make the trip.

Anne gave their names as Odah Okechukwu, Ogechi Andy, Henry, Okeke Amaobi, Festas Austine, Mohammed Salihu, Egbeta Robert, Obada Felix, and Linus Tochukwu.

Others are Kofar Mata Bello, Adams Williams, Mba Sunday, Uzeh Edeafe, Ubah Chike, Tijani Shamsudeen, Inuwa Nazifi Ammani, Chukwudi Samuel, Odia Henry and Olusegun Oluseyi.

The officials are Chief Coach Izilien Godwin, Manu Garba, Erelesusi Sunday, assistant coaches, while Onuoha Nnamdi, Fateye Babayinka, and Achor Enebia, who is team secretary.

Jatau laments dearth of quality strikers

From Okechukwu Eze,
Sports Correspondent (Lagos)

Former Iwuanyanwu Nationale striker, Ishaya Jatau has taken a swipe at the local league coaches for failing to produce an attacker that could erase his 17 goals all time best record in the league which he produced during the 1990/91 season for the Owerri based side, saying their inability to cancel the record after over a decade proves they are lazy.

Jatau, former Highlanders of Jos hitman, told our correspondent that he expected that by now the coaches would have been able to groom an attacker that would have erased the record, even as he blamed the attackers for not being very daring in the vital areas of the opponents.

"Much as I am happy to have a 17 goals unequalled record since over a decade, I lament the fact that our coaches are yet to produce an attacker that will equal and surpass me. The coaches have no reason and in fact I consider them very lazy. Yes, the big money coming into the system is spoiling them. Also the attackers too have to share in the blame because I don't see them being very bold," he said.

THE FIXTURE

04.02.2005	Cameroon vs. France	Odemis,	13.30
04.02.2005	Sierra Leone vs. Spain	Söke,	13.30
04.02.2005	Portugal vs. Nigeria	Kusadasi,	13.30
04.02.2005	Turkey vs. Egypt	Aydin,	13.30
06.02.2005	Spain vs. Cameroon	Aydin,	13.30
06.02.2005	France vs. Sierra Leone	Kusadasi,	13.30
06.02.2005	Nigeria vs. Turkey	Söke,	13.30
06.02.2005	Egypt vs. Portugal	Odemis,	13.00
08.02.2005	Cameroon vs. Portugal	Söke,	13.30
08.02.2005	Sierra Leone vs. Turkey	Odemis,	13.30
08.02.2005	France vs. Nigeria	Aydin,	13.30
08.02.2005	Spain vs. Egypt	Kusadasi,	13.30
11.02.2005	Turkey vs. Cameroon	Kusadasi,	13.30
11.02.2005	Portugal vs. Sierra Leone	Aydin,	13.30
11.02.2005	Nigeria vs. Spain	Odemis,	13.30
11.02.2005	Egypt vs. France	Söke,	13.30

Sayyu named Player of the Year again

Sayyu Dantata has been named Player of the Year for the second successive year by Polo Aficionado. The superstar who won the award for the first time last year largely on the strength of his Majekodunmi Cup MVP weighted into the 2005 contest with even weightier credentials; another Majekodunmi MVP, the Emir of Katsina Cup MVP, and the big, big one; the African Masters MVP. With two of the three Grand Slam MVPs, as well as the African Best Player prize, Sayyu's run to another Player of the Year award became virtually a one-horse race.

Another one-sided contest was that for Team of the Year which Fifth Chukker has won by making a clean sweep of the Grand Slam, taking the high-goal titles in Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Kano and Kaduna. The Adamu Atta-led team also has in its line-up Babangida Hassan, Kashim Bukar, Sayyu Dantata, and the Argentine professionals, Silvestre Donovan and Santiago Astrada. But Fifth Chukker's glittering record is not as easy as it looks on paper. They trailed IBTC/MRS until the very last Chukker in the Majekodunmi Cup championship match. That scenario repeated itself in Kaduna against El-Amin where a sudden death finish finally decided it in Fifth Chukker's favour. The trophies aside, Fifth Chukker was the most competitive team of the year, playing more tournaments than any other team and exhibiting great sportsmanship. They richly deserve their moment of glory.

Unlike last year, this year's Patron of the Year award is undisputed. In a less one-sided season the late Rufai Dantata would have been the sentimental winner, but Adamu Atta's domination of the season was so comprehensive that there was no real choice in it. Damian Duncan did

By Ismaila Umaru Lere,
Group Sports Editor

time will come pretty soon. For now it's Adamu Atta's reign, especially in his first Majekodunmi victory under his own team name as well as his own team's first Georgian victory since 1998.

The legend is now well known how V Mobile needed just one visit to Fifth Chukker Resorts to agree to pump N20 million into the African Masters Championship. That singular deal has propelled polo sponsorship to dizzying heights with clubs now asking and getting ten to twenty million naira from sponsors. In blazing the multimillion naira sponsorship trail and for hosting the continent's biggest polo fiesta, Fifth Chukker Resorts wins the Club of the Year award, succeeding Port-Harcourt Polo club, the 2004 winners.

Team of the Year... Patron of the Year... Club of the Year... If its beginning to look like a Fifth Chukker parade, it's because it is quite so. And there is more to come. The Lagos International Polo Tournament has always been the Gold standard for the domestic game. Once in a while some club comes up a carat above to claim the Best Tournament Prize, like the Niger Delta Polo Festival did in 2004. This year, however, Fifth Chukker and V Mobile have gone platinum in stitching together Africa's biggest multinational Tournament last November which saw South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Egypt and Ghana join hosts Nigeria to battle for the continent's most prestigious prize. The 2005 Best Tournament Prize deservedly go to V Mobile and Fifth Chukker.

The Best Defence Player Award goes to Babangida Hassan Usman Katsina for cracking the biggest defence job of last year, containing indomitable Player of the Year Sayyu Dantata. In the

raced, swirled, tumbled and concussed repeatedly doing the Sayyu job that helped his team edge out IBTC/MRS for the nation's most prestigious polo prize. Other tournaments proved less arduous for the Fifth Chukker hitman as they muscled through other opposition in their successful grand slam run. Babangida was always a strong contender for the Payer of the Year crown but with Sayyu on top of the world, he has to settle for the Best Defence Player prize.

The Best Offence Player Award has gone to Bashir Dantata, one of the more consistent players of last season. The Chairman of the Kano Polo Club and Master of the Offence play and the running game that Kano teams are famous for was one of the top three contenders for the Player of the year award. Although without a grand slam prize, Bashir blitzed through Katsina and Yola Tournaments charging down such heavyweights as El-Amin and Fifth Chukker. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Bashir's high performance index was his draft to pivot the Nigerian Team in the African Master's Championship.

The Club Captain of the Year Award has gone to Francis Ogboro of the Lagos Polo Club. Fondly called Franco Nero by friends, Ogboro, who recently turned 50 edged out Musa Yahaya of Port Harcourt Polo Club and Babangida Hassan Usman Katsina of Fifth Chukker for this first-time award. No one has had any reason to ever doubt Ogboro's commitment to add value to the club which he joined in the early 1990s and remains the longest serving executive committee member. Still a very active player, Ogboro recently captained the Lagos Machine team that won the Inter-city Bank Cup at last November's Kaduna Polo Tournament. He is the



President Olusegun Obasanjo receiving the African youth trophy won by the Flying Eagles from the Sports Minister Col. Musa Mohammed during the presidential reception for the team at the State House in Abuja, yesterday

Russian club dump Okoronkwo

Out of favour Super Eagles defender Isaac Okoronkwo has been sensationally released by Russian club Terek Grozny.

According to the club's official website, the team from troubled Chechnya decided to let Okoronkwo go after he failed to impress during trials in Turkey recently.

The club have instead signed Cameroonian Simon Atangana, who featured for non-premiership side Luch-

Okoronkwo has been released by Wolves in the summer and he has since been linked with clubs in Germany and English lower leagues. It is believed that Terek coach Valton Talgaev does not see how the big central defender could feature prominently in his immediate plans.

The team arrived back home in Russia from a playing tour of Turkey without the former

on 27 February to continue their preparations for the new season.



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for Sale*

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, February 3, 2005

Thoughts on the national conference

I have always admired Basil Davidson as one of the most perceptive historians of the modern era. He has demonstrated a truly outstanding understanding of the complexities of African history; and his interpretations of the facts of our history, have always been very progressive. Those who remember his television project, AFRICA, might recollect that he argued that Africa's present endeavours to build modern states, must be informed by the lessons of the success of its past experiences in the same endeavour.

Basil Davidson had always argued that the taming of the African environment: Often hostile, a terrain of jungles and deserts, man-eating beasts, inhospitable terrains, killer diseases, etc, yet peopled and settled and where agriculture, pastoralism and civilisation were eventually constructed by our ancestors, ought to be recognised as some of the greatest achievements of human beings, on the planet earth. Those thoughts have not been largely popular in the colonial and racist redoubts of historiography, especially in the western world. The most common stand traces directly to the German philosopher, Friedrich Hegel, who declared in his THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY, that "Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained for all purposes...the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night."

It is this racist perception of Africa that has largely dominated



Chief Obafemi Awolowo

the western historical scholarship about Africa. Luckily, it is this stand point which the works of Basil Davidson have challenged over the last forty years. And as we now know, it was that attitude of racism that such great African historians like the late Professor Kenneth Dike, consciously challenged in their entire career.

I have made this historical excursion today, because of the looming National Conference in Nigeria, and the need for us in Northern Nigeria to consciously face the challenges that might arise when the conference eventually commences. There is a major struggle unfolding for the soul of the Nigerian nation, but its roots were planted a long time ago. We must therefore refresh our memories about the facts of history in order not to be swept away by the reactionary forces of ethnic and tribal chauvinism, who have control of the media of the South West, and have attempted to push us in the direction of "restructuring" Nigeria along ethnic or tribal lines.

Our forefathers created the Emirate of Ilorin, and they were scholars of Fulani origin. However, they did not create a Fulani political entity. Our home is a melting pot of peoples: Hausa, Fulani, Gobir, Kanuri, Nupe, Gwari, Barba, and various Yoruba groups whose origins are very diverse, as they come from Oyo, Oshogbo, Ilobu, Ila, Ilesha and even Egba, to name a few. These different peoples, were united under the banner of Islam to build an Emirate, as part of the Sokoto caliphate, that was strong enough, all through the late eighteenth and into the mid nineteenth centuries, to withstand several efforts to destroy it by a combination of forces of the Yoruba armies of the period. It was to be conquered by the British in February 1897, in the push against the Sokoto caliphate that ended with the conquest of Sokoto itself by Lugard in 1904.

We therefore grew up in a very complex political and cultural environment, where the different peoples that make up our hometown had evolved as a MUSLIM people, where everybody remembers his origins alright, but was never defined in the narrow

Is'baq Modibbo Kawa
www.modibbo@yahoo.com

'tribal' or ethnic terms that Chief Obafemi Awolowo, would later introduce into the discourse and practice of Nigerian politics from the 1950s onwards, and which his disciples have continued to attempt to ram down our nation's throat, ever since.

Our own universe has always been far more complex and certainly more progressive than the narrow confines of 'tribalism' because the political practice that held our home town and most of what became Northern Nigeria together was derived directly from Islam, which by nature was all encompassing, emphasising our unity as part of an UMMAH. It is this complexity and subtlety which allowed Muslims of Ijesha origin (the arch tribalist, Bola Ige's people) to be the warriors who protected the flanks of the Fulani Emirs of Ilorin in those wars of old. It is also why the AJIA IJESHA (the head of the Ijesha clans of Ilorin) is the only person authorised to enter the bedroom of the Emir of Ilorin till this day. Not even the Balogun Fulani, the head of the Fulani groups, can do that in our tradition!

If it was a tribal hegemony that was constructed in Ilorin with the Jihad, it certainly would not make sense for an Ijesha man to defend a Fulani man's hegemony, in the perverted 'tribal' sense of these people.

These complexities and the creative balance that has kept



President Olusegun Obasanjo

us going have never been understood, much less respected by the tribalists, led by the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Unfortunately, Chief Awolowo and his disciples did not seem able to correctly understand the complexities even of old Oyo empire, which was one of the great empires of West Africa. It was however, NOT an ethnic or 'tribal' empire, but a territorial empire, which took in other peoples, including the Fon of present day Republic of Benin, the Barba speaking peoples of Republic of Benin, and present day Kwara and Niger States and which had very remarkable relationships with the Nupe, the Hausa and even nomadic Fulani groups. This supra-ethnic, territorial entity of Oyo mirrored the trend across most of West Africa. However, the political practice of the EGBE OMO ODUDUWA which metamorphosed into AG, UPN and AFENIFERE have continued to be based on a misreading of these histories, insisting that Nigeria must be 'restructured along ethnic' lines (a project that has no antecedent even in Yoruba history!)

We must decisively defeat this reactionary ethnic revisionist project and insist that Nigeria retains its character as a Federation of territorial states. Similarly, we must reject the madness of so-called geo-political regions, which Dr. Alex Ekwueme's group was able to push through the Sani Abacha Constitutional Conference, because there can be no collapsing of our territorial states into such amorphous regions. The quest for such regions, especially if fashioned along ethnic lines, as Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman correctly showed, is a fascist project rooted in the agenda of the ethnic chauvinists, especially of the AFENIFERE cabal, to carve out zones of their own exclusive control, in a weak, Nigerian federation.

Lets us rekindle our historical memories. During the First Republic, these people were against the regional set up in the country, because despite all their manoeuvrings, Northern-based political parties were always going to win any free and fair, democratic elections in Nigeria. They therefore jubilated when the military intervened, and had hoped that the creation of states would destroy whatever remained of Northern solidarity.

Subsequent political contests saw the North being able to forge alliances across the country to gain power, against the ethnic chauvinists of the Awolowo School.

So a new agitation emerged to restructure Nigeria along ethnic lines, that will strengthen the Yoruba region, including even adding Yoruba-speaking parts of Kwara and Kogi States to their empire, leave other parts of the country, but especially the North, weakened. The entire game plan has always been to weaken the North; and in their warped minds, to undo the history that came in the wake of the Jihad of 1804, especially as it affected the Ilorin Emirate.

This is why it is imperative for all those who represent the North at the conference to be aware of the importance of the historical issues that form the basis of the agitations that the AFENIFERE elite has systematically promoted in the media from the mid-1980s, about a Sovereign National Conference and which Obasanjo has finally acceded to. Or can we forget that the late Bola Ige said that he was in Obasanjo's government, because he, Obasanjo, was implementing AFENIFERE's agenda? Was it ever denied?

Our forefathers built states of great complexities in pre-colonial Nigeria, with varying degrees of sophistication, grandeur and power. These states, such as Benin, old Oyo, Kanem Borno and the Sokoto caliphate, represented the ingenuity of the African peoples. Each of these states was built on the basis of



Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto

a creative handling of the contradictions of existence and they cut across several linguistic lineages or ethnic groups and were territorially organised to give the components a secure place under the African sun. It was that process that was incorporated into the colonial territory that became the Federal Republic of Nigeria at independence in 1960.

Those who negotiated our independence did not represent 'tribes', and Nigeria at the beginning of the twenty-first century should not be dragged back by men of the past such as Chief Anthony Enahoro who have presented a reactionary, anarchic and impractical blue print for a so-called 'Ethnic Federations' derived from the a-historical agenda of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

We must go to the Conference to affirm the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its territorial states, while organising with other patriots from across Nigeria for the devolution of more resources for development at the state and local levels. This is without destroying the ability of the federal centre to play a decisive role as a modern state should do in the development process. This is especially important in the context of Nigeria's potentials as the regional power in West Africa.

It is also important to understand that at the base of the hydra-headed problems of Nigeria today, is the failure of our neo-colonial model of development. The debt burden has allowed the imperialists to impose on our country a neo-liberal economic model. That model obliges the ruling elite to pay the odious foreign debts, curtail social services, privatise our national assets and deepen subservience to the international capitalist system.

In implementing these policies, the state is unable to cater for the social needs of the Nigeria people in education, healthcare and employment. But these problems are mis-interpreted by reactionary elites as problems of ethnicity or religious marginalisation. These are people who in essence are afraid of democratic politics, despite all their noise making. We must therefore defeat all efforts to reduce us to their own primitive levels of 'tribalism' or ethnic restructuring. We are heirs to a more complex pattern of organisation of society, as our history has shown. We must fight for our heritage of pluralism at the National Conference. That is the way to move Nigeria forward in the twenty-first century.