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DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2010 RAB'U AWWAL 23, 1431 A.H.

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www.dailytrust.com VOL. 23 No 82 N150

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End this tit for tat madness

THE heinous, cowardly and genocidal attacks by armed men on three villages near Jos, Plateau State in the early hours of last Sunday was an outrage, a calculated attack on efforts to consolidate a fragile peace in crisis-torn Plateau State and a most despicable onslaught on human life, including the lives of women, children and the aged. Estimates of casualties from Sunday's episode already include hundreds killed and many hundreds wounded.

From all indications so far, the attacks on the three villages of Dogo Nahawwa, Ratsat and Zot in Shen District of Jos South Local Government were carried out by Fulani pastoralists to avenge for their community's losses during the last sectarian crises of January 25-27 in the same state.

It is noteworthy that in the wake of the last orgy of violence in Jos, which itself included the genocidal wiping out of many defenceless villagers by those alleged to

be their neighbours, the Fulani pastoral community's leaders meticulously compiled figures of herdsman and their family members said to have been killed in various villages and locations around Jos. The pastoralists' leaders made a convincing public case of the casualties they suffered, according to them in the hands of Berom attackers. They also made an interesting point that they were specially aggrieved because the pastoralists were

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Gen Gusau bounces back as NSA

By Abdulfattah Olajide & Muhammed S. Shehu

TOP spymaster Lt. Gen. Aliyu Mohamed Gusau (rtd) bounced back as National Security Adviser (NSA) to the president yesterday, four years after he last quit the post in 2006 in order to seek the ruling Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) presidential ticket. It would be the fourth time in 25 years that Gusau would hold this post, having held it twice under military ruler General Ibrahim Babangida and for another 6 and a half years under President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Gusau's appointment was announced last night after Acting President Goodluck Jonathan removed retired Major General Abdullahi Sarki Mukhtar, who was appointed to the post by Obasanjo in 2006 and retained by President Umaru Yar'adua in 2007.

Jonathan's Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity Mr. Ima Niboro announced the changes in a terse statement soon after yesterday's inaugural National Security Council meeting chaired by

Jonathan.

Although no reason was given for Mukhtar's removal, *Daily Trust* gathered that it was not unconnected with the renewed sectarian violence in Jos and the recent mobilisation of the Brigade of Guards without the acting president's knowledge during President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's return to the country after a 93-day medical sojourn in Saudi Arabia.

Presidency sources said although the police had earlier alerted the nation on the likelihood of re-eruption of violence in Jos, the former NSA did not act on the police security report.

Gen. Mukhtar was also said to have been involved in the mobilisation of troops for Yar'adua's return without clearance from the acting president, who is the acting Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Niboro only said, "Jonathan thanked the former NSA for his services to the nation and the

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GEN. Aliyu Gusau

JOS CRISIS

Jos killings a reprisal - Police

From Andrew Agbese & Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

THE Plateau State police command yesterday said the early morning attack on three villages in Jos South Local Government on Sunday was a reprisal by some Fulani people who lost their tribesmen and cattle in the January crisis.

Briefing newsmen on the incident yesterday in Jos, Police Public Relations Officer ASP Mohamed Lerama said the police in the course of investigation found out that the raid in which hundreds died was a fallout of the January crisis when hundreds of

Fulanis and their cattle were killed in Tim Tim, Kuru Janta, Kuru, Vom and Ungwan Doki.

The police however put the number of those killed Sunday at 55, adding that about 93 people have been arrested in connection with the killings.

ASP Lerama explained that the arrest was in two categories with the first comprising of 19 Fulani persons who were arrested after the incident with daggers and knives at Angwari village in Jos East Local Government Area and upon interrogation said they were on revenge mission, while four Fulani people were shot dead at Barikin Ladi by the Joint

Patrol Team. The second category he said, comprise of 74 persons who were arrested in Mangu Village with prohibited fire arms by the Joint Patrol Team after a hot exchange of fire between them and the security operatives, adding that the patrol team recovered 23 different types of guns and 39 9mm ammunition and live cartridges.

ASP Lerama explained that after the attack, the Police received a report that a group of Fulanis invaded Dogo Nahauwa and other surrounding villages like Zot and Ratsat, maiming and killing innocent people around 3am.

He said mobile police personnel were drafted to the area to maintain law and order around 4am, adding that on the spot interviews conducted by the police revealed that the villagers were attacked by their Fulani neighbours with whom they had been living peacefully for decades, adding, "To further substantiate this assertion, the killings and burning of houses were selective, a clear indication that attackers were from within, and all appeals and entreaties made to the Fulani before now for peace were turned down".

He said the village, Dogo Na Hauwa, is remote and on a very

difficult terrain, but the police moved swiftly and information was circulated to all divisional police headquarters and dragnets were spread and two mentioned categories of arrest were made successfully. The police spokesman refuted the reports by Al Jazeera television that the attackers were from Bauchi State, adding that preliminary investigation conducted by the police showed that the attackers were from Fubur villages which even though share boundary with Bauchi State, cannot be said with certainty that the attackers came from Bauchi until investigation is concluded.

I am not to blame - Jang

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

PLATEAU State Governor Jonah Jang yesterday explained why he shouldn't be a blamed for the crises in the state.

Jang who spoke at the inaugural peace building conference on peace in Jos yesterday said security in Nigeria had become intractable since governors had no command of the security agencies in their states.

He said if the governors did not control the security agencies in their states, then they should not be blamed in times of crises.

"As governor, I am the chief security officer of the state. I chair the security committee of the state, but I have no command or control over any security agency. All security agencies are federal. The state security heads are first responsible to their chiefs in Abuja. I can understand that. But where does that leave the state government that is often blamed for lack of ability to manage crises?" he said.

Jang said though he had been criticised and blamed for the crises that occurred in his state during his administration, he could not be said to have engineered any of them as he was also pained by them.

"In the circumstances, only an insane leader would cause violence which compounds problems of governance and distorts the milieu for stable development. Only an insane man wakes up and torches his house. Let me warn that unless we begin to punish those behind the crises, the violence would not be arrested.

Those responsible, no matter who they are, should be made to face the law," he said.

Those responsible, no matter who they are, should be made to face the law



FROM left: Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ishaya Ibrahim, Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Abdulrahman Danbazau, Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Paul Dike, National Security Adviser to the President, retired Maj. Gen. Sarki Abdullahi and acting President Goodluck Jonathan at a security meeting in Abuja yesterday. Muktar was removed as NSA immediately after the meeting.

Mass burial for victims

From Andrew Agbese & Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

IT was weeping and lamentation yesterday at Dogo Na Hauwa village as bodies of those slain in Sunday's attack were given a mass burial.

About 57 bodies were laid into the mass grave yesterday between 4:30 and 5:00pm.

Those present wept profusely as the bodies were committed to earth.

Our correspondent learnt that other bodies were buried at the two other villages that received attacks.

Special adviser to the state governor on Media, Dan Manjang, told our correspondent that a total of 380 bodies were buried in all the affected villages.

Soyinka flays FG, security agencies

From Femi Akinola, Lagos

NOBEL Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, yesterday blamed the Federal Government and security agencies in the country for the

Sunday killings in Plateau State, saying the Inspector General of Police and other security operatives were asleep while gun men unleashed mayhem on the people.

"They should be held respon-

sible. Worst still, the legislators, instead of doing what is expected of them, are busy collecting 'Ghana Must Go'. Women should rise up because they were the major victims in the crisis," he said.

Shagari, Shonekan sue for peace

From Ahmed Mohammed & Mahmud Lalo, Jos

DESPITE the fresh crisis that erupted in Dogo Na Hauwa in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State Sunday, former Heads of State, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Chief Earnest Shonekan were yesterday hosted to a peace conference in Jos where they all called for peace.

The former leaders made the call at the inaugural conference organized by the Institute of Governance and Social Research (IGSR) in collaboration with the British Department for

International Development supported by the Plateau State government.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who decried the recurrent crises in the state, pointed out the importance of the unity in the country, saying there was the need to find a lasting solution to the Jos crises.

"There is something wrong which we must all examine and correct and provide a suitable solution," he said.

Shagari who pointed out the strategic position of Jos which encompasses various tribes and religious groups in the country, said what all Nigerians want is unity, adding, "It is time to live in peace and concord, we cannot

afford therefore to ignore any situation which will disturb the peace, unity and integrity of this country".

Chief Earnest Shonekan who led the National Interim Government, attributed the recurrent crises in the state to lack of coherent economic structure, saying the problem of Jos was beyond mere ethnic and religious dimensions. He added that if government would create an enabling environment where people have access to basic necessities of life, people would have no time to resort to violence, saying, "we all know that a hungry man is an angry man".

Kano community discovers 'ritualists hideout'

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

RESIDENTS of Garin Gun Dutse in Kura Local Government Area of Kano State have discovered two caves alleged to be hideouts for ritualists.

Sources said the attention of the community was drawn to the caves by a security man working with the Kano State Water Resources and Engineering Construction Agency (WRECA) whose duty post is opposite the

rock.

The security man, Muhammad Sule, said he observed that strange activities were going on around the rock, but never bothered to investigate as it did not affect his work.

"In the two years I have worked here, I have seen big cars here, usually in the night. Most times people come out of the cars and climb the rock from behind, I never bothered to find out who they were or what they were

doing until last Saturday when I saw two men come out of a jeep, they climbed the rock not carrying anything and later came out carrying bags and that was when I became suspicious and alerted residents. Police later came to investigate too", he said.

A resident, Mohammed Sunusi, told our reporter when some of his people reached the caves they found a naked old man lying on a mattress in one of the caves while there were clothes

and other items in the other cave.

"When we went to the rock, we discovered that there were two caves, one with a very narrow entrance, but wide inside. We saw an aged man lying naked on a mattress and another old man and a 13 year old boy suspected to be victims of the ritualists in the other cave. The man was looking very pale and sick, he couldn't even talk. The boy too couldn't talk. They were taken to the hospital while the suspected culprit was taken away

by the police", he said.

However, the Kura police division denied the claim, saying the man at the cave was a mad man and that he had been released. Speaking to our reporter, the District Police Officer, Kura division, Isiaku Dangogari, confirmed the arrest and release of the suspect.

He also said the boy was not found in the cave, but somewhere around the cave. He condemned the alarm raised over the issue saying, it was uncalled for.



A rally to mark this year's International Women's Day in Lagos yesterday.

PIC: NAN

Jonathan orders Ajaokuta, Itakpe to resume operation

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

ACTING President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday ordered the Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited (ASCL) and the National Iron Ore Mining Company (NIOMCO), Itakpe to resume operation.

The minister of Mines and Steel Development Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke who announced this yesterday said both companies would commence operation before the year ends.

She said the acting president had approved the sum of N650 million for salaries and operation cost.

The concessioning of Ajaokuta to Global Infrastructure Nigeria Limited, a member of Ispat Group, was revoked two years ago by the federal government.

"I am happy to report to you today that the Acting President has graciously approved the Ministry's request to re-operationalise both entities, prior to privatization. It is the Ministry's plan therefore, to ensure that both entities commence operations, not later than the end of second quarter of this year," she said.

The minister said in taking the decision, the government had considered the critical economic importance of both companies to industrialization, job creation, wealth generation, economic diversification, and import substitution among others.

The reopening of two companies, she said, would save the job of professionals who are already working in the companies, some since its inceptions back in 1979.

CJN warns against indiscreet interim injunction

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin

CHIEF Justice of Nigeria (CJN) Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu yesterday cautioned judges to avoid indiscreet granting of ex-parte applications for interim injunction without considering the likely inconveniences associated with such actions.

Katsina-Alu gave the warning in a keynote address delivered at the 2010 refresher course for Judges and Kadis and Judges

designated to handle economic crimes and corruption cases.

He reminded participants of the provisions of Rule 2(a) of the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers which states that: "A Judicial officer must avoid the abuse of the power of issuing interim injunctions ex-parte".

The CJN noted that the National Judicial Council (NJC) is at alert to its responsibility should any judicial officer fall

foul of the rule and advised judicial officers to stay on the side of caution.

He urged Judges, "to be mindful of the fact that granting of frivolous adjournments in cases before you will not only cause undue delay in trial, but will also impact negatively on the evaluation of your performance by the NJC committee".

Earlier in his address, the NJI administrator Justice Umaru Eri (rtd) said transparency and

accountability must be the driving factors in the utilization of public funds if Nigeria is to be counted amongst the first 20 economies of the world.

Speaking, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mrs Farida Waziri recommended that judges handling cases of corruption and financial crimes should not handle any other matter to ensure expeditious trials of cases of corruption.

One killed in Katsina Maulud procession

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

A 25-year-old, Umaru Abdulrahman, was on Monday stabbed to death during the annual Maulud procession in Katsina metropolis.

Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO) of the Katsina State command ASP Alhassan U Kimba confirmed the incident to *Daily Trust*. He said already one person was arrested in respect of the incident.

He said but for the intervention of the police the situation may have degenerated into a mob action as some people have started beating the suspect and

are about to lynch him before he was rescued by the police.

The procession turned bloody following a purported disagreement between the two camps in the allegedly over a horse riding.

It was learnt that the two groups have been fighting, when one of them used a knife and stabbed the deceased victim on the chest somewhere at Kwanar Asibitin Mallam Barau.

The murdered young man hailed from Unguwar Alkali quarters of Katsina metropolis. He has already been buried according to Islamic rites at the Danmarna grave yard in Katsina.

US tells Nigeria to fight terrorism, not listing as country of interest

By Aisha Umar Agaie

THE United States of America said Nigeria should work towards avoiding a recurrence of the failed December 25 attack rather than expressing dissatisfaction with the country's inclusion on the list of countries of interest in the fight against terrorism.

US ambassador to Nigeria Robin Renee Sanders said this

at the Petroleum Club gathering.

"You do have outside extremists that have a foothold here in Nigeria and your energies need to be focused on addressing that issue more so than having to take your shoes off twice or being asked additional questions," she stated.

"I face these same things and what is more important to me is the safety of the flying public, and that should also be more

important to you. Everyone here should be grateful as I am that 278 people did not perish on that day, your citizens and mine," she added. She urged Nigeria to pass counterterrorism legislation to protect its territory and citizens because "no country today is immune from global terrorism or the efforts of global terrorists to operate in their country. America is not and neither is Nigeria."

PHOTO: NAN

Man arrested in Nigeria charged in US with assisting terror group

A man whom US prosecutors say received bomb-making training in Somalia from the Islamist militant group Al Shabaab has been brought to New York to face charges, the US Attorney's office said yesterday.

Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed, who was arrested in Nigeria and whose nationality was not disclosed, faces one count of conspiring to provide material support to Al Shabaab, which the US State Department has listed as a foreign terrorist organization. The US government considers Al Shabaab to be al Qaeda's proxy in the failed Horn of Africa state.

Al Shabaab, which has pledged allegiance to al Qaeda, wants to topple Somalia's UN-backed government and impose its own strict version of sharia, Islamic law.

The heavily armed group controls much of the South and parts of the capital Mogadishu, and courts run by its clerics have ordered executions, floggings and amputations.

According to the indictment unsealed on Monday, Ahmed received Al Shabaab "jihad training" in the vicinity of Kismayo and Barawa, Somalia, in April 2009, and provided the group with \$3,000.

Ahmed's lawyer, a public defender, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. He was scheduled to appear before a US magistrate judge later on Monday.

Ahmed was arrested in Nigeria, where he had bomb-making instructions. He was transferred into US custody over the weekend. He faces a maximum sentence of 45 years if convicted.

Nigeria must bring killers of Christians to justice: Clinton

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called Monday on Nigeria to find and punish those responsible for the killings of more than 500 Christians in a wave of sectarian slaughter.

"We continue to urge all parties to exercise restraint," Clinton told reporters, adding the Nigerian government "should make sure the perpetrators are brought to justice."

Clinton addressed report-



FROM left: Former Head of interim Government, Chief Ernest Shonekan, Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State, former Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, former President Shehu Shagari and first civilian Governor of Plateau State, Chief Solomon Lar, at the inaugural Peace Building conference in Jos yesterday.

UN chief Ban says Nigeria violence "appalling"

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Monday he was deeply concerned about the recent "appalling" deaths in Nigeria, and urged the country's political and religious leaders to solve the nation's crisis.

Several hundred people are feared to have been killed in recent clashes involving Muslim herders and Christian villagers. Violence has been concentrated around the city of Jos, which lies at the crossroads of Nigeria's Muslim north and predominantly Christian south.

"I am deeply concerned that there has been more inter-religious violence, with appalling loss of life," Ban said in New York. "I appeal to all concerned to exercise maximum restraint."

News Analysis

The return of General Aliyu Gusau

By Ibrahim Auduson

AFTER days of speculations about the possible sack of retired General Abdullahi Sarki Muktar from the position of National Security Adviser, NSA, Acting President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday announced his replacement with veteran security chief and retired senior General, Aliyu Mohammed Gusau.

The new NSA is no stranger to the position having held it for most of the 8 years of the Obasanjo Presidency. Before that he has been in military Intelligence and was briefly Army Chief. Within the Nigerian security circle, it is difficult to find anyone with more on the job experience or the wealth of contact in the global security establishment.

His appointment may still be a surprise given that the only time that the new NSA showed his hand in the political arena was when he contested the Presidential primaries of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party against ailing President Umaru Musa Yar'adua being a contemporary of the late Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'adua.

It is unclear what General Aliyu Gusau's acceptance of the appointment from Acting President Jonathan mean for the speculation that he or his

friend and ally, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida may be interested in the 2011 Presidential election for which the ruling PDP recently said it will field a Northern candidate. What may be a bit more certain is that his appointment may weaken the famed hold of former President Olusegun Obasanjo on the Acting President. Indeed the appointment of General Gusau may be a sign that the Obasanjo/Azazi axis may have lost the intricate power game to control the Presidency. Some sources had indicated that Obasanjo's former Chief of Defence Staff, General Patrick Azazi like his boss has been holed in Abuja trying to spin matters in his favour and possibly replace the former NSA.

With the ever recurring Jos crisis, the Niger Delta palaver, the creeping attempt to put Nigeria on international terrorism map and many other national security concerns, a tested hand like Aliyu Gusau may be the man that may help stabilize an uncertain presidency in difficult times. A hand that fit into all this. In the event he recovers sufficiently to take back the reins of power how will he relate to an NSA who clearly wanted his post or still wants it? Or as someone remarked on hearing of the new appointment, do these guys know something we don't?

Gen Gusau bounces back

Continued from page 1

present administration, and wished him well in his future endeavours.

The new NSA General Gusau actually handed over to Mukhtar in 2006, having held the position since Obasanjo's inauguration in May 1999. Before his re-emergence as a major PDP player in 1998-99 and one of the small group of retired Generals who orchestrated

Obasanjo's return to power, Gusau had been the Chief of Army Staff under Chief Ernest Shonekan's Interim National Government. He was retired soon after General Sani Abacha overthrew the ING in November 1993.

Prior to his appointment as Army Chief in the dying days of Babangida's regime, Gusau served twice [1987-89 and 1990-93] as the regime's National Security Adviser, having earlier headed the Directo-

rate of Military Intelligence. He also served as General Officer Commanding [GOC] the army's 2 Division, Ibadan in 1989-90. A native of Zamfara State, General Gusau was also the godfather of the Zamfara State PDP, at least until Governor Mamuda Shinkafi left the ANPP and joined the Zamfara PDP last year. He finished third in the PDP's presidential primaries of December 2006, after Yar'adua and Chief Rochas Okorocha.

Don't tag all Muslims as terrorists – Sultan

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

THE Sultan of Sokoto and President, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) Alhaji Saad Abubakar has said it is not right to generalise the entire Muslims as terrorists whenever an individual among them does something wrong.

Sultan Abubakar, who spoke in Lagos at a fund raiser for the Najah Joint Muslim Organiza-

tions (NAJOMO) mosque at the weekend, said rather than accuse all Muslims of terrorism, the acts of the United States and its agents should as well be examined.

He alleged that violent acts being perpetrated all over the world were being carried out by non-Muslims, including American citizens and agents of the American government. According to him, many Christians and Jews perpetrate terror acts

on a daily basis but they are not tagged terrorists by the US and the media.

"Our dear brother, the Baba Addini of Egba Land (Adegbite) was correct when he said Muslims are not terrorists and that Islam is a religion of peace. Let me add here that some people somewhere are known for their lies against Islam and Muslims. Violent acts are perpetrated all over the world by adherents of different faiths

and not only Muslims commit them.

Let me say here that it is unfair to Muslims and Islam for the US government to rush, as it used to do, to tag Muslims as terrorists whenever they commit any violent act. It is sad that if an adherent of any other religion commit any terror act the US and the media would not call such a person a terrorist, the US and the media must change this.

"I make bold to say that if we should put all violent acts being perpetrated all over the world by Americans and the ones Muslims commit on a scale, we would surely see that those being committed by the US citizens outweigh those they claim Muslims committed. But as Muslims we should try to change this negative attitude they have towards us. We can change this by showing them the beauty of our religion", he said.



PIC: NAN

FROM left: Chairman, Kaduna State PDP Ya'u Usman, Governor Namadi Sambo of Kaduna State and former Chairman, Kaduna State PDP Alhaji Yaro Makama, at the inauguration of the party's reconciliation committee in Kaduna yesterday.

Boko Haram: Witnesses fail to identify suspects

From Yahaya Ibrahim and Sharafa Dauda, Maiduguri

SIX police witnesses from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) who were to testify against Boko Haram suspects were unable to identify any of the 19 accused persons at the High Court 9 in Maiduguri yesterday, saying they could not recognize their faces any more. The case is one of the many filed by the police against the Boko Haram members. The witnesses had recorded confessional statements from the 19 persons between August 24 and 31, 2009, and which were tendered before the court by Barrister Richard Balami, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions in the Borno State Ministry of Justice at the hearing.

The presiding judge, Justice Abdullahi Yerima Sanya, had while admitting the exhibits, sought objection from the counsel to all accused persons. No objection was raised except in the case of the 17th accused person, which according to his counsel, Barrister Bukar Alhaji Waziri, was rectified with correction fluid, possibly implying that after his client issued his statement, it may have been distorted. The judge then told the defence counsel that the sequel hearings.

Apart from the statements which the suspects made during interrogations, no evidence was presented against them in court because all the investigative police officers who are witnesses against the suspects said they neither arrested the accused persons, nor did they know the officers who arrested them.

He also said he did not know where or how they were arrested. The IPOs also admitted before the court that they did not conduct any investigation on the charges brought against the suspects, adding that none of the accused persons was found to be in possession of any exhibit that could incriminate them.

Hearing in the case will continue today after it was adjourned yesterday.

Police investigate clash over ownership of fish pond

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

THE police in Niger State are investigating circumstances that led to the death of two persons in a communal clash over a fish pond which has been the cause of a conflict between the Kuchita and Emigi communities.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Chantre Oguiche told our correspondent yesterday in Minna that seven people were earlier nominated to investigate what was happening in the pond from the Kuchita community, but the Emigi community attacked them based on an alleged instruction from their community head.

Oguiche said the two communities which had claimed that the pond was handed over to them by the Etsu Nupe, had refused to yield, maintaining that they learnt that the village head of Emigi, Etsu Idris, had earlier instructed that his subjects should kill whoever they find at the pond. He said already, some people have been arrested over the incident as men of his command were keeping peace in the area.

A clash erupted Thursday as a result of the disputed fish pond that has been a subject of litigation for over 10 years.

The violent clash which also left three people seriously injured is the second communal clash in less than two weeks when more than six people died in Mokwa area of the state. Trouble started after a High Court ruling in Bida gave the Kuchita community the ownership of the fish pond which led infuriated youths from the aggrieved Emigi to go for fishing in protest. Tragedy struck when the Kuchita community members rushed to the pond to prevent youths of Emigi from fishing when Babaman Naibi and Abubakar were shot dead Thursday.

Our correspondent further gathered that seven people who were nominated to investigate what was happening at the pond were caught unawares by gunfire from the Emigi people.

As a result of the surprise attack, Mohammed Musa, Muhammed Jibrin and A. Mohammed were seriously injured.

Prostitute kills man in hotel

From Seun Joseph, Lagos

A fight in a Lagos hotel between a commercial sex worker and a client has led to the death of the man after he was stabbed with a broken bottle by the prostitute.

The Lagos Police Command along with other suspects who were arrested in Lagos.

The prostitute identified as Hope Nkechi Okafor, works at Nice-Time hotel in a Lagos suburb. The deceased, Abiodun Samuel, was a known regular patron of the hotel.

On March 1, he went to the hotel to patronize a particular prostitute. However, his regular customer was on duty with another man when he got there. Her neighbour made an attempt to lure him to her room.

Police spokesman Frank Mba told *Daily Trust* that one thing led to the other and the two started fighting. When the male customer started having an upper hand, she resorted to the use of a bottle of soft-drink. Which she had initially drunk while still waiting for the suspect who confirmed that she had been a prostitute since she came to Lagos about eight months ago.

Jigawa to revive education sector

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

JIGAWA State Governor Alhaji Sule Lamido yesterday has said raised by the state of education in the state and has reiterated his commitment to revive the sector.

Speaking at the 22nd annual co-ordinating committee meeting of secretaries of federal and state scholarship boards in Dutse, Lamido said his administration met the sector in total dilapidation. He said, "Classrooms were completely dilapidated, no furniture, no equipments in our laboratories and the salaries of our teachers was poor," noting that, the money being spent on the sector was based on the requirement of the sector. "What we are doing in the educational sector is not by chance, rather by necessity. Jigawa has been identified with high rates of maternal mortality, poverty and illiteracy and with improvement in educational sector, we are addressing these vices", he said.

World Bank rates Nigeria's agriculture high

By Aisha Umar Agaie

THE World Bank has rated the monitoring and evaluation framework for Nigeria's Commercial Agriculture Development Projects (CADP) as highly satisfactory.

Task Team Leader of the CADP Lucas Kolawole Akapa said he is satisfied with the progress made by participating states in the project in terms of their plan of action to ensure effective implementation that will deliver results to the beneficiaries.

He said the World Bank will ensure that technical assistance and financial resources get to the beneficiaries on time since agriculture is time bound.

Akapa asked participating states during a 5-day technical review and advocacy meeting held between Feb. 22 and 27, 2010 in Lagos to sustain the high rating given to the project by ensuring quality supervision and implementation of the project.

Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture, Chief Enock Kolapomoye Ajiboso, said his state was in support of the project and has already provided counterpart fund of N168 million for the year 2010.

The project is being implemented in Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Cross River and Kano states to support three value chains per state as follows: Cross river, oil palm, cocoa and rice; Enugu is fruit trees, poultry and maize; Kaduna, fruit trees, dairy and maize; Kano, rice, dairy and maize and Lagos, poultry, aquaculture and rice.

Auditor General: Senators move to stop Ukura

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

THE struggle for the vacant seat of Auditor General of Federation has taken a new dimension as some senators have commenced moves to stall the confirmation of Mr. Samuel Ukura from Benue State.

The report of the Senate Committee on Public Accounts which screened Mr. Ukura is scheduled for debate this week while some senators especially those from the South West insist that his appointment will go against the civil service rule.

The committee has screened Mr. Ukura late last year but his nomination by President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has become source of controversy among top officials in the Presidency and the civil service.

Source close to the committee revealed to Daily Trust that the report favours the appointment of Mr. Ukura who is currently Auditor General of Benue State "But what we are not sure is whether or not he would be cleared by the whole Senate."

Mr. Ukura's nomination faces protest from various stakeholders including senators and the Association of Public Service Auditors of Nigeria (APSAN) which sent a petition to President Yar'adua seeking to stop the nomination.

Sources said that senators especially from the South West zone are against the appointment of Mr. Ukura ahead of the present acting AGF who is senior and more experienced.

On its part, APSAN insist that appointing Mr. Ukura as Auditor General of Federation negates the principles of seniority in the civil service.

President Yar'adua in a memo to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) said "Specifically, the letter is an appeal to His Excellency, Mr. President to consider appointing any of the most senior Directors in the office of the Auditor General for the Federation to fill the vacant position of the Auditor General in the interest of public sector auditing."

The agitation against Ukura's nomination is against the backdrop that as assistant director in the Benue State civil service his appointment as Auditor General of Federation would promote him far and above his seniors in the federal civil service which could lead to insubordination.



DEPUTY Governor Patrick Yakowa of Kaduna State, Wife of Kaduna State Governor, Hajiya Amina Sambo, and Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Mary Amu Madami, at the International Women's Day Celebration in Kaduna yesterday.

Livestock, foodstuff sellers begin warning strike

By Misbahu Bashir

LIVESTOCK and foodstuff dealers yesterday commenced a one week warning strike over they called 'multiple taxation' by state governments.

Counsel to the merchants Jibrin Gonda said all relevant authorities including the Office of the Joint Tax Board and states governments have been requested to address the issue of multiple tax system and that all the associations would commence strike if the request was not addressed from March 8 2010.

"These merchants travel from state to state in most cases and any local government they pass, they are made to pay different taxes. And any delay or failure to pay the taxes, they are detained, harassed and beaten up. Most of the tax collectors work together with troublemakers and the police," he said.

The taxes lead to the increase in cost of goods. "For example, if you buy a cow for N50, 000 from the northern region and transport it Lagos or Awka, by the time you arrived there the cost of the cow

would climb to over a N100, 000 due to taxes," he added.

The Secretary General of Amalgamated Livestock and Foodstuff Association, Kabiru Alhassan said the strike was as a result of the failure of government to address the multiple payments of levies to different local council while conveying goods to the Sothorn parts of the county.

The merchants yesterday stationed themselves at Zaria and prevented all vehicles carrying livestock and foodstuff from taking goods to other part of the country.

Mark, AC mourn Stanley Macebuh

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Muideen Olaniyi

SENATE President David Mark and the Action Congress yesterday paid glowing tribute to former Managing Director of the Guardian Stanley Macebuh.

Mark said Macebuh's death is a great loss to the pen profession and the nation at large.

In a statement signed by the Special Adviser Media and Communications to the Senate President Kola Ologbondiyan, Mark said "Macebuh remained one of the brightest and fertile minds in the media profession."

He urged the family of the late journalist and the media profession to take solace "In the fact that the late forefront journal-

ist lived an exemplary life worthy of emulation."

The Action Congress (AC) described the late Macebuh as a journalism icon and a shining light in the great profession of journalism in the country.

In a statement issued in Lagos on Monday by its National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the party hoped that the generation of journal-

ists who benefited from the immense knowledge and professional competence of Macebuh will keep the flag flying by continuing to raise the bar of professionalism.

It also condoled with Macebuh's family and prays that God will give them the fortitude to bear the irredeemable loss, while also granting the departed eternal rest.

Barkindo: NNPC will either transform or liquidate

BY Hamisu Muhammad

GROUP Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo said the company will either transform or liquidate.

He said this yesterday in London at the flag off of a three day exploratory meeting with international investment banks aimed at seeking financing to fulfill the capitaliza-

tion needs of the new NNPC as proposed under its transformation agenda.

Dr. Barkindo who was accompanied by top management of the corporation explained that although the bankers may not take the corporation seriously because it had treaded and abandoned this course of action in the past urged the bankers to note that 'there is no plan B'.

He said it was important to note that the corporation was currently cash nega-

tive and had only been sustained by sovereign guarantees provided by the federal government.

"We must transform to a profitable and professionally driven enterprise and that is why we are exploring funding options. Indeed, it is the only way to go," Barkindo said.

He told the bankers that the Petroleum industry Bill was at an advanced stage of the legislative process adding that the cor-

poration had launched a transformation programme in anticipation of the changes expected to follow the passage of the bill into law.

Also speaking, Mr. Phillip Chukwu, the NNPC Group Executive Director in charge of Exploration and Production disclosed that the corporation had worked out plans to grow output from 60,000 barrels per day to 90,000 barrels per day by end of 2010 and 250,000 barrels per day by 2015.

Thugs assault councillors over impeachment plot

From Ibrahim Muhammad, Yola

ABOUT 21 political thugs popularly known as "Lawal Habu Boys" are alleged to have beaten up eight councillors in Girei Local Government Area of Adamawa State for allegedly plotting to impeach the Chairman of the council Alhaji Abubakar Hamman.

Nine of the 10 councillors in

the area signed and served Alhaji Hamman a 14-day impeachment notice for allegedly embezzling funds meant for the council and unauthorized withdrawal of funds.

The councillors accused the chairman of unauthorised release and expenditure of funds as well as the diversion of N1.78 billion that accrued the council in 2009.

They also alleged that the chairman embarked on frequent frivolous trips abroad without approval to the council.

They further alleged that the chairman negotiated and collected a loan of N50 million from a bank without the council's approval and bought some chemicals and executed various projects also without approval.

The councillors had said that their action was backed by Section 20 (1) of the state Constitution Law, 2009.

Our correspondent learnt yesterday that supporters of the embattled chairman trailed and attacked the councillors who signed the impeachment notice. In a petition to the state Commission of Police through their

lawyer, the councillors alleged that the thugs were sponsored by the state.

"Most of us were hospitalised while Ahmad Dikko, representing Dakri Ward is still in a critical condition at the Federal Medical Centre, Yola," they said. If Hamman is removed, he would be the fourth council chairman in the state to be sacked this year.

PHOTO BY KEMALUDDIN

Police ban motorcycle parks near Ondo banks

From Leyi Adewumi, Akure

THE Ondo State Police Command yesterday banned all commercial motorcycle parks around bank locations.

The Commissioner of Police Mr. Ballah Magaji Nasarawa who disclosed this in Akure while briefing newsmen said police decided to ban motorcycle parks near banks to check criminal activities.

"I intend to pursue this to a logical conclusion, no matter whose ox is gored," he said.

The commissioner condemned last week's attack on Justice Sadiq Adesola of the state High Court by armed robbers, the killing of a cocoa merchant, late Dayo Ogunmolasuyi and Managing Director, Citicorp Financial services late Cyril Akinbinu. The police boss said the suspected killers used motorcycles in all the incidents, adding that about 15 suspects were in police custody over the incidents.

He said the police had gotten credible information on the incidents and had put in place machineries to curb crime in the state.

Nasarawa said his mission in the state was to reduce crime to the barest minimum and ensure that the police abide by the rule of law. Meanwhile, the command has arrested 11 armed robbery suspects.

"I intend to pursue this to a logical conclusion, no matter whose ox is gored"



From right: Director General, UNIDO, Mr. Kandeh K. Yumkella, Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Dr. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, Managing Director, Bank of Industry, Ms Evelyn Oputu and CBN Deputy Governor, Financial System Stability, Mr. Vincent Moghalo, during the opening of a conference on the development of agribusiness and agro-industries in Africa in Abuja yesterday.

Militants want Jonathan to sack ministers

From Muhammad Bello, Port Harcourt

THE Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) a militant group in the Niger Delta, has urged Acting President Goodluck Jonathan to sack some ministers. An email by the JRC spokesperson, Cynthia Whyte, wants Dr Jonathan to sack the Minister of Defence Godwin Abbe, Minister of FCT Adamu Aliero, Petroleum Minister Rilwanu Lukman and Niger Delta Minister Ufot Ekaette.

The group which has claimed responsibility for various attacks on oil facilities in the region said the position of the Minister of the FCT should not be limited to the North.

UNIMAID teachers threaten strike action

From Sharafa Dauda, Maiduguri

THE Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) University of Maiduguri chapter has threatened to embark on strike on March 31 if certain issues are not resolved.

This, according to the union, followed a unanimous decision reached during its congress meeting on March 4.

Chairman of the union Dr. Usman Abubakar who spoke to

our correspondent Sunday said, "The strike is necessary to change the 'Impracticable' academic calendar approved by the Senate last week. The calendar does not provide for the usual long vacation, but a two week break. There is also the issue of the continuous payment of the old salary structure, instead of the newly approved one. It is not just getting the students to school that matters, but what they get out of it.

"It is not possible that two weeks after examinations, the school is made to resume again", he said. He added, "If you have to impart knowledge, you have to allow the knowledge to sink in. But if people are made to keep working under tension and pressure, you are not only going to have no impact, but you are going to create confusion and a lot of avoidable mistakes. A far-reaching decision will be taken at the next congress."

Kogi LG workers protest non payment of salaries

From Isiaka Wakili, Lokoja

WORKERS of the Kogi Local Government Area of Kogi State yesterday protested over the non payment of their three month salaries.

The workers stormed the Koto-Karfe highway, headquarters of the council, mounting road blocks which caused a traffic jam that lasted for several hours.

They refused to listen to pleas from security men to dismantle the road blocks until former Sen-

ate President Pius Anyim Pius who was passing-by pacified them.

The workers told our correspondent that efforts by the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) to make the council Chairman, Shaba Ibrahim, address the issue were unsuccessful.

It was gathered that yesterday's protest was the second in the last one month with the council chairman allegedly turning deaf ears to the workers' agitation.

The sector commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Mr Yomi Asaniyan who confirmed the incident said the police and FRSC were mobilised to the area.

Meanwhile, an official of the council told our correspondent on condition of anonymity that those who mounted the road blocks were politicians who wanted to frustrate the chairman, adding that efforts were under way to pay the workers.

Muslims sidelined in Danjuma c'ttee - Council

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

FIFTEEN Muslim Organisations from across the country led by the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria (SCSN) at the weekend rose from an emergency meeting in Kaduna calling on Acting President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to revisit the just constituted Presidential Advisory Council chaired by General T. Y. Danjuma, saying Muslims were sidelined in the composition of the committee.

Reading the communiqué at the end of the meeting, the SCSN President Dr. Ibrahim D. Ahmad said, "Muslims are shocked by the Acting President in his selection and appointment of Christians as chairman and vice chairman of the sensitive committee. Not too long, the Acting president constituted the committee with General T.Y. Danjuma and Professor Ben Nwabueze as chairman and vice chairman respectively. The committee was constituted to advise the acting president on sensitive National issues. We therefore demand that this imbalance to be redressed immediately so that the Muslim population of this country is given a fair representation in the council.

"We urge all Muslims to pray for the unity, well being, justice and peaceful co-existence in the conduct of public affairs of the federal and state levels in this country," he said.

The communiqué also raised alarm over marginalisation of Muslims in the security forces, alleging that Northern CAN had been working hard to block chances of Muslims to be recruited in the forces.

"If we are truly interested in achieving peace and stability in diverse then fairness should be upheld in line with constitutional requirements for equitable representation in all public establishments. A situation where during the November 2008 Jos crisis, the mobile police in Plateau was 94 percent Christian, and were charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace, was like a death sentence against Muslims in the state," the Muslim organisations said.

The council said the call by the Northern Christian Elders Forum for the removal of Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Abdurrahman Dambazau was as a result his swift mobilisation of soldiers in Plateau during the last crisis.

Edo Assembly alleges destabilisation plot

From Vincent Ewuruyanga, Benin

THE new Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly Bright Ehi Omokhodion has accused the former speaker Zakawanu Garba of plotting to destabilise the House.

Speaking with newsmen yesterday in Benin, the Speaker said he received text messages

and informal press reports that Garba and some people were planning to recruit people to cause trouble. Omokhodion warned the former Speaker to forget about the plan or face the law.

He also flayed the recent resolution of the House of Representatives condemning the change of leadership in

the Assembly, saying the matter upon which they passed a resolution was already in court. He urged the House of Representatives to respect the principle of separation of powers.

Meanwhile, the Clerk of the Assembly Egbe Eghuomwan has asked the former Speaker Zakawanu Garba and his former deputy, Levi Aigbi-

gun, to return the vehicles and any government property in their possession. Reacting, the former Speaker, Zakawanu Garba, refuted the allegations, saying Omokhodion was afraid of his own shadows.

He said the decision to sack him from office was an exercise in futility since according to him, he is still the Speaker.



PIC: NAN

FROM left: Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources Dr. Abba Sayyadi Rama, African Union Commissioner for Industry Madam Elizabeth Tanken and Minister of Commerce and Industry Chief Achiike Udenwa, at the conference on development of Agri-Business and Agro-Industries in Africa yesterday

Ojukwu advises Igbos to unite

From John Kennedy Uzoma, Owerri

APGA chieftain, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu, says the Igbos would only move forward if they could nurture and strengthen internal unity and cohesion.

Ojukwu said this in his key note address presented at the meeting of South-east elders and leaders in

Owerri, Imo State at the weekend. He advised them not to allow their individual differences to over ride the collective interest of Igbos. He urged them not to allow themselves to be made politically irrelevant.

He lamented that the Igbos were considered the weakest link in the Nigerian political chain and expressed concern that Igbos,

despite their relevance to the country were assigned minor responsibilities.

"What makes me sad is that we the Ndigbos seem to accept these minor and irrelevant responsibilities when by virtue of our population and spread, we should be the adhesive holding the Nigerian fabric together," he said.

Bauchi conjoined twins may be separated

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

THE conjoined twins delivered by 28 year old Binta Isa at Guduba village near Ningi in Bauchi State two weeks ago may be successfully separated, the Chief Medical Officer of Ningi General Hospital Dr. Bakunawa Garba Bello has said.

Speaking to our correspondent yesterday on phone, Bakunawa said the twins had already been taken to the Maiduguri University Teaching Hospital where they were being assessed by a consultant paediatrician for possible separation.

Bakunawa earlier told our correspondent that the case was rare because the twins were joined at the abdomen with two 'active' legs on one side and two deformed legs on the other side sharing one umbilical cord and anus. He said from what they could see, the twins appeared to be males.

"They have some special peculiarities because of the way they are fused. It is not common to have twins joined at the abdomen with a common pelvis most likely affecting their urogenital system," he added.

Gov Daniel wins at Appeal Court

From Yemi Bamidele, Ibadan

THE Court of Appeal in Ibadan, Oyo State, yesterday declared Otonba Gbenga Daniel the duly elected governor of Ogun State in the 2007 general elections. The case was filed by the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) candidate in the polls, Senator Ibikunle Amosun.

All the five justices of the court led by Justice Mohammed Garba in a unanimous judgment that lasted over an hour said Governor

Daniel was duly elected just as they affirmed that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which gave Daniel the certificate of return was right in its action.

All four reliefs sought by the appellant that he should be declared the winner of the election were thrown out by the Court of Appeal as all the justices agreed with the lead judgment that the matter was not proved beyond reasonable doubt. The appellate court

agreed with the tribunal's position that Senator Amosun actually abandoned some reliefs contained in his petition as argued by Daniel's counsel, Professor Taiwo Osipitan and others.

The Court of Appeal in declaring that the appellant did not discharge the burden of proof beyond reasonable doubt, held that the tribunal was not in error in dismissing the petition. The court noted that all the 40 witnesses called by the appellant could not substantiate the

claims that the election was characterised by violence, over-voting, irregularities, ballot-stuffing and ballot snatching.

The court maintained that the legal flaws contained in the oral evidence given by the expert were noticeable in the contradictions in his evidence during the cross-examination, especially when he told the court that he didn't know the number of votes cast and he could not properly explain how he arrived at his opinion.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly **HAUWA MUSSAINI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. HAUWA ADAM**. All former documents remain valid. KSU, NYSC and general public to note.



FROM left: Chairman Abu sports writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Mr. Victor Iroele, President, Nigeria Winter and Extreme Sports Federation, Dr. Louis Nelson, at a news conference in Abuja with them is Executive Secretary, SWAN, Mr. Andrew Abah.

Nigeria to host confab for women maritime operators

By Shehu Abubakar

NIGERIA is to host the premier regional conference of the Women's International Shipping and Trade Association (WISTA), President of the association, Mrs. Ify Akerele has said.

She stated this when she led a delegation of members of her association on a courtesy visit to Transport Minister Alhaji Ibrahim Isa Bio in Abuja.

Akerele told the minister that the conference which is slated for May this year is expected to be attended by women maritime operators.

She said the organization has its origin in England in 1974 while the Nigerian arm was incorporated in 1994. She solicited for the sup-

port of the Ministry in hosting the Premier Regional Conference.

She asked the minister to further appoint qualified women into boards, committees, special study groups and as heads of parastatal and advisory bodies as a way of further supporting women. She also asked for support the training of women in the maritime industry.

Responding, the transport minister, Represented by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry Dr Edugie Abebe, said though the sector is presently male-dominated, women should take advantage of the opportunities made available through the Cabotage administration to further make inroads into the maritime sector.

UN, others discuss agric in Abuja

By Aisha Umar Agaie

NIGERIA will play host to a High-Level Conference on the Development of Agribusiness and Agro-Industries in Africa (HLCD-3D) in Abuja on March 10.

The conference is jointly organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the

UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), a statement from Egypt embassy press and information counsellor Dr. M. Saber has said.

Dr Saber said Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak will be represented by the country's Minister of Agriculture Mr. Amin Abaza at the conference.

West, Central Africa partner against diseases

By Tina A. Hassan

OVER 20 West and Central African countries met yesterday in Abuja to undertake a self evaluation and assessment of their performance in controlling avian and human influenza.

Director of African Union Support Program to Integrated National Action plan on Avian and Human Influenza (SPINAP-AHI) Ahmed El-Swahili said the need to safeguard the health of human beings and animals from avian influenza is one that cannot be overemphasized because it affects national stability.

He said trans-boundary animal disease has the potential of destroying Africa's animal reserve, which is why AU is collaborating with the various veterinary services in the ministries of agriculture as well as the ECOWAS Commission.

He said more over 95 percent funding of the project comes from the European Union (EU) while the AU is contributing the remaining 5 percent to ensure that the project is fully implemented at the various national components.

He said over \$41 million has so far been mobilized from EU and the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) to support member states to institute preventive and control measures against animal and human influenza.

Speaking at the meeting, Agriculture and Water Resources Minister Abba Sayyadi Ruma said the impact of avian influenza on livestock is very devastating if left unchecked.

He said about 10 percent of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 20 percent of the agriculture GDP that is why the Ministry is also contributing in funding the project.

Defence College course on sexual abuse

By Benjamin Auta

THE National Defence College (NDC) has introduced sexual exploitation and abuse as a course for the Senior Mission Leaders Course (SMLC), Chairman of Senate Committee on Defence and Army Senator Ibrahim Ida has said.

Senator Ida made the statement during the graduation ceremony of the Senior Mission Leaders Course of the NDC in Abuja at the weekend.

He said that participants should be prepared to undertake senior leader-

ship positions in a possible ECOWAS peacekeeping mission with multi-dimensional approach.

"As a result of the course participants should now be prepared to undertake senior leadership positions in a possible ECOWAS peacekeeping mission with multi-dimensional approach," he said.

Senator Ida said the possibility of an ECOWAS mission within the region cannot be excluded as facts and events continue to tell us.

He told the participants to follow the successful

path of building a standby force as part of its wider contribution to the African Standby Force (ASF).

Speaking earlier, NDC Commandant Rear Admiral G.J Jonah said the course modules cover strategic leadership, military operations, resource management, policing and civilian dimensions of peace support operations.

He added that the course devote attention to the ECOWAS Standby Force, through it concept, training and vision adding the force stands tall above all other in the continent.

TUC asks FG to declare March 8 work free day

By Francis Okeke

TRADE Union Congress (TUC) yesterday urged the Federal Government to declare every March 8 work free day to celebrate womanhood in the country.

TUC President General Comrade Peter Esele made the call in Lagos when he delivered a good will message to mark the international women's day celebration organized by TUC

Women Commission.

Esele also called for the re-introduction of Ministry of Women Affairs to champion the education of women on issues concerning them.

He said "We also will love to see more women taking up appointments in key areas of our national life. This we believe will drastically reduce cases of fraud and other social vices in the country as women we all know are less prone

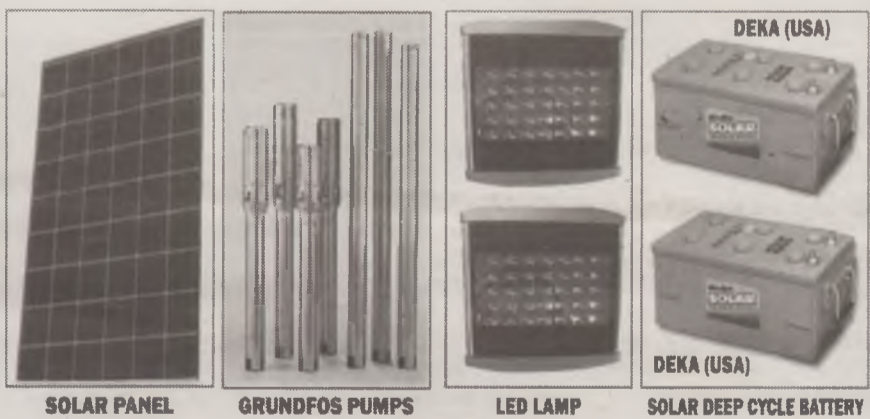
to taking to crimes."

Esele said the congress will not forget the immense contributions of Dr Peace Nkiru Obiajulu, Nigeria's first female president general of a labour federation, who was honored by the TUC women commission.

He urged the women "to rise up and speak out against all unpopular policies including the ongoing succession confusion created by the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP)."

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Online Reactions

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ON www.dailytrust.com



200 killed in Jos villages raid



SUSPECTED pastoralists attacked three villages of Ramsat, Dogo Nahawa and Kamat in Jos South LGA on Sunday.

THIS is a despicable act. We as a nation cannot continue like this. The perpetrators must be found and brought to book otherwise this vicious circle will continue. I am still waiting to read genocide articles on this issue from Daily Trust columnists. It will be a shame if they don't tell us about this latest genocide. After all, what qualifies as genocide in one instance should also qualify in other instances.

Nomji S

slydebby@ovi.com

It is the failure of government to act fast that created an enabling environment for people to take the law into their hands.

Mohammad

dunguza3@hotmail.com

Why is it that no individual was indicted after the killings of Fulani some few months back? How can there be peace without justice?

Usman Ahmed Danbaba

danbaba1986@yahoo.com

Jang has failed everyone including his Berom people. It is bad to initiate and propagate injustice. Much as I do not support revenge, look at what Jang's maladministration has caused everyone on the Plateau. And why not a state of emergency? We as a people must be prepared to condemn injustice

no matter who is involved.

Amiin

abd.amin34@yahoo.com

I want us to pray for this country of ours which is going through a bad time, especially Plateau State. Governor Jang should also stop pointing fingers at people, saying they are responsible or that they had fore knowledge of the attack, he should find a way to resolve this issue once and for all. It is time to stop wasting our natural and human resources.

Rabiu Muhammad

muhammadrabiu09@yahoo.com

When will these senseless killings stop in Jos? What has come over us as a people? Why don't we value life anymore? The political class and the elite in Nigeria have succeeded in sowing the seed of distrust among Muslims and Christians.

Ibrahim T. Ibrahim

elkutigi@gmail.com

Acting President, act now or lose more lives and property. Declare a state of emergency in Plateau or more innocent Nigerians will still die.

Ibrahim

shocks4real@yahoo.com

International human right bodies have to look into this mat-

ter. How can there be a barrack in a state and this kind of thing will happen, where are the soldiers and police?

Don k

donreal2011@yahoo.com

God is merciful and gracious for not allowing Nigeria to experience any earthquakes or any natural disaster, yet we are bringing artificial disasters upon ourselves. Remember that he that kills by the sword shall die by the same sword.

Olusola

surexreal@yahoo.com

It is really sad. This is anarchy, government should endeavour to bring the culprits of the previous attacks to book so that all these can stop.

Godia Bukar

gremalawan@yahoo.co.uk

Please my fellow country men and women, Nigeria is our dear country and we have no other place. Let us join hands and stop all these killings. We urge the people and government of Plateau to in the interest of peace stop this and be fair to all parties affected.

Babayo El-Nafaty

babayoelnafaty@yahoo.com

No one knows when this ugly incident will end and that is the more reason why the crisis should not have been allowed to start in the first place.

Audu John

audu2000@yahoo.com

Now that the sword is on the Beroms, Buba Gyang has visited the "victims", Yenlong called it "ethnic cleansing" We did not hear all these words when the Berom youths massacred innocent Fulani women and children. What goes around comes around.

Ahmad Ibrahim

qxahmad@hotmail.com

This is a clear testimony that Plateau State deserves a state of emergency. If the Acting President is sincere about Nigeria, let him declare a state of emergency in Jos, because it is the only alternative. Let us be pro-active.

Zanna Bukar Baruwa

bukar.zanna@yahoo.com

It is totally unfair for people to be killed just like that. Hope Daily Trust will tell us the truth as usual and Aljazeera will follow up to reveal the perpetrators of the attacks.

Tobias J. Hankle

johnyhankle@aol.com

Acting President Goodluck, if you do not take action over this issue now, it will spread to other regions. Please save the lives of your people.

Kurah

kurah200066@yahoo.com

A heinous crime like this is condemnable by any right thinking person. The only solution is for government to act decisively by bringing the perpetrators of not only the recent attack, but also the previous ones to book.

Usman Katagum

ulimacong@yahoo.com

I think a state of emergency would be better in Jos because political leaders in Plateau State cannot handle the problem.

Mamuda H. Rng

mahmudringim@ymail.com

For peace to return to Plateau, the Federal Government must either split Plateau into three or ask the military to take over the state for some time.

Raphael Kareem Akanb

donzikky@yahoo.com



INEC Chairman Maurice Iwu

NLC holds protest to oust Iwu

LABOUR should know what to protest about. Iwu is an individual, please let us face facts, there were issues of national interest and they kept quiet. Now, they want to protest over Iwu, is that wisdom?

Aji Isuwa Suleiman

suleimanaji@yahoo.com

I have been saying that, check my previous postings. For a credible election to hold in Nigeria, Iwu and his cohorts must be shown the way out.

Dan Kasa

najeriyakasata@yahoo.co.uk

Yes, NLC will be quick to organise a match for the removal of Iwu, but when SNG organised a match, NLC was nowhere to be found. Let them look for something else to do or are they trying to divert the attention of Nigerians. NLC cannot deceive Nigerians anymore.

Roger Emori

kk44ubom@yahoo.com

If those charged with the conduct of election cannot perform despite the enormous resources spent, they should leave the stage for other's who can. Prof. Iwu must go.

Usman Neji Mohammed

usneji2000@yahoo.com

Sultan: Calls for Dambazau's removal provocative

IN fact it is unfair for top Christian leaders in this country to come out openly and call for the removal of a top military officer. This statement can cause confusion in the country. I advise our Christians brothers to be careful with what they say.

Abubakar Danlami Wis

wiseeabu@yahoo.com

What the sultan said is very true because what those Christian elders said is dangerous for the country.

Surajo Abdullahi

sirajaaj@yahoo.com

The sultan is right, some people in this country are trying to use religion or ethnicity to cause confusion. They say whatever comes to their minds without thinking of the consequences. I want to use



SULTAN of Sokoto Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar

this opportunity to ask them one question, what would Dr. Goodluck Jonathan have done even if he knew that the president was coming back to the country?

Abubakar Chika Maru

abubakarsuleiman2009@yahoo.com

It is wicked to call for his removal. Jonathan as an intelligent man, I believe you'll be

rational in your decisions.

El-khalid uthman

elkhalid2k3@yahoo.com

The call by Northern Christian Elders for the removal of the Chief of Army Staff is wrong and not in the interest of the country. No Muslim or group of Muslims has ever made such a call against non Muslims in this country. Such decisions should be rejected.

Abdallah Rabo

abdallahrabo80s@hotmail.com

The call for Gen Dambazau's removal was premised on the way the president entered into the country. It said nothing about him being a Muslim. We have Muslim groups also calling for the removal of Maurice Iwu from INEC based on shady electoral matters, does that make it a Mus-

lim-Christian issue?

Anthony U

tonaria2000@yahoo.com

Did Dambazau do the right thing or was he acting the script given to him by the Muslims.

Kazeem Oluwale

mezybusiness@yahoo.co.uk

Religious leaders are moral examples to their followers. Please both Christians and Muslim leaders should watch their comments.

Peter Amos

peteramos90@yahoo.com

Please Nigerians, let us live together as one, whether Christian or Muslim. Violence will not do us any good, rather it will spoil the image of our dear country.

Musa Tafida

sameymta@yahoo.com



FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo

Yakasai berates Obasanjo over comments

I thought no northern elder was listening to former President Obasanjo's comments.

Maikasuwa Lucky

awodo2003@yahoo.com



By Taiye Olaniyi

What about oversight function at the mortuary?

A mortuary, whatever its size and aesthetics, is not a place anyone would like to visit or be asked to oversee as part of official duty. I have also not known of any political office holder that agrees that the inhabitants of mortuaries are part of their constituency; yet, in all respects, the conditions that have brought about occupation of mortuaries that often are traceable to acts of omission or commission by politicians and their acolytes.

Because our human and material resources are misdirected to ignoble usage, the innumerable heartaches Nigerians are having simply pushed many to premature residents of mortuaries. In the mortuaries, the sojourners in all their demographic characteristics of gender, age, marital status, height, weight, colour, social status, religion and what have you, remain lifeless because life in Nigeria remains appalling, poor and now deadly as methods of governance

“Who is to blame for the life of the corpse inside the mortuary both on earth and the hereafter?”

have forced them to early graves.

Preliminary to an initiation into mortuary candidacy, are the conditions to be met which include mortality at birth, deaths arising from dearth of health facilities, carnages on the Nigerian roads, ethnic and inter religious clashes, political killings, mass retrenchments, armed and pen robberies, fake drugs administration and consumptions and other vices that are daily making Nigeria an enabling environment for cheap deaths.

A visit to the hospital in Nigeria for any kind of ailment these days, ends in mourning, wailing and gnashing of teeth for the loss of the beloved ones whose accommodation now is in the transit camp, the mortuary before the incineration of their remains.

In this wise, what makes an official visit to the mortuary important as it is hereby humbly suggested to powerful Nigerians in the class of the politicians is first, the idea of performing one of their usual oversight functions and also the need to learn some potent lessons in governance and the emptiness associated with earthly life.

The mortuary is though a building where dead bodies of highly and the lowly placed are kept, it is also a school of learning and a centre of universe which looms around the Akashik record for every individual corpse to evaluate how eventfully or uselessly his or her life had been spent on earth.

No matter how beautiful or earthly rich one had been, no matter how ugly or hideous the life one had lived, no matter how caring or unfeeling the keepers of the mortuary could be to one's corpse in the mortuary; every occupant is as useless as the other. To one's surprise and marvel, no relation has agreed and would ever agree to keep vigil at the mortuary

with loved ones that just departed.

Religious protocol though demands that prayers be offered for the dead and living at the mortuary before the usual burial, I assume and ask: “Who is to blame for the life of the corpse inside the mortuary both on earth and the hereafter?” This indeed is the question we need to ask ourselves as Nigerians in all our religious and vocational persuasions.

Religious dictates demand that we all be our brother's and sisters' keepers but rather than do this to the glory of God the creator of all man, we go eating and killing ourselves one-by-one and two-by-two till the mortuaries become populated by even those who ordinarily ought not to be there by any means. At least not yet.

In many of our vocations, we work as if we have no iota of God's consciousness and human feelings in us, thus leading to the mismanagement of fellow human beings to the state of untimely deaths. The hospital environment and the health personnel therein who ordinarily should be the custodians of ailing human beings to the stage of recuperation, are now catalysts and accelerators to the passage of patients to life beyond.

It is difficult to apportion blame to health personnel many of whom dissipate energy and time to save life only to be deprived of their hard-earned salaries and other entitlements, whereas owners of Nigerians' life don't care a hoot whether or not fellow Nigerians die in droves, once their salaries, allowances including “When I die and coffin bonuses” are paid.

Politicians of all persuasions should extend their oversight functions to our hospitals especially the mortuaries to nip in the bud the Malthusian theory attendant to population and overpopulation which equally applies to dying and deaths in Nigeria.

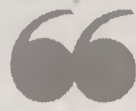
There is no doubt in my mind that miracle would happen at the mortuaries; many corpses would rise, complain and suggest that the politicians better rule Nigeria well so that they can enjoy longevity of life and make Nigeria a better place to live (and die) in.

In the same token, our politicians are surely going to learn the utmost lesson of life that no matter man's ambition, aspiration, perspiration and acquisition, death is the ultimate end of man and that the mortuary is equally a leveller, exposing the nakedness of the deceased and the rubbish that man is, especially in death.

All the politicians' *kirakita* which the Yoruba's view of “do- or- die struggle” means in earnest, and which is already taking its toll of innocent Nigerians as the 2011 general elections approach, definitely inspires a question to those in the ruling class, “What will the Creator discover with you as your role in the lives of average Nigerians when privileged to wield political power in Nigeria?”

There is great implication in living big and thinking that this life will never end especially by political office holders and those whose activities are daily making the days of numerous Nigerians turn to night overnight.

Olaniyi can be reached at taiyelolu_2004@yahoo.com



By Kenneth Uwadi

Declare a state of emergency in Plateau state now

The incessant genocides in Plateau state, which started since 1999, led to loss of thousands of lives and teeming number of refugees (widows & orphans). The major ones occurred in 2001 and 2004. We will not forget when the Olusegun Obasanjo led federal government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the central Plateau state after massacres between two ethnic groups were turning into a religious war. Obasanjo feared the violence there could spread across the country. Obasanjo announced the decision in Abuja on May 18 2004, suspending the then state governor Joshua Dariye - whom he accused of being weak and incompetent and replaced him with a retired army general, Major General Chris Alli. The emergency legislation gives the police and other security services the power to detain people indefinitely, conduct searches without warrants, impose curfews and ban public processions. Obasanjo said the state of emergency was to be reviewed in six months' time.

Major General Alli, who previously held power in the state when Nigeria was under military rule, warned, “In

Former Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, has blamed the crisis in Plateau state on the poor leadership qualities of Governor Jonah Jang

my 32 years in the military, I have been taught to use force and again I am the administrator. So I have all the powers to crush any attack.”

Plateau State is the twelfth largest state of Nigeria, and is roughly located in the centre of the country. Its capital is Jos. Plateau State is celebrated as “The Home of Peace and Tourism”, an image that has been fractured in recent years by Muslim-Christian clashes in the state. Plateau State gets its name from the Jos Plateau. It has a population of around 3.5 million people. The Plateau State administrative structure consists of the State Cabinet, the House of Assembly and Local Government Areas.

The state government is run by the Governor (chief executive), Deputy Governor; Secretary to the state government, Commissioners (cabinet members), special advisers, permanent secretaries, board chairmen and general managers. The current governor of the state is Jonah Jang.

In November 2008, a group orchestrated ethno religious cleansing. In the pogrom that followed about a thousand people lost their lives. Yet again on the 17th of January 2010, Jos was engulfed in another killing spree. March 2010, Jos Plateau state is at it again. Over 300 people, mostly women and children, were murdered in the early hours of March 7 following attacks on Dogo-Na-Hawa, Ratsat

and Jeji villages in Foron district, Jos South Local Government Area, Plateau State. The attacks were visited on the Berom villages by men suspected to be Hausa-Fulani fighters who had descended from the hills from where they launched into the villages at about 2am.

Going by the dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed in the aftermath of the January riots in which over 350 died, there was supposed to be military presence in the area at that time.

Some of the fighters were said to have positioned themselves at strategic entrances to the villages, while others went in and began to set houses on fire. Those who made to escape were butchered while others were shot. A reporter counted over 180 bodies at the scene. At the Plateau State Specialist Hospital, 18 other bodies were also deposited at the mortuary.

Former Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, has blamed the crisis in Plateau state on the poor leadership qualities of Governor Jonah Jang. He called for Jang's removal as the governor of Plateau State. According to Senator Mantu, the state has witnessed four ethno-religious crises since Air Commodore Jonah Jang became the governor of the state, adding that there is no guarantee that there would be no further loss of lives and property in the state under Jang.

Mantu said the governor had been treating the conflict in the state with kid glove which was why the crises continued. He said, “With the benefit of the hindsight, you can see that those of us who called for the imposition of state of emergency during the tenure of Mr. Joshua Dariye, were right. After that there was relative peace in the state. Now we are back to square one.” Senator Mantu said the present governor has not shown competence in managing the affairs of the state. He accused the governor of setting up panels of enquiries whose reports are not fully implemented.

Mantu is correct. The Acting President should, as a matter of urgency, declare a state of emergency in Plateau State. The state government is grossly incapable, inefficient and cannot handle the situation. What a mess. I had tears drop down from my eyes while I listen to this ugly news. Why in the name of God would this thing be said to happen again?

Before there is a reprisal attack that will kill more people, the Federal government should take steps to prevent further occurrence. These crises have clearly shown that Jonah Jang is too incompetent to lead Plateau. Goodluck Jonathan should suspend Jonah Jang and impose the state of emergency in Plateau state to protect lives and property until this issue is finally resolved. It will be sadistic and irresponsible of the National assembly to refuse to support declaration of state of emergency in Plateau State with so much loss of lives and suffering because of petty party interests.

Uwadi wrote from Mmahu Egbema, Imo State.



By Abdulkadir Sulaiman Muhammad

Jos crisis: State of emergency is now inevitable

The recurrence of violence in Plateau state indicates to a large extent that the authorities concerned are doing little or nothing to address the situation, thus portraying the state government as either incompetent or a part of the problem.

The events that led to the declaration of the state of emergency in 2004 was not in any way different from what has continuously repeated itself since the ascension to the seat of governance by Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau state.

Barely one year after the last crisis of Nov. 28, 2008, the residents of Jos North area of Plateau state on the 17th day of January 2010 woke up to another mayhem. What started as a disagreement over the erection of a structure that was the remains of the previous crisis, became the source for the deadly clash that resulted in hundreds of casualties. The cause of the crisis this time around can be located in the careless utterances of state government officials before and after the current administration took office. There was a claim by the state commissioner of Police that the crisis started when Muslims attacked Christians in their places of worship on the fateful Sunday. However, another side of the story as reported by the media was that a house was been converted to mosque, this arouse the anger of the residents of the area. While this second assertion has an appeal to the cause of the crisis, the earlier position of the state through the commissioner of police was only one of its deliberate attempts of smear casting in order to lay the blame of the crisis on the Muslims.

In truth, the crisis started at the building site of one Alhaji Kabiru Muhammad of Dutse Uku area where he was reconstructing his house which was razed by the hoodlums during the November 28, 2008 crisis. He decided to rebuild the structure into a storey building in which case he invited bricklayers and masons to lay the decking of the first floor of his building.

Not only did his decision to rebuild his house in the same spot where it was razed angered the residents, but his desire to now have a storey building, or have it decked instead of roofing, had become a threat to those that called themselves indigenes. On the 17th day of January when the building hands got busy with the casting of the floor, the inhabitants threw stones and hurled insults at them. When the situation was becoming confrontational, Muhammad made haste to invite the security officials. Incidentally some security personnel were already approaching the building site. Their mission they said was to stop work on the building. However, the workers protested that they had already mixed the concrete and for it not to be wasted they should be allowed to use it.

This also was met with hostility from the neighbouring indigenes, who insisted on pulling down the building, which they said would not be allowed to be erected in their neighbourhood. His workers were attacked, three of them fatally. This invited the protest of the remaining Muslims and thus the unfortunate event that followed.

All stakeholders to a peaceful Plateau State should act promptly in accordance with the provision of the Nigerian constitution to stop this frequent outbreak of terrorist acts. To this end, it is important that a state of emergency be declared in Plateau state until enduring normalcy is restored; a new local government created for the communities that are culturally homogenous or, in the alternative, Jos North local government should be excised from Plateau state and merged with Bauchi, where it originally belonged.

Muhammad is of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Abuja (aburaudah25@gmail.com)

(This article was written before the latest round of violence in Plateau State-Editor.)

Your Letters

Justice should be done, even if the heavens fall

It is unfortunate for people living in Nigeria to think that their Muslim compatriots are not peace-loving. The Jos catastrophe is neither Islam nor Christianity but, according to the Birom, it is an ethnic uprising planned to take over Birom Land and not bothered with the all the responsibilities that come with it.

The population of the Plateau State capital is predominantly Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba living peacefully for a long time. If you knew Jos very well you will agree with me that the three major tribes

that live there are entrepreneurship and business oriented people. The Birom view the economic and commercial clout of the so-called non-Indigenes as a threat to their own livelihood, and blame them for their own lack of individual initiative and personal development. The non-indigenes don't enjoy any of the rights enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution, for example the right to live, own property in any part of the country.

Nigerians should rise and condemn such acts for the progress and stability of our great country, Nigeria. We should view issues objectively without being poisoned against certain portion. I am of the opinion that declaration of a State of Emergency in Plateau State will not help matters as it is

the belief of all the Birom and their supporters that this is the only way they can follow and achieve their aims not minding that others too have equal right to live in the area, everybody in the area knows the right thing to do.

Finally, the Birom should know that most people knew they met before the killing started and the security agencies wrote to the state government through different security reports, but to no avail. We are appealing to the Federal Government to Invite the International Investigators to come and look the issue(s) and afterward the culprits should be charged for genocide in the International Court of Justice.

Muhammad Zubairu Katsina, Abuja.

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

Plateau crisis price of bad leadership?

WHAT is happening in Plateau State today has potential to consume the whole nation if care is not taken. This is the way conflicts in Africa and elsewhere start when irresponsible leaders hold sway. 07041910929.

For those who go to equity

HOW do you expect peace to reign in Plateau State when the governor always readily blame the Muslims, and refuse to say a word when the shoe is on the other leg. This means injustice. FARIDA, 080965332281.

Ending the carnage

THE only way to bring the end of Jos crises is to apply justice on whoever is involved in the past five crises and to put up tight security in the state, as was done in Kaduna state during the crises there. ABDULLAHI Isah Jimeta, Kaduna, 08033045358.

Wise counsel

"WE must live together as broth-

ers or perish together as fools" so said Martin Luther King Jr. RASHEED, Kaduna, 08033159203.

Oh, so this time we can identify the 'attackers'

IMMEDIATELY after the incidents that happened at Dogo Nahawa and other villages, the Plateau state government visited the scene and expressed their heartfelt sympathy. Without any delay, the government used its usual 'crisis-meter' and arrived at the conclusion that 'Fulani were the attackers at these villages'. But why the same government failed to use the same instrument in finding out 'who were the attackers' at Kuru Karama and Vom villages in the earlier crisis? Or the inhabitants there are not human, or because they are Muslim? MUSA Abdullahi, Jos, 08032890676.

Unacceptable, in whatever guise

WHAT happened in Kuru Karama and Dogo Nahawa in Jos is a clear indication how vile humans can be. This is genocide, and those people

who committed this act either in the name of tribe or revenge does not represent humanity or any ideology. I call on all Nigerians to stand up and make sure the perpetrators of this act are brought to face the full wrath of the law. UMAR Faruk, Gombe, 08035430371.

Like Plateau, like Niger Delta

ANOTHER crisis in Jos? I think the FG should apply the same method as in Niger Delta by creating ministry of Jos Hills, and amnesty to the Jos militants. AKIB Jiks, 08035959546.

Haba, Soyinka!

AS a respected elder in Nigeria and the Diaspora, power, Ajakuta steel industry and railway where is our money being sunk without anything to show for it. What of innocent people who died in Maiduguri, Bauchi and Jos, as a result of boko haram and fake religious crises? You did not stage a protest but you are proposing anti Yar'adua protest! Please think again. SHEHU Ali Ifon, Jos, 08064575796.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

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End this tit for tat madness

Cont'd from front page

not an interested party in the many political, social, commercial and property conflicts between the Berom natives and the Hausa "settlers" in and around Jos.

But while the pastoralists' urban-based leaders were making this convincing case, the pastoralists' widely-dispersed, tradition-steeped community [with or without the leaders' knowledge] was planning a major outrage as revenge for the January killings, which they unleashed on the three Berom villages on Sunday.

No one as yet knows for sure where the attackers came from. Some of the victims estimated the number of attackers as several hundred, who fired guns into the air to force villagers out of their houses, and then proceeded to kill defenceless men, women and children with cudgels and machetes. They also set fire to whole villages, before they vanished in the night.

That such an attacking force could be assembled and could launch an attack only a few kilometres away from Jos metropolis so soon after the last orgy of violence, when the state is still bristling with soldiers and other security agents, and when a 6pm to 6am curfew was still in force in Jos, indicates a monumental failure of intelligence and security in Plateau State. It is true that the pastoralists' knowledge of the rural terrain is unsurpassed, but then, given their community's dispersed nature, it is baffling indeed that they could assemble such a large army and move it into position for the attack without anyone noticing it.

Besides, all political and traditional authorities in Nigeria ought to know that vengeance is a deeply ingrained matter in pastoral communities' traditions. Pastoralists are known to avenge for wrongs done even to their grandfathers. That no security and intelligence measures were put in place to guard against possible reprisal attacks, given that the pastoral community very widely publicised its grievances after the January violence, was another monumental failure on the part of the authorities.

Still, in adhering to their age-old traditions and carrying out this heinous act in the name of revenge, the pastoral community around Jos has robbed itself of the moral high ground after the January crisis and may have sown the seeds for more inter-communal bitterness and suspicion in years and generations to come.

Even though the attackers melted away into the night soon after their cowardly deed, it is not too late for the military, policemen and intelligence agents to trace them and apprehend as many of the attackers as they can. They should be made to answer for their crimes in order to convince all other individuals and communities that are planning similar revenge attacks that this will not be tolerated in a modern, civilized country.

Yet, it is very important to remind the authorities that despite the complications of old customs and traditions in Nigeria, no one would have contemplated revenge attacks if the perpetrators of the many inter-communal outrages in Jos over the years had been swiftly apprehended and brought to answer for their crimes.

Daily Trust, for example, editorially advised the authorities [Monday, January 25, 2010] to set an example after the genocidal attacks at Kuru Karama village by swiftly bringing the perpetrators to book since, as in most inter-communal killings, the victims could identify the attackers. In that attack hundreds of men, women and children were killed with scores of bodies dumped in wells in the affected area. Nothing has so far been done about that incident with some section of the society in denial of the bestiality that happened there. And unless the authorities draw the line and for once bring the culprits of this massacre to book, there is nothing to prevent others from contemplating similar "revenge" attacks in the near future. Leaders at all levels must stop this madness which robs us of our collective humanity and leaves us all covered with the blood of the innocent on our conscience.

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Nigeria: The media as saboteurs

Muhammad Al-Ghazali

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Just as I was concluding my visit to old friends in New York and New Jersey last weekend, I received a text message from my brother Usman, a barrister, which read: "Crises in Jos again!" The message instantly set my blood racing. I was overwhelmed with both anger and pity.

There I stood, among friends, and in the midst of so much affluence and splendour in comparison to the mental image I had of the location of the latest social outrage to hit my beloved nation. And yet, over in Nigeria, a great percentage of folk who existed on less than a dollar per day, were engaging in the mindless slaughter of each other instead of pursuing the peace, happiness and prosperity that should be their birth right, given the promise of the abundance of their natural resources.

And as is usual with the nature of such crises in Nigeria, only the poor and the innocent will bear the full brunt of the atrocities and the inevitable trauma and dislocation that will follow. If there is one sure thing, it is the fact that justice will always be slow for the victims as well as the perpetrators of the infamy.

Incredibly, in this age of modernity in which boundaries and trade barriers have collapsed at the feet of globalization, over 200 people woke up only to be slaughtered for no apparent crime but the accident of their birth, religion and ethnicity. Only weeks ago, of course, approximately the same number of innocent men, women and children were killed and stuffed into wells for the same primitive impulses.

And as is usual with such incidents in Nigeria, truth is often the first casualty as we attempt to come to terms with the crimes. From what I gathered from the internet are confirmed, the latest killings appear to be reprisal killings for the earlier slayings on the Plateau barely two months ago. But how can such crimes make any sense?

The victims of the latest repulsive murders like the earlier ones, obviously knew nothing about the social crimes for which they were compelled to pay the supreme sacrifice to a nation that is now in the strangle hold of mediocre politicians and spiritual leaders.

If the instigators of the latest outrage were not so bereft of ideas and common sense, they would have realized that an eye for an eye will only make the whole world go blind. And that is not what we desire in Nigeria at this time.

What we need are leaders with sufficient intellect and vision to harness our God-given resource for the common good. Wherever we stand on the latest tragedy, we must all recognize that we have all become poorer by the lives that were so cruelly and needlessly lost.

Both Islam and Christianity abhor the spilling of innocent blood. We must all recognize that we are all victims of one crucial factor in our match towards nationhood, one way or the other. We have all been let down by decades of clue-less and incompetent leaders that prey on our internal cleavages for primitive gain.

And if the common Nigerian has been guilty of complicity in the absolute wreck that has become our ship of state, it is to

They were the institution that demonized the late Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello for corruption and nepotism only for posterity to reveal their folly. Today, no thanks to the media, inhabitants of the northern part of the country are fast acquiring a siege mentality.

They are to be blamed for all the ills of the country since independence. They are the ones that stole the country blind despite the damning statistics. The fact even caught up with me yesterday in New York when I was introduced to a fellow Nigerian from the Southwest last Friday. "Ah, you are the ones who control all the money in Nigeria" he said while grudgingly shaking my hand with hypocritical envy!

That explains why I get

We must all recognize that we are all victims of one crucial factor in our match towards nationhood, one way or the other

the degree of our recklessness optimism in the bogus omnipotence and infallibility of our leaders coupled with our criminal gullibility and docility in the face of crimes committed in our name.

And because we celebrate such leaders like deities it has become easier for the media to become a tool in the vicious cycle that continues to accelerate our ruin and descent to anarchy and bloodshed that could make the 1990s genocide in Rwanda pale in significance.

Now, more than ever before in our history, the media has a crucial responsibility in ensuring that they remain above the fray. They must play a positive role to halt our gradual slide towards the abyss. I fear that if they fail to exhibit maximum responsibility the slide could easily become an unstoppable stampede towards the amargeddon I am convinced will make the much vaunted African renaissance a pipe dream.

If Nigeria eventually fails it will not only be a tragedy for Nigerians alone. The domino effect will undoubtedly envelope the entire sub-continent leaving a trail death, decay and destitution given the size of our population. The legacy of ruin will recognize no special boundaries, religion or tribe.

Let no one, least of all the media, be deceived. If Nigeria implodes, the consequences will be too severe for the elite as much as it will be for the common man. I have dwelled so much on the media because, they, more than any other institution in our history, have contributed more to the creation of myths and bare-faced lies that has made Nigerians enemies of each other.

amused when governments talk about spectacular developmental visions for the country without recognizing the role the media has played as saboteurs since independence, or how to curtail its menace in the present dispensation. Those who perished in Plateau state yesterday, like others lost to various crises experienced in the nation since independence were definitely victims of the irresponsible role of the media, as much as that of selfish and incompetent leadership.

What Nigeria presently needs, therefore, is a media that is not devisive and raises above petty sentiments at all times in the overall national interest. The media must exhibit maximum responsibility in the manner it reports national events to rescue the nation from the brink, and to avoid the needless slaughter of innocent Nigerians in ethno-religious crises.

Oviously, what we must also pray for are competent and visionary leaders at all levels to escape the shackles of under-development that has made us all mortal enemies of each other. Only last Saturday, I visited a facility in Bordentown New Jersey, that runs entirely on solar power even in late winter! The power generated at the facility could serve more than three districts in Abuja without failure.

In Nigeria, we cower from blazing sunlight all year round but seem bereft of the essential grey matter to convert it to our use. It pays our corrupt leaders to expend scarce resources in the importation of gas turbines and all that nonsense that serves to perpetuate our economic servitude.

INTERNATIONAL

African Union urges Ivory Coast to hold vote



IVORY Coast's Prime Minister Guillaume Soro speaks after a cabinet meeting, in Abidjan.

THE African Union called yesterday on Ivory Coast to hold its presidential election, delayed since 2005, by the agreed deadline of early May.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council urged all political forces in Ivory Coast to work to create a climate that would allow the holding of a "free, legal and transparent election within the agreed timeframe".

President Laurent Gbagbo sacked the country's Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the government last month, triggering a fresh political crisis, with the putting down of sometimes violent demonstrations leading to at least seven deaths.

Gbagbo had accused the CEI of fraud in putting together the list of eligible voters.

The African Union welcomed the installation of a new CEI and government last week, calling for "all parties to immediately provide their full support to the CEI".

The government, again led by Guillaume Soro, the head of the former rebel New Forces (FN), includes more representatives of other opposition parties.

Ivory Coast has been split in two since a foiled coup against Gbagbo in 2002 and the FN mainly holds the north, while the south is largely in the hands of supporters of Gbagbo's Ivorian Patriotic Front.

Guinea sets June 27 presidential election date

GUINEA'S interim leaders say a presidential election will be held June 27 in the West African country. It could be the nation's first democratic vote, as a coup leader grabbed power in 2008 and the nation had previously been led by two dictators since gaining independence from France.

The coup leader agreed to go into voluntary exile after he survived an

assassination attempt following a massacre at a pro-democracy rally in September. The transitional government was established with help from international mediators.

Also yesterday, a decree from interim leader Gen. Sekouba Konate said the government has established a national transitional council of 155 members.

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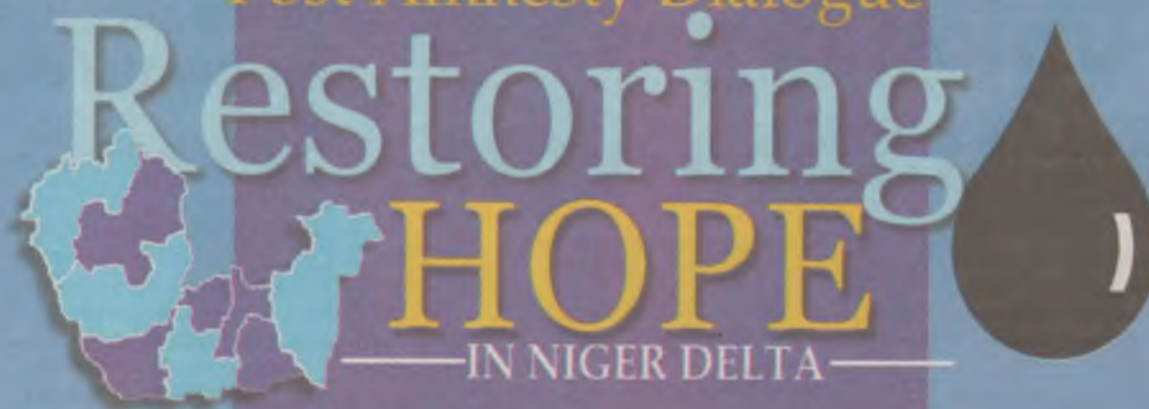
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International

Togo security blocks opposition headquarters

SECURITY forces yesterday blocked off three roads leading to Togo's opposition party headquarters a day after the group had staged protests claiming presidential elections last week were rigged to favour the son of the country's longtime leader.

Police spokesman Col. Damehane Yark said police are present to prevent opposition supporters from blocking nearby boulevards, as they did on Sunday.

An Associated Press reporter yesterday saw roughly 60 anti-riot police with their shields lined up

to create a blockade. They stood behind the shields with batons in their hands.

Togo's top opposition candidate Jean-Pierre Fabre vowed Sunday to take to the streets every day to protest what he said were rigged elections.

He was let into headquarters Monday after an hour-long stand-off with police.

Provisional results released late Saturday show Fabre lost to current President Faure Gnassingbe, whose 1.2 million votes gave him 60.9 percent of the vote.

Fabre received 692,584 votes, or 33.9 percent. Opposition spokesman Eric Dupuy said in a press release that the opposition was planning a large march Tuesday to demand a review of the preliminary results from last week's election.

A report released over the weekend by the European Union's observation mission did not find evidence of vote tampering or ballot stuffing as the opposition alleges, but did determine that the ruling party may have attempted to buy off voters.

The observer mission's report said EU election monitors were present in at least four different regions of the country when the ruling party handed out rice to potential voters at three to four times less than market price.

The election is only the second since the death of Gnassingbe, who grabbed power in a 1967 coup and ruled for 38 years, only for his son to grab control upon his death.

The younger Gnassingbe's victory in the recent election extends the family's rule into a 44th year and will mean the political dynasty will stay in power for nearly half a century.

Early results indicated that in the provinces where the rice was given out, voter turnout was high and people overwhelmingly voted for Gnassingbe.



TOGO security forces block off three roads leading to Togo's opposition party headquarters in Lome, yesterday.

Uganda 'to relocate 500,000 at risk of landslides'

UGANDA plans to resettle at least 500,000 people living in mountainous areas over fears that last week's deadly landslide could happen again, a minister said yesterday. "The total population at risk of landslides and floods is estimated to be 500,000," State Minister for Disaster Preparedness Musa Ecweru told reporters.

"We plan to resettle the population from these very high risk locations, once emergency operations of the current situation end."

The 500,000 figure refers to 300,000 people living around Mount Elgon and another 200,000 living on similar terrain

in western Uganda.

Following a visit to Bududa district, the region hit last week by the mudslides that killed an estimated 350 people, Ecweru said he believes much of the Elgon region is too dangerous to be lived in.

"The Elgon region has been invaded up to very dangerous slopes and if we don't relocate these people we are likely to witness a repeat of what we have witnessed," he said. "To me, this is a wake-up call."

He added that Uganda has begun work on a programme to relocate all people currently living in the Mount Elgon region.

Mauritanian female prisoners pardoned for women's day

MAURITANIAN President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has pardoned four female prisoners to mark International Women's Day, according to a presidential decree issued yesterday.

"On the occasion of the holiday on March 8, International Women's Day, the president of the Republic has decreed that four women detained under common law be pardoned, in accordance with article 37 of the constitution," read the decree.

The document said the four women had not "committed offences linked to blood crimes, terrorism, rape or drug trafficking."

This is the first time women have been pardoned since Mauritania started celebrating women's day in 1970, five years before the United Nations declared it an international holiday.

Women's representation has increased in the Muslim country in recent years, with 20 percent of lawmakers who are women and six female government ministers, including the foreign minister who is the first woman to hold this post in the Arab world.

Zimbabwe PM announces re-election bid

ZIMBABWE'S top two politicians are looking ahead to the elections that will end their uneasy governing partnership.

At a rally in Harare, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai said he would run in presidential elections expected next year.

He also called for African peacekeepers to protect voters in a country where politics has long been dogged by violence and fraud blamed on President Robert Mugabe's supporters. Mugabe hinted last week that he would run for re-election.

The 86-year-old has led Zimbabwe since 1980. Mugabe was

forced into a power-sharing agreement with longtime opponent Tsvangirai a year ago. The unity government is supposed to prepare for elections in 2011, but it has been beset by disputes among the partners. No election date has been set.

"I am ready to stand for elections," Tsvangirai told about 20,000 members of his Movement for Democratic Change party.

"We want a peacekeeping force to protect people during the election period," Tsvangirai added, saying he would ask the African Union and a regional group known as SADC to send the peacekeepers.

Congo group accuses soldiers of killing animals

AN environmental group is accusing Congolese soldiers of killing more rare wild animals in a national park in Congo's volatile east.

Bantu Lukambo of Innovation for Development and Environmental Protection said yesterday soldiers killed the animals in Virunga National Park in February while stationed in the area to fight rebels. Their toll includes seven hippos, two elephants, two chimpanzees and four baboons. The report also accused soldiers of illegal fishing and logging. Army Col. Philemon Yav says the army has launched an investigation and will punish anyone found guilty of poaching. Virunga National Park is home to an array of rare animals, including 200 of the world's 720 remaining mountain gorillas.

South African minister is nominated for UN post

THE South African president's office has announced the nomination of its tourism minister for the United Nations' top climate post.

In a press release yesterday, the office said Marthinus van Schalkwyk is a candidate to direct the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The current leader of the post, Yvo de Boer, announced his resignation in February and will step down July 1. Van Schalkwyk was South Africa's former minister for environmental affairs and tourism and is well-regarded in climate change circles.

His chances of being appointed are bolstered by the high likelihood that South Africa will host the UN's climate change negotiations in 2011.



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The practice of journalism today in Nigeria has acquired some odium due to the "brown envelope syndrome". For those who may want it spelt out, "brown envelope," is the practice whereby journalists, or those who pass off themselves as such, insist on being paid to cover events, write news report or feature articles (that are clearly not to be paid for). This practice is not limited to the lowly reporter; it obtains also at the high echelons in media organisations.

Similarly, many reporters and editors are offered gift and gratification, sometimes with the overt aim of influencing their work. Some of these gifts could be described as "token." If not, it may be offered in ways it would be rude or self-righteous to reject there and then.

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International

Interpol issues 16 arrest warrants for Dubai murder

INTERNATIONAL police agency Interpol yesterday issued arrest notices for 16 further suspects wanted by Dubai for the killing of a Hamas leader there.

The announcement brought to 27 the total number of suspects on Interpol's wanted list for the murder of Mahmud al-Mabhuh in a luxury hotel room in January, which Dubai police suspect was ordered by the Israeli secret service.

"Investigative information provided by the authorities in Dubai bore out the international links and broad scope of the number of people involved, as well as the role of two 'teams' of individuals identified by the Dubai police as being linked to Al-Mabhuh's murder," Interpol said in a statement. It said the 16 new names make up the second of these "teams", in addition to 11 for whom Interpol issued arrest alerts, known as Red Notices, on February 18.

"According to the Dubai police investigation, the first team consisted of a smaller core group alleged to have carried out the killing," it said, referring to the 11 named last month.

The second team of 16 "is believed to have aided and abetted the first team by closely watching, following and reporting Mabhuh's movements from the moment he landed at Dubai airport until his murder" on January 19, it said.

Interpol's latest list includes the names of at least six Britons and three Australians, along with several whose nationalities were not given. The international police organisation said last month that suspects travelled using other people's identities. Several countries have complained to Israel about the use of fake passports.

PM Maliki emerges as front-runner after Iraq vote



IRAQI women arrive at a polling centre in Baghdad's Karrada neighbourhood.

PRIME Minister Nuri al-Maliki, the Shiite who helped ease Iraq's sectarian strife, emerged yesterday as a front-runner in a parliamentary election but could yet face a tough battle to cling to power.

Maliki polled well according to early forecasts from Iraq's second election since the 2003 ouster of Saddam Hussein, which saw millions shake off the fear of bomb, mortar and rocket attacks that killed 38 people to cast ballots.

President Barack Obama, who has promised to withdraw all US troops from Iraq by the end of next year, paid tribute to "the courage and resilience of the Iraqi people who once again defied threats to advance their democracy."

"The key estimates from the Baghdad region, which could swing the result of the vote, were not yet available Monday but local officials said Maliki's political bloc

was so far leading the count in nine of Iraq's 18 provinces. Iraq election turnout is 62.4%

Maliki's State of Law Alliance was ahead in Shiite regions, while Iyad Allawi, a former premier who heads the Iraqiya list, was leading in Sunni areas, said estimates AFP obtained from officials across the country. Official final results are not due until the end of March and it is then likely to take months of horse-trading before a new government is formed.

But early indications were positive for Maliki. A source close to the prime minister said it now looked like his list was going to get 100 seats in the 325-seat parliament.

Maliki was appointed prime minister in 2005 as a compromise candidate and his administration, with considerable help from the US military, sharply reduced the Sunni-Shiite sectarian strife that

killed tens of thousands in the wake of the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted Saddam.

He played down his party's Shiite religious roots in his campaign for this election and sought to portray himself as the leader who restored security to Iraq, a claim dented by a series of recent bombings.

One analyst, however, said even if Maliki's list was triumphant, his unpopularity among Iraq's many political parties could prevent him from remaining prime minister.

"His relations with the Kurds, who play a key role in parliament, are not good," said Hamid Fadel, a political scientist at Baghdad university.

"The Iraq National Alliance accuses him of concentrating power in his own office and the Sunnis accuse him of launching a 'de-Baathification' process aimed

at them," he told AFP. Maliki's main challenger, according to the initial estimates, is Allawi, whose Iraqiya is a mostly Shiite slate that has campaigned on a nationalist and non-sectarian ticket.

The other leading list is the Iraq National Alliance, dominated by two Shiite religious parties -- the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council and the movement of radical leader Moqtada al-Sadr, who led two uprisings against US troops.

Whoever forms the new government, they will be tasked with tackling still high levels of violence, an economy in tatters and a culture of endemic corruption. Seven years after the invasion, much of Baghdad remains bomb-damaged. Most homes receive only a few hours of mains electricity a day and lack clean drinking water, and a quarter of the Iraqi population is illiterate.

Israel OKs new settlement work as Biden arrives

ISRAEL authorized the construction of new apartments in the West Bank despite a pledge to slow down settlement building, the government disclosed yesterday -- enraging the Palestinians just as the US vice president landed in Israel to push new peace talks.

Word of the construction of 112 new apartments in the Beitar Illit settlement and their possible complication of the talks came amid a flurry of activity by the US to try to salvage peacemak-

ing. The Palestinians agreed Sunday to hold indirect talks with Israel, a first achievement for the Obama administration's diplomatic efforts here.

Vice President Joseph Biden's arrival in Israel yesterday marks the highest-level visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories by an Obama administration official. Washington's special envoy to the Mideast, George Mitchell, was also in the region, meeting Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat accused Israel of trying to undermine the talks even before they began. "If the Israeli government wants to sabotage Mitchell's efforts by taking such steps, let's talk to Mitchell about maybe not doing this (indirect talks) if the price is so high," Erekat said.

The Palestinians presented the US envoy with a document outlining their desired peace agreement -- a Palestinian state

in Gaza and the West Bank, with minor border adjustments. At his meeting with Mitchell, Abbas also raised the issue of the new construction, Erekat said, saying it "put a big question mark on what it is that we came to do."

Netanyahu sounded upbeat after his meeting with the US envoy yesterday. "I believe we will succeed in advancing the diplomatic process," the Israeli leader said. "But the diplomatic process is not a game, it is real, and rooted first and foremost in

(Israel's) security."

Jewish construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem is a particularly sore point with the Palestinians because it challenges their claims to lands they want for a future state. Under heavy US pressure, Israel agreed in November to restrict building in the West Bank to some 3,000 apartments whose construction was already under way. But it rejected any curbs in east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want for their future capital.

International

Pakistan interrogation center bombed, killing 13

A suicide car bomber yesterday struck a building where police interrogate high-value suspects in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore, killing at least 13 people and wounding dozens including women taking children to school, officials said.

The attack broke what had been a relative lull in violence in Pakistan, where militant groups revile the government for its alliance with the US. It also showed that insurgents retain the abil-

ity to strike the country's heartland, far from the Afghan border regions where al-Qaida and the Taliban have long thrived, despite army offensives aimed at wiping them out.

Pakistanis living near the building had filed complaints urging authorities to move the unmarked interrogation facility out of the residential area so the street wouldn't become a target for an attack, said Mohammad Musharraf, a neighbourhood

resident.

The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility in a telephone call to an Associated Press reporter. It and allied groups are believed responsible for a wave of attacks that killed more than 600 people starting in October, including several in major Pakistani cities. More recent attacks have been smaller and confined to remote northwest regions near Afghanistan.

The bomb blast yesterday

comes amid reports of a Pakistani crackdown on Afghan Taliban and al-Qaida operatives using its soil. Among the militants said to have been arrested is the Afghan Taliban's No. 2 commander, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. In recent days, Pakistani officials say an American member of al-Qaida has been captured in the southern city of Karachi.

The explosion went off outside a Punjab province police building, police official Zulfikar Hameed

said. TV footage showed a huge crater in the ground where the blast originated. It appeared the suicide bomber rammed a car packed with as much as 1,300 pounds (600 kilograms) of explosives into the building's perimeter wall, officials said.

"This place was used to interrogate important suspects, but presently there was no such suspect, but more than 40 staff were manning the place," Lahore police chief Pervez Rathore said.

Noorul Huda, a student at a nearby religious school, was in his first class when the blast shook the area, he told TV reporters.

"With the huge bang, blocks and pieces of the roof fell upon us and six of us were wounded," said the young man, who suffered a head injury that was covered by a bloodstained cloth.

"It was total chaos outside and people were running and crying for help," Musharraf, who lives near the building, said his son was injured.

"My whole house was shaken and I thought it was an earthquake," he said. "A window dislodged and fell on my son, fracturing his arm."

Police official Chaudhry Shafiq said 13 people had died. Of the 61 people wounded, several were in critical condition. Major Mushtaq, who heads the interrogation facility, said the dead included nine officials from police and the investigation agency and four civilians, including two women.

Hospital official Jawed Akram said the dead included at least one woman and a young girl, apparently part of a group heading to a school. Several women were among the wounded.



PAKISTAN officials stand near a building destroyed by a suicide car bombing in Lahore, Pakistan

Moderate quake hits Taiwan

A 5.1-magnitude earthquake hit Taiwan yesterday, the central weather bureau said, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

The quake struck at 5:26 pm (0926 GMT) about 16 kilometres (10 miles) southeast of southern Chiayi city with the epicentre 14 kilometres underground.

Last week, a strong 6.4-magnitude earthquake rocked the south of the island, derailing a carriage on a high-speed train, toppling farm houses and momentarily cutting off electricity to more than half a million homes.

Taiwan is regularly hit by earthquakes as the island lies near the junction of two tectonic plates.

In September 1999, a 7.6-magnitude tremor killed around 2,400 people in the deadliest natural disaster in the island's history.

Myanmar junta unveils election laws but no date

MYANMAR'S military government yesterday unveiled long-awaited laws for elections later this year but gave no immediate date for the country's first polls in two decades, state media said.

Junta supremo Than Shwe promised the elections in 2008 as part of his so-called "roadmap to democracy" but critics say the vote will be a sham if pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest.

"The laws were enacted by the State Peace and Development Council and the details of the laws will be published in tomorrow's newspaper and also will be published as a book," state television and radio said, referring to the junta by its formal title.

It was unclear if a date for the election would be included in the five new laws. Analysts have predicted the polls will take place in October or November.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) said the junta had not given parties enough time to prepare for the elections, but it would reserve its decision on whether to take part until after it had seen the laws.

The NLD won Myanmar's last national polls by a landslide in 1990 but the military regime refused to let it take office. Nobel Peace laureate Suu Kyi has been in detention for 14 of the last 20 years since then.

"It cannot be fair by announcing the laws at this time for an election to be held in 2010. There is not enough time, the parties are not ready, they cannot lobby or campaign," NLD spokesman Nyan Win told reporters.

He said senior party members hoped to meet Suu Kyi later this week. The five laws enacted were the political parties registration law and four separate laws for the national election commission, the election commissions of the two houses of parliament and all regional parliaments.

Troops face hard fight, Gates warns on Kabul visit

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates held talks in Kabul yesterday, warning of "hard fighting" ahead as his ground commander said NATO could take on the Taliban in their spiritual capital this summer.

"There is no doubt there are positive developments going on, but I would say it's very early yet," Gates told reporters on his plane before landing in the Afghan capital in order to review US-led efforts to beat back the Taliban.

He cautioned that there would be "some very hard fighting, very hard days ahead" as US, NATO and Afghan forces step up pressure on Taliban militants in the south under a last-ditch strategy designed to end the war.

Gates acknowledged "bits and pieces of good news" when asked about the recent capture of senior Taliban leaders in neighbouring Pakistan, but said it was probably too soon to say momentum had shifted to coalition forces.

"I think more needs to be

done," he said, adding that a surge of US reinforcements was still in its initial stages.

About 6,000 of the 30,000 additional troops pledged by President Barack Obama in December have arrived in Afghanistan, Gates said, with the rest due to deploy by the end of August.

It was the Pentagon chief's first visit to Afghanistan since NATO and Afghan troops swept into the former Taliban stronghold of Marjah on February 13, in an assault seen as a pivotal test of Obama's bid to turn around the war.

Gates discussed the offensive -- billed as the biggest since the 2001 US-led invasion -- with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the commander of US and NATO troops, General Stanley McChrystal, as well as other operations planned this year.

McChrystal said NATO and US troops could take on the Taliban in their Kandahar strongholds this summer when enough reinforcements are on the ground.

International

Chile quake survivors suffer cold, rainy night

A strong rain on a chilly night added to the misery yesterday of survivors of Chile's terrible earthquake and tsunami, many of whom live in tents and improvised shelters as continuing aftershocks threaten to collapse what's left of their homes.

At least 30 cities and towns were badly damaged, leaving more than 500,000 homes uninhabitable. Authorities are analyzing the dam-

age in buildings across the region to see if people can safely return.

Meanwhile, the best shelter many could hope for as the first rains since the disaster fell was a donated tent or plastic sheeting hung between trees in the pine-covered hills.

One group of six women and seven children camped in a park in Concepcion after leaving their nearby community of San Pedro to

avoid vandals and violence.

The children were staying in two flimsy tents, while the women huddled under plastic and blankets strung beneath a large tree, which despite its foliage still allowed rain to fall on their heads. "This is the last thing we need, for it to rain," said Magdalena Cuevas, 48. "There are children here who have become ill from diarrhea."

Some help is coming from

A Roof for Chile — a volunteer organization that plans to use part of the money raised in a national telethon this weekend to put up 30,000 tiny prefabricated houses in the next four months. With wooden walls and aluminum roofs, each one is just 9 feet by 6 feet (about 3 meters by 2 meters). But they will provide an emergency solution while stronger and bigger new housing is built, said Gabriel

Prudencio, the group's representative in Concepcion.

These houses lack plumbing, but the group plans to install community bathrooms and kitchens.

"As a society we have to stay on an emergency footing until everyone is able to have their house again," said Prudencio, who hopes the raw material will arrive in time to begin construction in the next two days.



US Army soldiers load their duffels prior to their departure from Haiti at the international airport in Port-au-Prince.

US troops withdrawing en masse from Haiti

US troops are withdrawing from the shattered capital, leaving many Haitians anxious that the most visible portion of international aid is ending even as the city is still mired in misery and vulnerable to unrest.

As troops packed their duffels and began to fly home this weekend, Haitians and some aid workers wondered whether UN peacekeepers and local police are up to the task of maintaining order.

More than a half-million people still live in vast encampments that have grown more unpleasant in recent days with the early onset of the rainy season.

Some also fear the departure of the American troops is a sign of dwindling international interest in the plight of the Haitian people following the catastrophic Jan. 12 earthquake.

"I would like for them to stay in Haiti until they rebuild the country and every-

body can go back to their house," said Marjorie Louis, a 27-year-old mother of two, as she warmed a bowl of beans for her family over a charcoal fire on the fake grass of the national stadium.

US officials say the long-anticipated draw down of troops is not a sign of waning commitment to Haiti, only a change in the nature of the operation. Security will now be the responsibility of the 10,000-strong UN peacekeeping force and the Haitian police.

A smaller number of US forces — the exact number has not yet been determined — will be needed as the UN and Haitian government reassert control, said Gen. Douglas Fraser, head of US Southern Command, which runs the Haiti operation.

"Our mission is largely accomplished," Fraser said.

Catholic church slams Mexico City's leftist mayor

MEXICO'S Roman Catholic Church has published its harshest criticism to date of leftist Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, accusing his administration of botching issues ranging from crime to public transit.

The church has often disagreed with Ebrard's Democratic Revolution Party.

An editorial published Sunday on the Archdiocese of Mexico's Web site accused

Ebrard of "following the line set down by foreign groups" in approving legalized abortion and same-sex marriages.

Ebrard is viewed as a top contender in 2012 presidential race, and some leftists have accused the church of supporting more conservative rivals.

Mexican law prohibits the church from becoming involved in electoral politics.

Ex-Honduran leader to write book about 2009 coup

FORMER Honduran President Manuel Zelaya plans to write a book describing his ouster last year.

Zelaya says Honduras' business elite was behind last June's military-backed coup that sent him into exile.

In a television interview broadcast in Venezuela, Zelaya said the business leaders feared he planned to copy President Hugo Chavez's socialist policies and some were upset over his decision to seize control of fuel terminals used by store imported oil.

Honduran officials say Zelaya was ousted for refusing to drop a campaign for

a referendum on changing the constitution, which the Supreme Court had ruled illegal.

Zelaya said Sunday he hopes to publish a book about his ouster within three months, but provided few details.

He hopes to publish a book about his ouster within three months, but provided few details

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LIST OF PRE-QUALIFIED COMPANIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF 2ND PHASE OF NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (NTI) BONNY, RIVERS STATE

The Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) wishes to inform the general public especially companies that responded to the invitation for pre-qualification of prospective contractors for the 2nd phase development of National Technical Institute (NTI), Bonny, Rivers State, published in Daily Trust of June 11, 2009 and ThisDay of June 12, 2009 respectively, that the **LIST OF PRE-QUALIFIED COMPANIES HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ON PTFD WEBSITE www.ptdf.gov.ng. ALL COMPANIES THAT RESPONDED TO THE INVITATION ARE THEREFORE REQUESTED TO VISIT THE PTFD WEBSITE TO CHECK THE LIST.**

2.0 NOTE

Pre-qualified contractors are to pick up tender documents at Wiltech Consult, 7B Isaac Boro Street, Old GRA, Port-Harcourt, from Monday, March 22, 2010 to Wednesday, April 7, 2010 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of N100, 000.00 in form of a bank draft in favour of Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF).

Completed Tender documents should be properly sealed in an envelope marked with the relevant Tender Lot on the left hand corner of the envelope and addressed to:

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To reach him before 12:00 noon on Wednesday, April 7, 2010. The Tenders will be opened by 2:00 pm the same day at a venue to be announced later.

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International

Bulger mother's torment as killer 're-offends'

THE mother of a toddler killed by two boys in one of Britain's most notorious murders told of her torment yesterday amid reports one of the freed killers was being held over suspected child pornography.

James Bulger, two, was beaten to death on a railway line in Liverpool in 1993 by Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, who were aged just 10 at the time.

The pair, who became hate figures in Britain, were later given new identities and released on licence in 2001.

A string of media reports suggest Venables, now aged 27, has now been taken back into custody over alleged child pornography offences but has not yet been charged.

While confirming an investigation into Venables is under way, ministers have refused to officially reveal the nature of the claims, saying it could prejudice a future criminal trial.

Denise Fergus, James's mother, has accused officials of breaking a

promise to tell her if either of the young killers broke the terms of their release.

"My head has been all over the place. I don't know what he has done," she told ITV television.

"I have had sleepless nights and I am not eating again -- I have had to pull my kids out of school. "It is just one massive rollercoaster again for me and I can't believe that they are putting me through this."

Amid intense media pressure to reveal more details of what Venables is accused of, Justice Secretary Jack Straw is making a statement to the House of Commons later and has hinted he could reveal more details of the case. But he seemed to confirm some of the allegations in an interview yesterday.

"What I want to do is to look at what has already been made public... to look at that and then to make a judgement about whether there is information that, given it is now out in any event, we could now confirm," he told BBC radio.



DENISE Fergus, the mother of murdered toddler James Bulger, and husband Stuart Fergus leave the Royal Court of Justice after the decision in the murder case in London.

Nuclear energy gets new French-driven boost

POOR countries need nuclear power, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said yesterday, urging rich lenders to help pay for a global nuclear expansion in the interests of fighting climate change and feeding the growing world hunger for energy.

Sarkozy recognized the danger of meltdowns or proliferation — and international worries about Iran's nuclear program. He stood

firmly against those who "cheat" and use nuclear technology to make weapons.

His tantalizing vision of nuclear reactors dotting the horizon won over international energy officials from India to Brussels and French executives eager to market their expertise abroad, all present at a Paris conference yesterday.

Some experts, however, say

Sarkozy's push is opening the door to risks that deadly nuclear technology gets into the wrong hands, and warn consumers to pay attention to the staggering price tag of potential nuclear energy growth — up to \$3.9 trillion worldwide by 2050.

"We need nuclear energy" to meet international goals set for slowing global warming, Sarkozy said. Nuclear reactors do not pro-

duce the carbon emissions that scientists blame in part for climate change.

His recommendations come at a time when the Obama administration has called nuclear power a key part of comprehensive energy legislation in the United States, where nuclear reactor orders have been halted since the Three Mile Island nuclear accident in 1979.

Sarkozy wants France, which

is reliant on atomic reactors for a large majority of its electricity, to lead the way.

France has long marketed itself as a nuclear pioneer globally. But it hit a recent setback — the loss of a lucrative deal to build reactors in the United Arab Emirates to a South Korean consortium — that has raised questions about the French industry's prospects in a nuclear renaissance.

Britain won respect in Middle East over Iraq - Miliband

BRITAIN'S decision to back the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 earned it respect in the Middle East and it must not be scared of similar action in the future, Foreign Secretary David Miliband said yesterday.

Giving evidence to the public inquiry into Britain's role in the US-led conflict, Miliband insisted that despite all the violence, Iraq now had the potential to be an example to the region on democracy and human rights.

Miliband acknowledged the domestic and international opposition to the war but said many Arab countries respected Britain more for acting on Iraq's violation of UN resolutions on its weapons of mass destruction.

"I do think people in the region do respect those who are willing to see through what they say they favour," he said.

"Even those who disagree with it (the war) would say to me, 'you've sent a message that when you say something you actually mean it. And if you say something's a last chance it really is a last chance.'"

He added: "In the Arab world today, I don't believe that the Iraq decisions have undermined our relationships or our ability to business. Some of our ambassadors say we are in a stronger position."



FOREIGN Secretary David Miliband -- pictured in Cordoba on March 5 -- has said Britain's decision to back the US-led invasion of Iraq won it respect in the Middle East.



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N4000 for SS 1 Applicants (Age 13 - 15)

EXAMINATION DATE: 20TH MARCH, 2010

TIME: 9:00 AM

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPLICATION FORMS SALE CENTERS • Zaria Academy, Kilometer 10, Zaria-Funta Rd, Shika, Kaduna State • Sacred Heart School, Independent Way, Kaduna, Kaduna State • Panaf Nursery, Primary & Secondary Sch, Ethiopia by Gabon Str, Barnawa, Kaduna • Sokoto Cement Staff Primary School, Sokoto • Hazel International School, Katsina • New Capital School, 19 Kwame Nkrumah Rd, Asokoro, Abuja • Lugbe International Academy, Lugbe Phase II, Abuja • Roberto International Primary School, Wuse II, Abuja • Nadi International School, Yola, Adamawa • Plateau Private School, Bauchi Ring Rd, Jos, Plateau state • CBDA Primary School, Maiduguri, Borno State • Hadid Pharmacy/Tarauni Shopping Complex, Sabo Bakin Zuwo Rd, Kano • Faith Nursery & Primary School, Norman's Land, Kano • Adamu Consulting, Suite 30, Block B Landmark Plaza, 1 Yedseram Str, Off IBB Boulevard, Maitama, Abuja | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXAMINATION CENTERS • ZARIA: Zaria Academy, Kilometer 10, Zaria-Funta Rd, Shika, Kaduna State • ABUJA: New Capital School, 19 Kwame Nkrumah Rd, Asokoro, Abuja • KATSINA: Hazel International School, Katsina • SOKOTO: Sokoto Cement Nursery & Primary School, Sokoto • KANO: Faith-Star Nursery & Primary School, Norman's Land, Kano • MAIDUGURI: CBDA Primary School, Maiduguri, Borno State • BAUCHI: Sa'adu Zungu Primary School, Bauchi, Bauchi State • LAFIA: Dunama Primary School, Lafia, Nasarawa State • LAGOS/OTA: The Bell Comprehensive Secondary School, Ota, Ogun State • ADAMAWA: General Murtala Mohammed Secondary School, Yola, Adamawa State • TARABA: Government Day Secondary School, Magami Jalingo, Taraba State • UYO: Dove International School, Osongama Estate, Uyo. |
|--|--|

Application forms can also be purchased on the day of examination at the examination centers. Applicants who intend to purchase their forms on the day of examination should arrive at the centre by 8:30 am with 2 recent passport-size photographs.

For further information call:

08036786173, 08056831789, 08062112720, 08028398297, 08051235165, 08036696462

website: www.zariaacademyng.com



FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

FCDA OLD SECRETARIAT, AREA 11, PMB 24
GARKI, ABUJA

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tenders are hereby invited from interested caterers for furnishing and managing of FCDA Staff canteen at area 11 Garki, Abuja.

The Authority will not change rent for the place so that the services rendered by the caterer would be affordable by staff of all categories. In addition the caterer will not be paying for electricity or water bills. These and others are to guarantee affordable cost of the meals.

2. Interested caterer wishing to manage the staff canteen are expected to be guided by the followings:-
 - (a) Provide standard furniture, kitchen equipment, cooking utensils, plates and cutlery
 - (b) Operating hours shall be between the hours of 7am to 7pm.
 - (c) Engagement is for three (3) years with a probation period of one year.
 - (d) All caterers are expected to report to the Deputy Director, Recurrent Division of Procurement Department on 15th March, 2010 for inspection of the facility before submission of their bids.

3. EXPECTED MENU LIST

CATEGORY A	CATEGORY B
White Rice	Meat Pie
Jollof Rice	Fish Finger
Porridge Yam	Egg Roll
Fried Rice	Doughnut
Pudding	Assorted Cakes (expected wedding & birthday
Semovita	Burger
Eba	Hot Dog
Pounded Yam	Pizza
	Bread
	Kebabs
	Popcorn
	Ice Cream

You are to tag your quoted prices to the menu listed above in your submission and changes in prices will be subject to negotiation with management/stakeholders during the period of engagement.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- i. Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission
 - ii. Evidence of current three (3) years Tax Clearance Certificate
 - iii. Evidence of previous engagement in similar services
5. All candidates are to pay non-refundable fee of N10, 000.00 to Aso Savings & Loans Bank at Area 11, Garki, Abuja and Photocopy of evidence of payment is to be attached along with the tender documents.
 6. All tenders are to be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Executive Secretary FCDA and marked on the top right hand corner " Tender for furnishing and management of FCDA Staff Canteen" and to be dropped in Room 017, block B, Deputy Director (Recurrent Procurement).
 7. The closing date for receipt of tender is 22/03/2010 by 12 Noon two weeks from the date of publication and late submissions will not be accepted.

Signed:
Management



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

MOTTO: JUSTICE, UNITY AND PROGRESS

ZONAL SECRETARIAT NORTH-EAST ZONE
Maiduguri Bye-Pass, Bauchi

NOTICE OF MEETING

NORTH-EAST ZONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Notice is hereby given to all members of the North-East Zonal Executive Committee of our great party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that there will be a meeting of the North-East Zonal Executive committee as stated below:

Date: Saturday, 13th March, 2010
Venue: Banquet Hall, Government House, Bauchi
Time: 10:am

Attendance is strictly for members only, specified under Article 12.53 of our 2009 (amended) Party constitution, comprising of:

1. The Zonal Chairman
2. Members of the National Assembly from the Zone
3. State Governors and Deputy Governors from the Zone
4. Members of the National Executive Committee from the Zone
5. Members of the Board of Trustees from the Zone
6. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Party Leader and Party Whip in the State Houses of Assembly in the Zone
7. Zonal Working Committee members in the Zone
8. Zonal- Ex-Officio members from the States of the Zone
9. States Chairmen, States Secretaries and Treasurers of the Party from the zone.

Signed:

BARRISTER YUSUF HARDO

Zonal Secretary
PDP North-East Zone

BUSINESS

0805 1000 536

Ecobank Nigeria appoints new MD, EDs

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

THE Board of Directors of Ecobank Nigeria Plc has announced the appointment of Mr. Jibril J. Aku as Managing Director of Ecobank Nigeria. Aku takes over from Mr. Offiong Ambah who has since been elevated to Group Executive Director, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated in charge of Ecobank Capital.

Prior to this appointment, Aku was the Executive Director in charge of Treasury & Financial Institutions.

Aku has over 26 years experience in banking with 17 at senior management levels. He holds both BSc. and Master's Degrees in Business Administration.

His banking career included key positions in Capital markets, Foreign Exchange, Treasury Management, Operations and Technology. He had previously worked for 16 years with Citibank Nigeria and was Executive Director Afribank Nigeria Plc between June 2003 and December 2005.

Ecobank Capital is responsible for overseeing all Ecobank Group treasury, investment banking and asset management businesses across the Ecobank Group 29 country network.

Commenting on his appointment, Aku said he is committed to enhanced efficiency that will bring about customer satisfaction as well as creating improved shareholder value.

Also appointed are three new Executive Directors namely, Ibrionke Wilson Executive Director, Finance and Administration; Morenike Adepaju, Executive Director & Regional Head Lagos and West and Jolone Okorodudu Executive Director & Regional Head South-East/South-South.

Mrs. Wilson is a Chartered Accountant with over 11 years audit experience with Coopers and Lybrand and over 15 years banking experience at senior management levels in different positions within the



MR. Jibril J. Aku

Ecobank Group. Mrs. Adepaju has over 20 years banking experience, 14 of which are at senior management positions, and was until this appointment, the Managing Director of Ecobank Liberia while Ms. Okorodudu

has 24 years banking experience, 15 of which in senior management positions within the Ecobank Group. She was until her appointment, the Managing Director, Ecobank Gambia.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE



Arik Air
 PH-Abuja: 08.45, 12.12.50, 17.00 (Mon-Fri), 08.45, 17.30 (Sat), 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Abuja-PH: 07.15, 11.20, 15.30 (Mon-Fri), 07.15, 16.00 (Sat) 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Lagos-Kano: 12.20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun)
 Kano-Lagos: 02.35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Kano: 03:35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Kano-Abuja: 05:20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Gombe: 11:10am (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Gombe-Abuja: 12.30pm (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Lagos-Yola: Lag-Abj 04:50pm, via Abj-Yola 06:45pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Yola-Lagos: Yola-Abj 08:40am, Abj-Lagos 10:20am (Mon-Fri/Sat); Lagos-Maid: Lag-Abj 03:50pm, via Abj-Maid 06:00pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Maid-Lagos: Miud-Abj 07:30am, via Abj-Lag 09:15am (Mon/Fri/Sat); Abuja-Sokoto: 11:10am (Mon-Fri); Sokoto-Abuja: 12:50pm (Mon-Fri) Abuja-Akure 02:10pm (Mon, Wed and Fri); Akure-Abuja: 08:50am (Mon, Wed and Fri); Lagos-Kwara: 07:30am, (Mon-Fri) 07.30, 03:50pm Sat 08:00am, 11:45am Sun; Kwara-Lagos: 4:10pm (Mon-Fri), 01:10pm, 05:30pm Sat 09:45am, 05:00pm Sun
 Abuja-Kwara: 03:25pm (Mon-Fri); Kwara-Abuja 01.30pm (Mon-Fri); Lagos-Jos: 09:05am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); Jos-Lagos: 11.00am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
 ABV-QOW 02:30pm (Mon-Fri), 11:30am Sat 03:20pm Sun; Lagos-Kaduna: 10:20am, 04:10pm (Mon-Fri), 10.20 (Sat/Sun); Kaduna-Lagos: 12:10pm, 06:00pm (Mon-Fri), 12.10 (Sat/Sun); Lagos-Warr: 07:30am (Mon/Fri) 07:30am, 03:50pm (Sat), 08:00am, and 11:45am (Sun)
Aero Contractors
 Lagos-Kad: 08.00am (Mon/Fri/Sat/Sun)
 Kad-Lagos: 09.40am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
 Lagos-Jos: 11.15am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
 Jos-Lagos: 13.15pm (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
 Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30; 16.30; 19.45 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16.45 (Sat). Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30, 14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30 (Sat); Lagos-Ben: 07:45; 11:00; 15.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).
 Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun); Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun); Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun); Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00 (Sun); Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)
Chanchangi Airlines
 Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 10.00, 13.10, 15.30, 17.30
 Abj-Lagos: 08.00, 11.45, 13.40, 15.30, 17.00
 Lagos-Kad: 10.45, (on Fri), 17.00 (Mon/Fri/Sat/Sun)
 Kad-Lagos: 07.30 (Mon/Fri), 08.00 (Sat/Sun)
 Nigerian Eagles Airlines (Virgin Nigeria)
 Abj-Kano: 18.40 (Mon-Fri)/Sun
 Kano-Abj: 08.35 (Mon-Fri) /Sat
 Abj-Soko: 09:35, (Mon); 10:10 (Fri), 11:20 (Wed/Sun)
 Soko-Abj: 11.35 (Mon), 12.00 (Fri), 13:20 (Wed/Sun)
 Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 11.40, 14.00, 16.30, 17.00, 17.20; 18.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun), 8.00; 12.40; 13.10; 20:00 (Fri)
 Abj-Lagos: 07.00, 09.30, 10.30, 11.15, 16.15; 19.15, 19.25, 19:35 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 14:55; 15:15; 20:45 (Fri); 19:45 (Sun); 11:25, 13:35, 16:25 (Mon)
 Lagos-PHC: 07.40, 09.30, 10.00, 12.20, 13.30, 14.00, 16.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); PHC-Lagos: 10.50, 11.20, 12.45, 15.30, 16.15, 17.15 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); Lagos-Owr: 12:15; (Tue-Fri/Sun); 12:40 (Mon/Sat)
 Owr-Lagos: 14:25 (Tue-Fri/Sun) 14:50 (Mon/Sat)
 Lagos-Cal: 08:00 (Fri), 09:10 (Wed-Thu), 12:40 (Tue/Sat/Sun), 13:10 (Mon)

CBN EXCHANGE RATES				BUREAU DE CHANGE RATES	
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	Selling (NGN)		
CFA	0.2897	0.2997	0.3097	BUYING	
DANISH KRONER	26.8799	26.971	27.062	DOLLAR.....	N151
EURO	200.1899	200.8681	201.5462	EURO.....	N206
POUNDS STERLING	230.5512	231.3322	232.1132	POUNDS.....	N235
RIYAL	39.36	39.4934	39.6267	SELLING	
SDR	226.2265	226.9929	227.7592	DOLLAR.....	N152
SWISS FRANC	136.5655	137.0281	137.4907	EURO.....	N208
US DOLLAR	147.6	148.1	148.6	POUNDS.....	N238
WAUA	226.801	227.5693	228.3376	Source: S&J Bureau de Change, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.	
YEN	1.6378	1.6434	1.6489		

Stock Market Index	
Date:	Tuesday, March 8, 2010
Index:	22,923.91
Deals:	5,667
Volume:	214,498,632
Value:	N 1,812,748,063.81
Cap.:	N 5,521,033,716,730.47

Business

'I've not heard of micro finance bank before'

MALAM Umar Aliyu, 31, hails from Kwara State but does his petty trade business in Gauraka Tafa Local Government of neighbouring Niger State. Like many small business owners in the northern part of the country, Aliyu does not know that he could approach a micro finance bank to raise capital for his business. In fact he says he hasn't heard of micro finance banking before let alone know why they exist. He is not alone in his lack of basic business knowledge. He, however, dreams of owning a chain of superstores in the future.

Stories by Jibrin Abubakar

WHEN and how did you start this business?

I started with N7, 500 in Abuja five years ago. My family gave me the initial capital. But as a result of the demolition of houses in Abuja, I moved to Gauraka, Niger State.

How much do you earn per day?

Sometime my total sale in a day is up to N5,000 but as you know it fluctuates.

How often do you go to the market to refill your stocks?

I go to the market once a week and sometimes twice a week, depending on demand.

What is your revolving



MALAM Umar Aliyu

capital like?

I think about N120,000. This may not be accurate.

How educated are you?

I have Arabic and Islamic education.

What is your major challenge?

My major challenge is capital. If I have enough money I can get a bigger shop and buy more products.

Are you aware that you could grow your business by approaching one of the micro finance banks?

Truly I am not aware. But now that I am aware, I will try and get information about it so that I can grow my business.

Are you single?

No I am married but I am not yet a father.

Are you comfortable with this business?

I am not comfortable because I would need this bank loan to grow my business.



MALAM Umar Aliyu

'I can't approach a micro-finance bank because I don't have connections'

MALAM Musa Muhammad, 42, and father of five, is from Jigawa State. He started his small business 22 years ago with N50 as capital. With two wives and children in school, Malam Muhammad feels a sense of achievement but says he is desirous of growing his business.

WHAT was your initial capital?

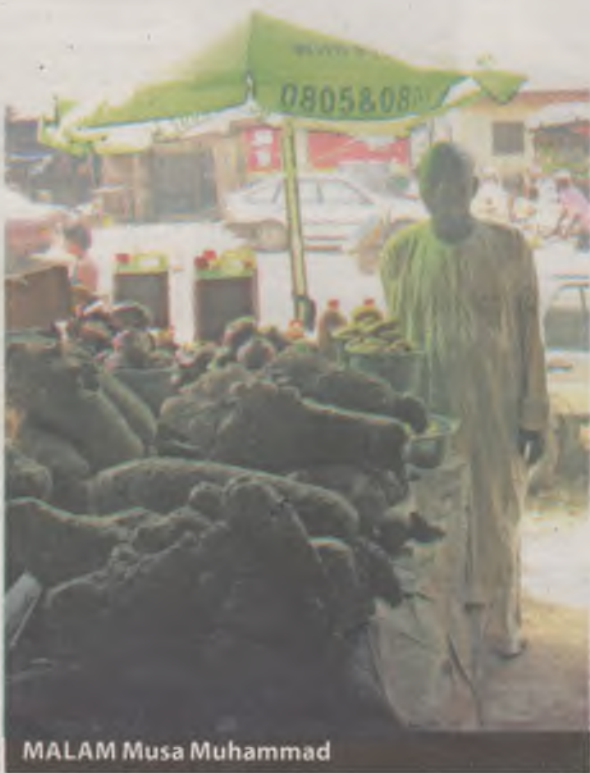
I started business with N50 only. I went to the market and bought some onions and started selling. Gradually, my total business asset became N100. Today I should thank God because I am married with this business and my eldest daughter is now in secondary school in Jos. The rest are in primary school, one is a nursery school.

What is your total asset now?

I think I can confirm to you that my total asset now is up to N150, 000. I use this money to buy stocks and sell same. With this I help myself and my family members.

What are some of your challenges in doing this business?

One of my problems is that I need more capi-



MALAM Musa Muhammad

tal to boost my business. You see I am enterprising because I am trying

to expand the business by selling Irish potatoes, yam, palm oil and onions.

How much do you make in a day?

I make up to N4, 000 and sometime N5, 000 every day. It is a good business. If I have a better shop and if the roads are good I can do more. As you can see the Niger State Government is reconstructing the roads.

Are you aware of micro finance banks?

Yes I am aware of the banks but I think you need to get connected before you can secure the loans. I don't know anybody there. Yes we are hearing that we can go to the banks but we are afraid because we don't have brothers there.

Do you have any message to the government?

My first message is that I pray that Allah gives President Yar'Adua sound health. Secondly, I know that government is working but you know the Hausa



MALAM Musa Muhammad

people say: In dabu yayi yawa bayan jin moi. Government should try more. Government should help

us and we would be law abiding citizens, and I pray Allah help them in their work.

Business/Publications

Challenges facing Nigerian banks, by BGL

By Jibrin Abubakar

THE BGL group has identified infrastructural deficiency, unreliable social statistics, human capital deficiency and the problem of corporate governance as some of the daunting challenges that need to be tackled if the banking sector must work efficiently.

This is contained in the BGL banking report presented to the minister of finance Mansur Muhtar last Friday.

"As there are challenges for the operators so are there challenges for the regulators. For the regulators, the most important challenge is to get

the banks to lend again after suffering untold losses due to the financial crisis," the report said.

The report also said the challenges facing the banks include human capital deficiency and corporate governance.

The report said epileptic power supply, unstable road and other infrastructural problems continue to stifle banks' growth, negatively impacting profitability.

"Banks generate power individually at substantial cost (accounting for more than 60% of the general and administrative expenses) and expend several man hours that could have been

performed quite easily through technology," the report added.

Another challenge facing the banking sector, the report said is that CBN churns out several circulars creating confusion for the operators. Apart from its report on banking sector, the BGL also presented reports on Insurance, pension, oil and gas, and agriculture.

Speaking earlier at the event, Group Managing Director and Chief Executive of the BGL Plc, Mr. Albert E. Okumagba, said BGL has strong research team with an unrivalled research database spanning 15 years of experience.

Oxford Group publishes report on Nigeria's economy

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

NIGERIA'S bid to push ahead with its roadmap for national development, including the ambitious expansion of its non-oil sector and an overhaul of the country's infrastructure, is mapped out in a ground-breaking business guide just published by Oxford Business Group (OBG).

Andrew Jeffreys, OBG's Editor in Chief, said that OBG's first report on Nigeria's economic activity came as the country was beginning to reap the rewards of its ambitious reforms, despite the ripple effects of the world financial crisis. "The country's hydrocarbons industry has ensured that Nigeria's GDP continues to rise, while providing the building blocks for the government's development strategies," he said. "Even if the downturn reduces the speed of Nigeria's economic progress, the country has shown its determination to push forward with its reforms and I am confident that OBG has captured this resoluteness in its report."

Jeffreys also paid tribute to OBG's partners, saying they have made an invaluable contribution to The Report: Nigeria 2010. "OBG recognises the importance of teaming up with part-



MINISTER of Finance Mansur Muhtar

ners that have an in-depth knowledge of the local economic landscape," he said. "Our partners in Nigeria have proved to possess outstanding levels of expertise in their field which has provided the Group's team with high-level credible and accurate analysis for our new report."

The Report: Nigeria 2010 marks the culmination of more than ten months of groundbreaking field research by a team of analysts from OBG, assessing trends and developments in all major sectors of the economy, including energy, industry, finance, banking, tourism, transport and real estate.

The Regent Secondary School Abuja



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Entrance Tests

ABUJA CENTRE

Dates: Saturday 13th March and Saturday 22nd May 2010
Time: 9:00am

Venue: Plot 858, Mabushi District, Behind the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing

PORT HARCOURT CENTRE

Date: Saturday 27th March 2010 Time: 9:00am

Venue: Montessori International School
58, King Perekule Street, GRA Port Harcourt

Registration forms: from The Registrar, Mrs Eniola Ekubi or

The Admissions Officer of the Montessori School, Port Harcourt

registrarsec@regentschoolabuja.com

www.regentschoolabuja.com

0803 327 9062

0807 848 7966

Star Feature



A visit to parks and gardens nowadays could be a daunting affair.

By Tosin Omoniyi

A visit to the notable Millennium Park in Abuja either in the wee hours of the day or at dusk, will reveal another world of its own. The strong, unmistakable scent of Indian hemp is what easily arrests the attention of anyone who is strong hearted enough to pay a visit to the government owned property at those two periods. It is not also unusual to see groups of young men gathered in pockets around the expansive park, smoking

as if the habit was going out of fashion. A regular visitor to the park, Yemi Adepoju says that he does not exceed 7pm at the park on any particular day that he decides to visit. This he claims is as a result of the activities of hoodlums who make use of the cover of darkness to dispossess visitors of their valuables. He adds that many unlucky ones have equally been manhandled by these miscreants, who do not hesitate to deal with anyone who crosses their paths at these odd hours. 'The fear of these boys is no doubt

the beginning of wisdom for anybody that goes to the Millennium Park regularly. They usually wait till the very late hours to attack unsuspecting visitors since security is lax at these hours. Many of the park staff would have left except for a very few guards who are still around at such hours. And don't forget that the many portions of the wall around the premises have broken down so anyone can easily gain entrance to the park without even making use of the main entrance. These boys smoke openly and

harass people when they are in groups. When it is daytime of course they keep a low profile, because obviously they know that they would be dealt with if they try to molest anyone. But at nights they are kings and can easily operate without hindrance. I have seen them harass a man. It was only when the man responded to their demands that they let him go. Others have not been so lucky. That is why people like me leave before the dark hours so as not to fall prey to these violent boys. The Park authorities appear not to be doing anything to curb the menace and this is not good enough,' confided Adepoju.

In most of Abuja's public gardens and parks today, the activities of hoodlums and other shady characters appears to be transiting to a source of concern to most residents, with not a few of them calling for the strict assurance of security of lives and properties of visitors, who daily throng such places. Not quite a

few also have equally appealed to the law enforcement agencies to make concerted efforts in curtailing the unwholesome activities of miscreants who abound in such public places.

A few weeks back the FCT police had to put in extra measures to ensure that a fight that broke out amongst miscreants at the Millennium Park did not spread into the city's center. Many other free for alls have occurred at the park several times with combatants and innocent bystanders, sustaining different degrees of injuries. This has made many residents to query the ability of the police to provide adequate security at the numerous parks and gardens that dot the entire city.

A few weeks back also, the media was jolted out of its lassitude by the brutal and unprovoked killing of one of its own, Efenji Efenji at the Cortland garden Karu, on the outskirts of the city by yet to be identified assailants. Efenji, a reporter with the Africa Independent Television AIT was suspected

Ga or

The active residents

to have been severally shot to death in the presence of wife, baby and brother on Valentine's Day, simply because he rebuffed the amorous advances made to his wife by hoodlums, who reacted violently by snuffing out the life of the recently married journalist. Although the police are working on other possible motives for the killing, many say the issue that needs to be tackled is the general state of security in the city's gardens and parks. Cortland garden has since been closed down pending the completion of investigations and the police say that several suspects have been nabbed in relation to the murder. But according to many skeptics if care was not taken the murder may just turn out to be one of the numerous unsolved crimes that have been hanging around their necks.

In the wake of the fatal murder some gardeners around the city appear to have subsequently beefed up security around their establishments. Chimex Ike, supervisor of Classic Garden which is a stone throw away from the Cortland Garden says that the issue of security is a top priority for his establishment. He adds that apart from a 24 hour guard shift that the garden's authorities put in place to take care of the safety of clients, it equally occasionally employ the services of more policemen who come at irregular hours to monitor the movements of people coming in or going out of the garden. 'We also have regular interaction with the policemen to patrol the area and the police officer's personal phone number and we can easily

“ These boys smoke openly and harass people when they are in groups. When it is daytime of course they keep a low profile, because obviously they know that they would be dealt with if they try to molest anyone. But at nights they are kings and can easily operate without hindrance.

Gardens of relaxation tension?

Activities of hoodlums in and around parks and gardens in Abuja, raise concern amongst even as the police say they are capable of providing security cover at such places

touch with him even at odd hours. He is a friend of the house,' he proudly says.

Director of Jimson Gardens, Jikwoyi, Godwin Osahon believes that the attitude of garden owners in relation to interpersonal relationship with the public, can go a long way in determining the state of security of such establishment. Displaying numerous knife wound scars to this reporter which he says he got from intervening in numerous fights throughout his career, he says that owners of relaxation spots have to be proactive in their management of their businesses if they want to survive. 'Many of these violent boys are known by owners of such parks as they reside in the area. A park owner must be able to easily identify such boys, and stop them from visiting their gardens. Owners of parks also need to have a good working relationship with the police, if possible policemen from other posts that are not near the establishment. This is because even the policemen of a particular area after some time become so friendly with these violent boys, and would be unable to effectively deal with them when they cause trouble. But a policeman who is from another area has no such sympathies.' He adds: 'apart from employing private guards, you can also have undercover security personnel who go around monitoring activities in the park and reporting to you directly if they sense any trouble. Every garden or park owner must take the security of his clients seriously, if he wants to remain in business.'

Gloria Clement, supervisor of Jabi Park and Gardens also concurs. 'Security is paramount in gardens as the customer is the soul of every business. Apart from a 24 hour private security guard in place, we equally make use of the regular police patrol team who visit us. We have the DPO's numbers and we also do our own in house screening, before allowing people to enter the premises. For instance, your manner of dressing or demeanor at times will determine if you are allowed into the garden in the first place. Of course we train our staff especially the security to respond to any security threat quickly and as professional as possible,' she enthuses.

At the 2-4-7 Garden and Ibiza garden, area 11, Garki, the presence of bouncers was noticed at the entrance. These heavily built men were seen briskly frisking and studying customers as they walked in. A customer who was turned back bristled with anger as he

retorted at one of the guards: 'is it because I am wearing slippers that you will not allow me in. Am I not coming to spend my money like other people you are letting in?' Findings reveal that for gardens especially Ibiza, the mode of dressing of customers determines if they are allowed in or not.

Interestingly, further investigations reveal that patronage at the various parks and gardens visited has not in any way dropped. The supervisors spoken with say the number of customers that visit them on daily basis has not in any way dimin-

ished. 'People have a way of getting over calamities like that. That is one of characteristics of Nigerians,' one of them opines.

A source at the federal capital development agency, FCDA who does not want his name in print, says that the modality for owning a garden in the FCT is so simplistic that this may account for why such establishments are springing up regularly with no provision for security. He says that, 'owning a park or garden is not as difficult as people say, once you have the money and land, securing a license to run your business

is not difficult. Even getting an alcohol permit is equally easy, so you find out that many people are now going into the business. I think the city authorities should partner with the police to ensure that provision of adequate security is one of the priorities of ownership of parks.'

FCT police spokesperson, SP Moshood Jimoh however believes that despite the recent tragic incident at Karu, the police can still live up to its constitutional responsibilities of providing security for residents. He says

that in the aftermath of the gruesome murder of the journalist, security has been beefed up in the area, and the police command is working hard at providing more patrol teams to checkmate the activities of hoodlums in and around the FCT. 'The police are still carrying out investigations on the matter, even as suspects arrested are helping us with investigations. Meanwhile residents should remain calm, as the police will continue to provide the necessary security for the safety of lives and property,' he enthuses.



ARE our parks and gardens slowly being taken over by hoodlums?



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Business

Sacked staff want court to shut Afribank

From Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

THE retrenched 506 AfriBank staff said they want the National Industrial Court to order the closure of AfriBank for its inability to heed to the court's order.

The National Industrial Court sitting in Kano had ordered Afri Bank PLC, on January 21, 2010, to pay the full benefits of the sacked 506 staff of the bank based on current salary scale but since the judgment, the bank is yet to settle the affected workers.

In the judgement, the pre-

siding judge MB Dada said the judgement was being declared in favour of the disengaged staff as the bank was not able to contravene all the claims adduced by the sacked staff. He said the bank also failed to bring any single document to substantiate their stand and vitiate the contents of the plethora of documents submitted by the claimants.

Speaking to our correspondent yesterday in Kano, the spokesman of the disengaged bank workers, Malam Maikudi Aminu, said since the bank refused to honour the court

order, they had no option but to go back to court and seek the closure of the bank.

While urging the new management staff to hastily settle their entitlements, Malam Aminu said the immediate-past management of the bank led by Sebastian Adigwe was the cause of their travails. "It is unfortunate that the same people who wrongly advised the previous management on our case, are still misleading the new management," he said.

Another affected staff, Nura Jafaru Dan Malam noted that

they had served the bank for at least 10 to 20 years, and as the bank terminated their appointments without committing any fault, they were entitled to full redundancy payment as the law provides.

"The employment protection law has imposes an obligation on employers to make full payments to their employees who have been disengaged from service by reasons of redundancy," the claimed.

He added that instead of them to be paid on the basis of current salary scale, but they were paid on the old salary scales of 2005. They argued that previously retrenched

staff were paid based on their current salaries.

"Redundancy payment according to article 5 (a, b, c & d) is based on the employee's current basic salary, housing, transport and lunch subsidy," the ex-banker stated.

The spokesman of the sacked staff Malam Maikudi Aminu, whose appointment was terminated as a manager, said going by the bank's decision to pay them based on retroactive principle, the amount he received as benefit was less than what a driver received in the bank's previous retrenchment exercise.

'Peugeot 307 sedan wins most qualitative award'

By Abubakar Momoh

THE Peugeot 307 sedan has won two outstanding awards first as Most Qualitative Product and Overall Best Product of the Fair. PAN also carted four other awards in the just concluded trade fair in Kaduna, a statement from PAN said.

"The Most Qualitative Product award was presented to PAN by His Highness, Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Dr. Shehu Idris. The award is one of the most distinguished prizes given by the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (KADCCIMA) on an annual basis," the statement said.

The statement signed by Toyin Akigbogun Head Corporate Communication said The Peugeot 307 Sedan, christened "Jubilee" in commemoration of Nigeria's 50th Independence Anniversary, was the cynosure of visitors to the PAN Dome at the Fair, due to the fact that it is wholly Nigerian assembled with prospects for increased local content.

The car first rolled out of the Kakuri, plant in November, 2009 during which Acting President Goodluck Jonathan commissioned the production line.

"The PAN Nigeria Dome also emerged as the Most Environmentally Friendly stand at the Fair. Other awards were Best Exhibitor of Automobiles and Most Consistent Exhibitor. Furthermore, the company was adjudged the Best Overall Runner-up of the 31st Kaduna International Trade Fair, thus maintaining its last year's position," it said.

One of the key highlights of the Fair was the simultaneous unveiling of the company's new Corporate and Product Logos, performed by the Managing Director, Dr. Haroun Ibrahim Aliyu and Deputy Managing Director, Alhaji Shehu Sani Dauda.

Africa needs to rebuild economic defences –IMF

WITH its economies recovering, Africa needs to start rebuilding reserves and thinking about tightening spending to build defences against future crises, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Monday.

In Kenya as part of a three-country tour of Africa to examine its recovery from the crisis, Fund Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said it was still too early for many governments to withdraw emergency fiscal measures.

However, Africa's leaders must keep an eye on future disaster mitigation by ensuring they have sufficient reserves and the ability to boost short-term spending -- factors that allowed the poorest continent to weather the worst of last year's global economic storm.

"Africa is back, although a lot depends on a global recovery that is still in its early stages," Strauss-Kahn said in a speech at the University of Nairobi.

"For many countries, it is still too early to remove the crutch.

"A major lesson from the crisis is that countries that sowed in times of plenty were able to reap in times of loss. Policy buffers must therefore be rebuilt to allow for future countercyclical responses, with fiscal policy and reserves.



IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn

"This is the first line of defence against adverse shocks," he said.

He also urged African leaders to plan for unexpected problems by negotiating debt with flexible repayment terms, or taking out

insurance against natural disasters.

The IMF is now projecting economic growth in the sub-Saharan region at 4.5 per cent, below the 6 per cent - 7 per cent it

enjoyed in years leading up to the global slowdown, but well above last year's estimates of expansion below two per cent.

The Washington-based institution lent Africa a record five billion dollars last year as global recession hit demand for its commodities and other exports, causing a sharp decline in government revenues.

Remittances from Africans living overseas, an important source of income for many, also declined.

However, more than 30 countries were able to maintain social spending at pre-crisis levels or above due to the prudence of economic policies in the boom years, Strauss Kahn said.

Despite the relatively positive outlook, he said Africa remained at risk from factors ranging from natural disasters to political upheaval and an over-reliance on single streams of revenue, such as mining exports.

"This is not the time to rest on our laurels. African remains highly vulnerable to economic dislocation from many different sources," he said.

"Think about swings in commodity prices, natural disasters or instability in neighbouring countries," the IMF boss said.

40 LGs to raise N12bn for micro financing

By Sunday Williams

THE National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) said it is working with 40 local governments in the country to raise at least N12 billion for micro financing to the poor under its Village Solutions programme.

NAPEP is also advocating that every state government should commit at least 5% of their annual budget to economic empowerment and participation programme including health insurance for the poor, adult literacy, remedial, training and financial empowerment programmes.

The Village Economic Development Solutions programme is a community based programme aimed at spurring mass participation in the economic development process through the establishment of anchor economic activities at the grassroots.

In a statement, the agency said that Nigeria's success in the fight against poverty would be as a result of the cumulative contribution of all stakeholders.

"This implies the duty to ensure that all segments of society is mobilized to play its part in this fight. In exercise of this mandate, NAPEP designs strategies and programmes to which state, local governments and the private sector are encouraged to buy into, adopt and scale up the programmes in their respective constituencies," the statement said.

It said that NAPEP in 2010 is laying more emphasis on encouraging private sector initiatives as a sustainable poverty eradication strategy for poor. In 2009, NAPEP succeeded in coordinating and sensitising states and local governments on its Village Economic Development Solutions Programme and other programmes.

Head Publicity at NAPEP, Mr. Paul Onuoha said in the statement that in 2009, NAPEP succeeded in coordinating the setting up over 2,000 projects in various communities, creating over 18,000 direct jobs nationwide.

He said: "Related feeder jobs in our capacity widening program are about 45,000 from over 3,000 grassroots cooperatives throughout the country. The Village Solutions program has thus created well over 63,000 direct jobs nationwide, strengthening households and resulting in average incomes well over the poverty threshold."

He said NAPEP also succeeded in coordinating the implementation of Nigeria's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme called COPE with over 100, 000 vulnerable children, who were in danger of dropping out of school safeguarded by the programme.

Business/Agric

200m Africans need \$620bn for food

By Idris Ahmed

MORE than 200 million people in Africa are malnourished and the continent requires \$620 billion to feed its people in the next 40 years, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi said yesterday.

The number represents 26 percent of the entire population of the continent. Annually, Africa requires \$6.5 billion to develop the sector.

Statistics reveal that food import to Africa is about \$15 to \$20 billion per annum.

"These huge financial resources that are being expended can be internalised to develop Africa's agriculture", Sanusi said at a conference on the Development of Agribusiness and Agro-industries in Africa holding in Abuja.

Agriculture is the predominant economic activities of low developing economies, especially Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over 70 percent of the people in Africa depend on agriculture

for survival and well beings. It contributes about 20 to 50 percent to the continent's GDP.

Investment in agriculture in the continent has declined over the years and is still declining.

The share of the official development assistance to the sector in Africa dropped from \$1.45 billion in 1998 to \$713 million in 2002.

At the end of 2008, only 11 African countries had reached the six percent annual agriculture growth target in the official commitments.

According to the global food insecurity statistic, about 10 million people die annually of hunger related diseases. Half of these are children who die of malnutrition.

The proportion of those living below the poverty line of \$1 a day increased from 47.6 percent in 1985 to 59 percent in 2007.

While other jurisdictions like Asia and Latin America have recorded a sharp drop in the number of hungry people due to growth in food productions, about 850 million people were



estimated to have food insecurity in 2005.

Investment in agriculture provides the opportunities to address extreme poverty, governor Sanusi

said. He said agriculture has not achieve the desired result and this has ensure that a large number of people in Africa have limited access to food, clothing and shelter. "A total

budget of \$251 billion needed for the period of 2002 to 2015 to successfully implement the agricultural develop is far from been met", the CBN boss said.

Sub-Saharan Africa needs \$15bn for agric

By Sunday Williams & Tina A. Hassan

SUB-SAHARAN Africa countries need at least \$15billion annually between now and 2050 for crops production and rural infrastructural development, the Director, Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industry Division, Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), Geoffrey C. Mrema has said.

He said this in Abuja at the opening ceremony of a high level conference on the Development of Agri-business and Agro-industries in Africa.

He said the FAO, AfDB, IFAD, UNECA, and UNIDO are convinced that the African-Agri-business and Agro-business development initiative will play a vital role in the promotion of agri-

cultural led economic growth and social development that Africa is so well positioned to achieve.

He said the initiative is consistent with the emerging consensus in Africa that if agriculture is to be the main sector to stimulate economic growth, then investments should go beyond improvements in on-farm productivity to also cover agri-business and agro-industrial development

"There is a need, and an opportunity to accelerate investments in so-called downstream activities of the agri-food value chains. That is the industries and services that allow food products to match the demands of and reach the consumers in national, regional and global markets," he said.

Minister of Commerce and

industry, Achike Udenwa said the High level conference for Africa will build on recommendations of the Global Agro-Industries Forum (GAIF) hosted in India in 2008.

He said that the focus of the conference will be to assess the progress made in individual countries in the African continents, towards the development of the sector which has the potentials to stimulate economic development in the nations.

Agriculture remains the mainstay of African economies in terms of national output and employment generation but its potentials have neither been fully developed nor realized despite significant efforts by the governments in the past decade.

World Bank rates CADP high

By Idris Ahmed

THE World Bank has rated the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Nigeria's Commercial Agriculture Development Projects (CADP) as highly satisfactory.

The project is being implemented in Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Cross River and Kano. It will support three value chains per state as follows: Cross river, oil palm, cocoa and rice; Enugu is fruit trees, poultry and maize; Kaduna, fruit trees, dairy and maize; Kano, rice, dairy and maize and Lagos, poultry, aquaculture and rice.

"I am satisfied with the progress made by the states in terms of their plan of action to ensure effective implemen-

tation that will deliver results to the beneficiaries. On the Bank's side we will ensure that technical assistance and financial resources get to the beneficiaries on time since agriculture is time bound," Lucas kolawole Akapa, Task Team Leader of the Commercial Agriculture Development Project said.

Both the Government and the beneficiaries took the lead in the design and preparation of the project. Implementation of the project commenced in June 2009.

Lucas told the participating states, during a 5-day technical review and advocacy mission in Lagos, to justify and sustain the high rating given to the project by ensuring quality supervision and implementation of the project.

Farmers interested in commercial agriculture in the par-

ticipating states are to benefit from the project by joining their Commercial Agriculture Development Associations (CADAs) and Commodity Interest Groups (CIGs).

The World Bank, the National Project Coordinating Office and the State Commercial Agriculture Development Officers have agreed to ensure success of the project by stepping up project implementation as well as ensuring prompt disbursement to project beneficiaries.

The project which is aimed at transforming Nigeria's agriculture from low level productivity to high level model of commercial agriculture has two components: Agricultural Production and Commercialization, and Rural Infrastructure.

Sugarcane farmers guaranteed 40% interest rebate

By Sunday Williams

CENTRAL Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has promised to pay interest rebate of 40 percent to farmers that repay their loans before repayment date under the 2010 National Out-grower Development programme.

Executive Secretary, National Sugar Development Council, Alh. Usman Bello said this during the flagging off of the programme at Savannah Sugar Company Numan.

A statement issued by the National Sugar Development Council, said the Executive Secretary said with the 40 percent interest rebate, if a farmer's loan is at 9 percent interest, he will end up paying only 5.4 percent interest.

The National Out-grower Development scheme is designed to provide individual members of registered cooperative multipurpose societies complete inputs to produce sugarcane profitably.

Kwara partners private firms on garri processing

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE Kwara State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Professor Mohammed Gana Yisa has said the State would partner with the private sector in the processing of cassava into garri and other products both for export and local consumption.

The Commissioner said this during a visit to an indigenous agricultural processing industry based in Eleshin-Meta in Moro Local Government Area of the State. The company is Fallah Agro Processing Company Limited.

Professor Yisa, pointed out that as part of efforts to realize the objective, the State Government has allocated over sixty thousand hectares of land equipped with borehole for farming in various communities in the State.

Kano fadama farmers give alms to the needy

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

THE Kano State Apex Fadama Farmers Association has presented 1,000 bags of grains as alms (Zakkat) to the Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau for delivery to the needy through the commission in charge of arms in the state, the Zakka and Hubsu Commission.

Presenting the bags of grains to the governor at the State House last Friday, Chairman of the association Alhaji Umaru Mohammed Tsara said the gesture was an attempt by the organization to fulfil the provision of the third pillar of Islam which is obligatory on every Muslim.

Tsara said the gesture was in appreciation to the Almighty Allah who blessed the members of the association with a good harvest during the year 2009. He said the effort is also connected to the encouragement given the association by the state in improving fadama farming.

Business

Oceanic Bank workers protest over pension

By Sunday Williams with agency report

SOME workers of Oceanic International Bank in Lagos yesterday staged a protest over alleged non-remittance of their pension contributions to their pension fund managers.

But the Oceanic Bank has condemned illegal picketing by section of Junior Staff, adding that the ringleaders of this faction are not elected officials of any known trade union be it at local or national level and no trade dispute was declared.

The statement said: "The management has described this action as uncalled for as it has always maintained an open-door approach towards staff matters and has demonstrated its commitment to dialogue, transparency and empathy in its negotiations on staff matters.

"It is on record that the new management of Oceanic Bank has been working closely with the local and national executives of NUBIFIE in respect of sundry issues bordering on staff welfare. This has been commended on several occa-



OCEANIC Bank CEO Mr John Aboh

sions by the officials of NUBIFIE, at local and national levels of the union."

They said that they were also protesting against some deductions from their salaries to a staff savings fund and the lack of a well-established disengagement benefits' structure.

Mr Peter Dio, Secretary of the bank's chapter of National Union of Bank, Insurance and Financial Institutes Employee (NUBIFIE), disclosed the workers' grievances to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos.

He said that the workers discovered that deductions from their salaries had not been credited into their pension accounts since the pension programme started in 2004.

Dio alleged that the bank had also been engaged in some anti-labour practices, particularly in the recruitment of junior workers.

He said that the bank had engaged three agencies so far to manage the junior staff, adding: "Anytime the bank changes vendors, some of the workers lose their jobs.

"They are asked to reapply and this always leads to the underpayment of severance packages to workers," he said.

Dio urged the bank's management to remit the worker's pension deductions to the pension fund managers, while refunding the deductions paid into the staff fund.

He noted that the bank was not paying interests on the workers' contributions to the staff fund since 2004 when the fund was initiated.

However, Mr Segun Ola, the General Secretary of NUBIFIE, said that the management of the bank and the union were already holding discussions over the issues.

Ola described the protest as "uncalled for", saying that the current management had assured the union that it would solve the problems, which it inherited from the previous management team.

"They are overzealous and the protest is uncalled for since there are ongoing discussions between the union and the management," he said.

Ola, however, urged the bank's management not to compromise on the payment of accrued benefits to the workers.

Declining postal service worries West Africa

From Kayoed Ekundayo, Lagos

WEST African sub-regional postal service operators yesterday converged in Lagos to brainstorm on how to improve on quality of goods and services in the continents.

The meeting which was with the theme: Quality of service regional approach to field support includes: Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia and Sierra Leone.

According to Postmaster general and chief executive officer, Nigerian Postal Service, Malam Ibrahim Mori Baba, the meeting was first of its kind in Africa and it intends to achieve the enhancement of quality of service skills, introduce up to date measurement and technologically support systems and promote reliability and sustainability of the world wide postal network for all products and services such as letter post, parcel post and expedited

Mail Service (EMS)

"It is believed that with determination and commitment, the programme would be successful in the West African English speaking sub region, taking cognizance of what it is intended to achieve", he said

He said as the world postal body including its auxiliaries at whatever level of operations are facing innumerable challenges that directly or indirectly create ripple effects on quality of service, technological demands and customers yearnings and aspirations for an effective postal service would persist

The secretary general, the Pan African Postal Union, Mrs Rodah Masaviru said the improvement of the quality of service is a major preoccupation of the global postal fraternity and one of the priority areas identified by stakeholders with the regional development plan for Africa between 2009 and 2012.

Within these priority areas,

Masaviru said focus would mainly be on improvement of cross boarder mail transmission by road and integrated quality of service management for all products and services and covering track and trace and addressing

She said the regional approach to quality of service improvement is a step in the right direction, as it takes account of sub-regional peculiarities and needs and brings together all the stakeholders, adding that key among them would be the UPU and PAFU and member countries to ensure optimal utilization of resources.

"Africa faces quite a number of challenges; among them are poor infrastructure, lack of adequate skills to quickly adapt to new technologies, comparatively low network coverage and lack of appropriate addressing systems, all of which negatively impact on the quality of service", she said.

UNIDO challenges Nigeria's leadership claims

By Idris Ahmed

THE United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) yesterday said Nigeria should develop her economy rather than dwelling on her potentials.

Director General of UNIDO Kandeh Yamkella said this at a conference on the Development of Agribusiness and Agro-industries in Africa holding in Abuja.

He specifically said that Nigeria and other African countries should develop the agricultural sector to avoid using all the oil money on food importation.

"We always talk about Nigeria's

potential. We should stop talking about Nigeria's potential. We should start talking about Nigeria's leadership in the global economic", he told the conference.

He said Nigeria must take the issue of energy seriously to promote the manufacturing sector and investment in other sectors.

"It is unfortunate that in most African countries, we cannot guarantee 24 hours of continuous power supply. Nigeria must pay attention to power", he said.

"You cannot transform any economy without a reliable power supply, you cannot promote agro-industry in rural areas if you don't have an energy source", he further said.

A cabal undermined NNPC oil production- Barkindo

By Hamisu Muhammad

AN attempt to turn Nigeria's national oil company into a medium producer of crude oil was scuttled by a clique some two decades ago.

Mr. Mohammed S. Barkindo said last Friday that the group snatched away the corporation's ten lucrative oil blocks and sold them.

Barkindo, now the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was speaking at the Trans-

formation Town Hall meeting of the Corporation in Abuja said in 1988, when he was an assistant to the Minister of Petroleum Resource, Dr Rilwanu Lukman they created the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), and decided to select the best upstream assets, ten blocks were allocated to NPDC with seed finance so that NPDC will within short term grow into a medium producer.

Although Mr. Barkindo didn't mention the names of the oil blocks but said: "... those blocks were taken

away one after another and today those blocks are held by companies who acquired them from third party".

NPDC is a subsidiary of the NNPC, whose primary responsibility is oil exploration and production.

He said it is only when you have such assets that you can have operational excellence. "We must revive that. What the transformation means is that we are going to migrate from these statistics to the range of the most successful INOCs in the world".

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CHANGE OF WORKSHOPS VENUE
This is to inform prospective participants that the first runs of the workshops scheduled to be held at Hillstation Hotel, Jos Plateau State from 22nd – 26th March 2010.

HAVE BEEN MOVED TO
Tafawa Balewan Guest Inn, 10 Tafawa Balewa Way, GRA, Kaduna.

Date remain the same. For further information; please contact the coordinator on. 08033017801, 08051649933, 07084265904

Signed:
MANAGEMENT

Business/Finance

Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE)

Monday, March 8, 2010

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONAL PLC	2	0.21	1,943,113	1,180,558.3
CAPITAL OIL PLC	7	0.50	76,200	38,100.00
SECTORTOTALS	10		2,019,323	446,155.83
AGRICULTURE				
FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	12	0.98	962,200	926,662.00
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	27	0.66	652,190	424,445.04
PRESCO PLC	23	5.60	2,373,753	12,798,123.03
SECTORTOTALS	62		3,988,143	14,149,230.07
AIR SERVICES				
AIRLINE SERV. & LOGISTICS PLC	2	2.26	11,700	26,029.00
NIGERIAN AVIATION HANDLING COY. PLC	73	8.60	491,856	4,273,318.36
SECTORTOTALS	75		503,556	4,299,339.36
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DNTYRE & RUBBER PLC	2	0.50	18,000	9,000.00
R.T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	32	5.28	194,967	1,022,037.15
SECTORTOTALS	34		212,967	1,031,037.15
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	179	9.60	4,458,458	42,692,603.88
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	69	2.24	2,783,444	6,489,215.31
DIAMOND BANK PLC	176	8.50	21,478,702	182,870,204.05
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	95	5.40	2,315,955	12,454,181.97
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	73	9.15	1,379,158	12,599,621.70
FIDELITY BANK PLC	83	2.51	4,999,250	12,626,836.05
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	649	14.61	18,047,217	263,862,479.29
FINBANK PLC	69	0.69	4,334,358	2,971,942.92
GT BANK PLC	458	18.21	18,987,265	343,140,086.46
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	84	8.87	5,947,620	51,840,147.88
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	55	1.98	972,273	1,934,067.32
OCEANIC BANK INTERNATIONAL PLC	101	2.01	3,090,421	6,234,708.15
BANK PHB PLC	49	1.69	787,903	1,368,897.97
SKYE BANK PLC	113	6.90	2,623,422	18,212,202.99
SPRING BANK PLC	22	0.97	1,376,758	1,332,206.63
STERLING BANK PLC	42	1.89	5,978,914	10,914,516.11
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	205	13.15	17,536,468	229,237,755.80
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	154	5.75	2,024,134	11,681,477.87
UNITY BANK PLC	16	1.06	236,500	252,283.23
WEMA BANK PLC	30	1.16	564,717	639,325.85
ZENITH BANK PLC	265	15.75	5,997,285	94,581,633.79
SECTORTOTALS	1,967		125,920,722	1,879,818,622
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	81	16.00	1,502,803	24,028,709.77
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC	26	50.05	142,724	7,146,512.12
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIGERIA PLC	23	16.50	240,650	3,906,675.92
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	6	35.00	31,487	1,046,942.75
SECTORTOTALS	136		1,917,664	36,128,840.56
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS NIGERIA PLC	13	4.06	286,000	1,161,160.00
CHEMICAL & ALLIED PRODUCTS PLC	1	28.26	26,370	708,034.50
DN MEYER PLC	2	2.95	4,000	12,000.00
NIGERIAN GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC	3	15.04	21,838	312,055.02
SECTORTOTALS	19		338,208	2,193,259.52
COMMERCIAL SERVICES				
AFROMEDIA PLC	23	0.51	788,137	403,213.87
COURTVILLE INVESTMENTS PLC	2	0.50	60,000	30,000.00
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	12	2.61	414,823	1,079,911.50
SECTORTOTALS	37		1,262,960	1,513,125.37
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	24	0.53	1,116,550	577,346.50
THOMAS WYATT PLC	2	1.84	43,700	76,475.00
SECTORTOTALS	26		1,160,250	653,821.50
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIGERIA) PLC	8	2.99	44,570	130,795.75
JOHN HOLT PLC	1	9.28	842	7,426.44
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	43	26.00	485,012	12,612,784.79
SCOA NIGERIA PLC	1	8.71	176	1,457.28
TRANSNATIONAL CORP. OF NIG. PLC	48	0.56	20,673,251	11,257,133.05
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	69	44.50	809,244	35,222,545.96
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	69	25.00	1,171,476	29,294,281.28
SECTORTOTALS	239		23,184,571	88,526,424.55
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	20	5.39	137,917	718,489.24
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	9	27.95	82,500	2,235,995.00
MULTIVERSE RESOURCES PLC	1	0.50	10,000	5,000.00
SECTORTOTALS	30		230,417	2,959,484.24
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
CUTIX PLC	2	2.98	2,920	8,312.00
NIGERIAN WIRE & CABLE PLC	2	0.78	19,000	14,250.00
SECTORTOTALS	4		21,920	22,562.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	12	30.60	15,199	488,343.87
BIG TREAT PLC	5	0.76	93,882	71,072.68
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	50	15.62	502,370	7,860,811.59
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	143	12.84	1,219,945	15,636,105.66
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	72	16.50	1,329,787	21,824,567.38
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	67	45.01	1,000,659	45,154,474.41
HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	20	8.80	184,250	1,608,581.00
NATIONAL SALT COY. NIG. PLC	37	6.35	646,200	4,068,254.70
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COY. PLC	19	27.00	42,651	1,098,590.10

GAINERS

NB	2.85
UACN	1.91
IBTC	0.42
RTBRISCOE	0.25

LOSERS

PZ	0.40
NAHCO	0.29
DIAMONDBNK	0.22
UNILEVER	0.19

What is Beta?

A measurement of the relationship between the price of a stock and the movement of the whole market.

Google

NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	19	270.00	20,143	5,486,231.50
NORTHERN NIG FLOUR MILLS PLC	2	23.00	11,500	251,275.00
TANTALIZERS PLC	11	0.90	722,910	656,944.70
UTC NIGERIA PLC	4	0.72	32,908	23,742.96
SECTORTOTALS	461		5,822,404	104,228,995.55
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	7	1.00	153,608	154,765.20
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	18	2.28	577,592	1,333,938.44
GLAVOSMITHLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	10	27.30	41,927	1,132,029.00
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	8	5.05	33,440	168,645.00
NEIMETH INTER. PHARM. PLC	21	1.40	282,000	400,293.39
UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SERV. PLC	19	0.60	1,698,643	1,045,585.80
SECTORTOTALS	88		2,787,210	4,235,256.83
HOTEL & TOURISM				
CAPITAL HOTEL PLC	15	3.37	1,314,000	4,380,000.00
IKEJA HOTEL PLC	1	1.43	8,125	11,293.75
SECTORTOTALS	16		1,322,125	4,391,293.75
IND./DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	1	10.39	2,000	19,760.00
VITAFAM NIGERIA PLC	12	4.98	616,373	3,028,175.21
VONO PRODUCTS PLC	1	0.63	1,000	630.00
SECTORTOTALS	14		619,373	3,048,565.21
INFO. & COMM. TECHN.				
CHAMS PLC	10	0.70	106,750	72,108.00
MAS TELECOM INNOVATION NIG. PLC	1	0.50	50,000	25,000.00
STARCOMMS PLC	26	1.97	1,622,950	3,116,149.50
SECTORTOTALS	37		1,779,700	3,213,257.50
INSURANCE				
AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSUR. PLC	1	0.50	160	80.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC	209	1.08	6,869,281	7,179,760.31
CONTINENTAL REINSUR. PLC	12	0.95	1,395,000	1,355,560.00
CORNERSTONE INSUR. CO. PLC	17	0.54	1,152,809	615,787.19
CUSTODIAN & ALLIED INSUR. PLC	20	2.95	1,381,843	4,083,033.35
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	2	0.50	70,000	35,000.00
GREAT NIG. INSUR. COY. PLC	1	0.50	40,000	20,000.00
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	11	0.54	353,650	190,648.00
GUARANTY TRUST ASSUR. PLC	4	2.20	85,200	196,420.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	1	0.50	7,500	3,750.00
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSUR. COY. PLC	15	0.54	1,704,767	930,725.84
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	37	0.51	3,122,050	1,570,463.00
LAW UNION & ROCK INSUR. PLC	10	0.50	335,939	168,093.50
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.50	500	250.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSUR. PLC	5	0.64	535,909	342,981.76
N.E.M. INSUR. CO. (NIG.) PLC	18	0.53	437,750	225,629.50
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	8	0.71	269,300	192,463.00
OASIS INSURANCE PLC	1	1.17	8,000	8,960.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	4	3.43	2,520	8,215.20
SOVEREIGN TRUST INSUR. PLC	3	0.50	30,000	15,000.00
STACO INSURANCE PLC	4	0.76	58,259	42,529.07
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSUR. PLC	32	0.51	4,190,995	2,095,747.50
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	8	0.70	893,486	628,740.20
UNITY CAPITAL ASSUR. PLC	5	0.87	480,000	417,600.00
UNIVERSAL INSUR. COY. PLC	3	0.50	87,123	43,561.50
INTERCONTINENTAL WAPIC INSUR. PLC	8	0.91	700,000	652,000.00
SECTORTOTALS	440		24,211,541	21,022,998.92
LEASING				
C&I LEASING PLC	20	2.75	394,270	1,037,402.50
SECTORTOTALS	20		394,270	1,037,402.50
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERV. PLC	90	1.21	2,098,345	2,591,545.85
SECTORTOTALS	90		2,098,345	2,591,545.85
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	13	0.67	116,000	75,635.00
SECTORTOTALS	13		116,000	75,635.00
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	24	0.70	3,668,420	2,541,798.61
RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	11	0.50	634,575	317,287.50
UNION HOMES SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	31	0.86	1,546,146	1,348,787.19
SECTORTOTALS	66		5,849,141	4,207,873.30
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC	6	0.95	171,563	163,180.48
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	1	0.59	200	116.00
SECTORTOTALS	7		171,763	163,296.48
PACKAGING				
NIG. BAG MANUFACTURING COY. PLC	296	2.12	1,269,565	2,721,813.70
BETA GLASS CO. PLC	5	12.88	53,500	654,840.00
SECTORTOTALS	301		1,323,065	3,376,653.70
PETROLEUM (MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	102	40.56	720,565	29,374,777.25
BECO PETROLEUM PRODUCT PLC	4	2.20	26,300	54,967.00
MRS OIL NIGERIA PLC	4	69.79	1,524	106,958.83
CONOIL PLC	25	39.54	21,044	844,374.35
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	54	6.50	2,466,595	15,534,708.86
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	9	93.00	4,840	454,860.00
OANDO PLC	13	93.99	13,230	1,243,487.70
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	7	142.50	12,645	1,833,575.00
SECTORTOTALS	218		3,266,743	49,447,708.99
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEV. CO. PLC	7	20.50	45,990	905,690.00
SECTORTOTALS	7		45,990	905,690.00
OVERALL TOTALS	5,667		214,493,632	1,812,748,063.81

SOVEREIGNTY VIGILANCE ALLIANCE (SVA), Asokoro, Abuja

Yar'Adua: Patriots Stand and American Interest

We the above named group, which is set out to watch against intellectual, political, economic and social rape of the Nigerian Sovereignty, have followed the recent developments in our dear country occasioned by the lingering ill-health of President Umaru Yar'Adua and the attendant controversies.

We note with great interest and vigilance, the different roles being played by diverse interests groups. We also acknowledge the fact that free speech and plurality of opinion bring out the beauty of any democracy. But in this context, patriotism to the nation, sense of reason, humility and sensitivity to our peculiar history and situation, should not take flight in the face of our peculiar challenge as a nation and a developing democracy.

That is why Sovereignty Vigilance Alliance (SVA), congratulates the National Assembly, the Federal Executive Council, the Governors Forum and our amiable Acting President Goodluck Jonathan, for the maturity, statesmanship and the patriotic manner they handled the political and constitutional issues that overheated the polity to the point of falling into the hands of undemocratic elements.

We praise your courage in the face of a very difficult and tension-soaked situation. Your actions underscore your patriotism, love and abiding faith in the unity, and progress of Nigeria as an emerging democracy.

Your contributions to the peaceful resolution of the crises is also a testament to the fact that irrespective of the obviously divided interest of the political class in Nigeria, they are absolutely united in their desires to see that our democracy continues to grow without any hitch or set back.

Nigeria and Nigerians, whether civilians or military are in the know that democracy with all its, sometimes, self-induced imperfections, is never comparable to any undemocratic set up. Thus, we also commend the fidelity of our urbane military to professionalism and also to the norms of democracy which encourages the supremacy of the constitution of the land. The military, inspite of some hash reviews in the past weeks, have remained honourably faithful to its constitutional role in a democracy.

More importantly, we also thank our ever patient, resilient and industrious fellow country men and women, who though traumatized by countless rumours and devilish insinuations in this trying period, refused to be cowed by the antics of the dooms day prophets and alarmists who revel in controversy. We urge them to continue to have faith in our dear country and also support the leadership of our dear country.

Questionable love from America

SVA observes with a deep sense of responsibility the questionable neo-love from the government of the United States of America. The United States of America (USA) believe that they have the solution to the problems of the world. Sounding puritanistic in their ever meddlesomeness in the internal affairs of other countries, the US, with their well-defined selfish agenda, will go to any length (legitimate or dubious) to cow, instruct, some times, threaten and outrightly turn the leadership of any undiscerning nation of their interest into a living puppet. So, when American government with such a mindset offers a carrot to a developing democracy such as Nigeria, native intelligence should essentially prevail to ascertain wholesomeness or otherwise of such carrot.

We state here, authoritatively that the rash of interest in Nigeria's internal affairs by the US especially since President Yar'Adua took ill, should be taken with caution. America cannot love our country more than we Nigerians do. What the US is doing is only to stoke embers of disillusionment among Nigerians and distrust against both the leadership and key democratic institutions in the country. In the past few days the US have made close to a dozen statements concerning Nigeria's internal politics as if Nigeria's issue is the beginning and end of world problem.

Just last week when it was obvious that calm has returned to the polity as a result of the patriotic steps taken by our leaders, the US State Department issued a statement which read in part, that President Yar'Adua "has not been seen publicly or met with members of his cabinet or any of his country's key political leaders, generating additional unease about the stability of the country... senior cabinet members and legislative leaders have a right to know the health status of their president and so do Nigeria's citizens".

A day after President Yar'Adua arrived, Johnnie Carson, America Assistant Secretary of state, Bureau of Africa Affairs, in a statement said "we hope that President Yar'Adua's return to Nigeria is not an effort by his senior advisors to upset

Nigeria's stability and create renewed uncertainty".

Before that statement, both Carson and Walter Carrington, former US Ambassador to Nigeria had also at different fora dismissed Nigeria's quest to conduct a free and fair election in 2011 as a mirage even when Ag. President Jonathan had assured even Carson and the world, when he paid him a curtesy visit few days earlier of the resolve of the Nigerian government to conduct credible and transparent general elections in 2011.

If America do not have faith in us, they should at least allow us to believe in ourselves rather than their prophecy of doom that only creates doubt in the minds of people.

This new antagonism of Nigeria by America began since President Barack Obama took over the mantle of leadership in America. We recall how Obama in his first visit to Africa shunned Nigeria and went to Ghana. We have not also forgotten how Mrs. Hilary Clinton, America's Secretary of State devoted more time and energy dining and winning with the opposition and some professional activists that populate the civil society when she visited and derided Nigerian leadership with a glee.

The Game Plan

The agenda of America in all this is purely to feather their own interest especially as it appears that China, America's global economic rival, is gaining more ground economically in Nigeria. Thus, they wish to dictate, or even strategically determine who becomes Nigeria President come 2011. Such pre-determined leader will then in-turn ensure policies that would give America an upper hand in Nigeria's economy over China; ensures free supply of oil to American consumers (Nigeria as at December 2009 was supplying 0.853 million of barrels of crude oil per day to America), and other such policies that would be of interest to them.

To achieve this end, we have it on good authority that America has started a systematic funding of some opposition parties, some money-induced democracy activists and even a section of the media in order to continue to heat up the polity so as to discredit the leadership of the nation in order to hand twist them to the dictates of the American government's interest.

Some of these new colonialism agenda have begun as America has successfully infiltrated the civil society community and also recruited some members of the leadership of the opposition parties.

Food for Thought

> Where were these our new American friends when Nigerian was being blacklisted by the same government they serve because of the isolated case of the alleged attempted bombing of an American airline by Farouk Abdulmutafab?

> If the US so much loves Nigeria, why did they not invite Nigeria's Foreign Affairs minister or the ambassador to the recent US Congress'Feingold Committee hearing where issues concerning Nigeria was tabled, instead, they chose to invite Nuhu Rabadu, former EFCC chair who currently has issues with Nigerian authorities?

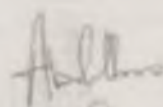
> What meaningful role did America play in assisting Nigeria to resolve Niger Delta crises?

> What really is Nigerian government's sin against the America if not the country's trade relation with China?

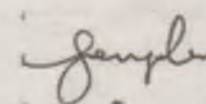
Conclusion

We call on all Nigerians to be vigilant to the antics of some questionable interest groups, whether local or international. No foreigner can love Nigeria more than Nigerians themselves. We must remain united in facing our collective challenges. We must not allow the West to use us as a pawn in the chess board of their international politics. We urge all Nigerians to give Acting President Jonathan the desired support as he pilots the affairs of the nation while President Yar'Adua recuperates.

Signed



Professor Abdul Ibrahim



Dr. Feng Mancha



THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

Private Mail Bag Number 1022, Yaba, Lagos

ADVERTORIAL

RE: WAEC CONNIVES WITH MINISTRY TO REGISTER GHOST CANDIDATES - ADAMAWA STATE GOVERNOR

The attention of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has been drawn to a report on page 9 of the *Daily Sun* of Tuesday, January 12, 2010 titled "WAEC connives with ministry to register ghost candidates- Adamawa Governor."

In order to put the records straight with regard to the registration of candidates for its May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) diet, the Council wishes to inform the general public as follows:

1. Entries for the May/June WASSCE are "floated" by the Council, through letters to principals of all recognised schools nationwide (both public and private), notifying them of the opening and closing dates for the registration of candidates for the examination, the registration fees and other conditions for registration.
2. Public schools in states where their governments pay the examination fees of candidates, submit the list of their prospective candidates to the state ministries of education, which approve the total number

of candidates to be registered for the examination by each school.

3. Based on the clearance obtained from the state ministries of education and upon payment of the prescribed fees, officers of the Council in such states generate and issue Personal Identification Number(s) (PINs) to each school, to enable schools upload the entries of their candidates on-line, to the Council's registration website for processing. Staff of the Council are, therefore, not directly involved in the registration of candidates for the May/June WASSCE.

4. All payments in respect of entries of school candidates for the May/June WASSCE are carried out through bank draft, payable directly to the Council's revenue accounts with its bankers, which are controlled, exclusively, by the National Office of the Council in Yaba, Lagos. By this arrangement, therefore, there is no cash dealing between staff of the

council and schools or state ministries of education in all the Council's offices in the country.

5. Based on the aforementioned procedures for the registration of government-sponsored candidates for the May/June WASSCE, and for the avoidance of doubt, officials of state ministries of education are to be held responsible for any perceived fraudulent practices, if any, in the registration of candidates for the examination.

The Council has taken pains to explain its registration procedure for the May/June WASSCE, involving candidates in public schools in states which pay the examination fees of such candidates, in order to correct the wrong impression which the said report may have created that staff of the Council are involved in the registration of ghost candidates for the May/June WASSCE.

Signed
MANAGEMENT

DIGEST

Mother goes to court to stop her daughter calling her new stepmother 'mum'

AN Australian mother has gone to court to prevent her daughter from calling her stepmother 'Mum'. She has asked the court to stop her ex-husband and his new wife from encouraging the young girl to refer to the stepmother as 'Mum', 'Mummy' or 'my other Mummy'.

The Adelaide mother, who cannot be named, told the Family Court that her ex-husband was deliberately undermining her role as their child's mother.

She said he was encouraging his new wife to answer to the terms 'Mum', 'Mummy', and 'Mummy-D' - the D being the initial of the stepmother's first name.

The court was told that the girl's parents separated when she was four months old.

The case will be of interest to separated couples around the world where arguments have erupted over the role adults should play in children's lives.

In the Adelaide case, Sydney's Daily Telegraph reports, the mother argued that

the stepmother should not be allowed to refer to herself as 'a motherly figure'.

The child's father agreed that his new wife should not be called 'Mum' or 'Mummy' but he thought 'Mummy-D' was all right.

The mother, however, claimed that he was 'attempting to replace her as the child's mother by encouraging the child to call his new wife "Mum".'

She said in a statement that the new wife would sign the child's school notes 'Mum' and take the child to medical appointments where she 'presented herself as the mother'.

She was 'adamant that the child should only call her Mum' or any variation of 'Mum'.

The stepmother told the court that she rejected the accusation that she presented herself as the child's mother.

The court eventually declined to make an order that the child should be prevented from referring to her stepmother as 'Mummy-D'.



LEGAL action: A mother has gone to court to prevent her daughter referring to her stepmother as 'Mum' (picture posed by models)

The judge said he was concerned that making such an order would lead to further litigation 'where it would be up to the court to determine whether the father had breached the order in relation to encouraging the child to use the term Mummy-D'.

The judge said it was hoped that the child would grow out of 'Mummy-D' and

begin calling her stepmother by her first name.

All other matters including where the child should live and what school she should attend, were settled before the 'Mummy' argument went to court.

The child's parents will continue with a shared-care arrangement.

How fizzy vitamin supplements can wreck your teeth



PEARLY whites: If you drink an acidic drink such as a cola, it can soften your tooth enamel for an hour

WE know that sugar-filled juices and canned drinks such as cola and lemonade can cause tooth decay - yet few of us would

think fizzy vitamin preparations can have similar effects.

However, a study at the University of

Helsinki on eight types of effervescent vitamins found they could all have corrosive effects on teeth.

Leaching out the minerals contained in teeth, they left them weaker, more porous and prone to decay.

In the research, teeth were soaked in the vitamin drinks for 100 hours. All of them - including those drinks that contained calcium - caused demineralisation.

The effects were worst in the Vitamin C products, where teeth were corroded so severely that dentine, the sensitive layer beneath the enamel was exposed.

'When you drink fizzy vitamins, you wouldn't expose your teeth for anything near this length of time,' says Dr Mervyn Druian, spokesperson for the British Dental Association.

'However, if you drink one of these dissolved tablets each day, it is likely that they would weaken your teeth.'

Citric acid, the primary ingredient of many fizzy vitamin drinks, has been found by researchers at the University of Baltimore Dental School to cause dental

erosion. While this erosion is less than in drinks that also contain sugar, it is still significant.

Dental erosion is caused by acidic solutions which come into contact with the teeth,' says Dr Adam Thorne, dental surgeon at the Harley Street Dental Studio.

'Because the critical pH of dental enamel is 5.5, any solution with a lower pH value may cause erosion, particularly over a long period or if it is taken regularly.'

'The danger of these soluble vitamins is that they are marketed for daily use and consumers tend to take them with breakfast and brush their teeth shortly after.'

'For an hour after you have an acidic drink such as a fizzy vitamin, cola or apple juice, your tooth enamel will remain softened,' says Dr Thorne.

'During this period, teeth become more vulnerable to corrosion, sensitivity and decay. Vitally, if you brush your teeth during this time, you are likely to brush away a layer of tooth enamel.'

So how can you protect your teeth from the effect of fizzy vitamins?

Sign Language

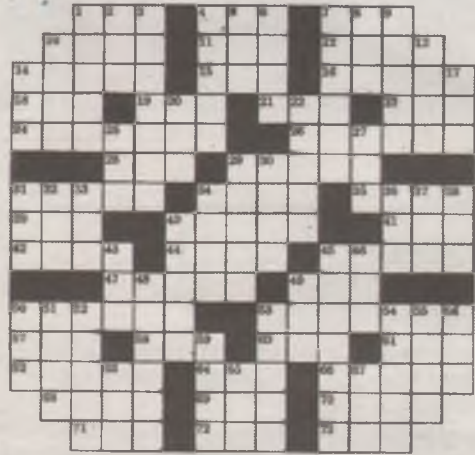


Are you thirsty?
Photo location: United Kingdom, by Merrill Brown
Culled from www.signspotting.com

EASY CROSSWORDS

6

- ACROSS**
- 1. Three Stooges member
 - 4. Crow's noise
 - 7. Iniquity
 - 10. Ears of corn
 - 11. NHL star Bobby
 - 12. Raring shape
 - 14. Ape
 - 15. Compete (for)
 - 16. Exterior
 - 18. Zodiac animal
 - 19. Make haste
 - 21. Cutting-edge
 - 23. Greek letter
 - 24. Tofu ingredient
 - 26. Heavy load
 - 28. Possess
 - 29. Range
 - 31. Holds tightly
 - 34. Ripped
 - 35. Bone photo: hyph. wd.
 - 39. Assistance
 - 40. Impressive selection
 - 41. Frothy quaff
 - 42. Bath cleanser
 - 44. Average
 - 46. Inexpensive
 - 47. Dunebike
 - 49. Pair
 - 50. South Pacific island
 - 53. Texas sight: 2 wds.
 - 57. "Got it!"
 - 58. Itty-bitty
 - 60. Moistened
 - 61. Low grade
 - 62. Guitar kin
 - 64. Harden
 - 66. Come together
 - 68. Male swine
 - 69. Mature
 - 70. Wagon tracks
 - 71. Bother
 - 72. Round speck
 - 73. Print widths
 - DOWN**
 - 1. Tot's cry
 - 2. Kimono sash
 - 3. Forgoes
 - 4. Witch's group
 - 5. Onassis nickname
 - 6. Tiny songbird
 - 7. Appear: 2 wds.
 - 8. Debt marker
 - 9. Observed
 - 10. "So long!"
 - 13. Slugger Rose
 - 14. Wife's title
 - 17. Sped on foot
 - 20. Writer Fleming
 - 22. Dark wood
 - 25. Jazz style
 - 27. Tyrannosaurus chaser?
 - 29. Apologetic
 - 30. Pack too full
 - 31. Mower fuel
 - 32. — de Janeiro
 - 33. Lovely Lupino
 - 34. Stepped (on)
 - 36. "Norma —," film
 - 37. Similar to: 2 wds.
 - 38. Slangy asst.
 - 40. Comic-strip orphan
 - 43. See 23-Across
 - 45. Social refinement
 - 46. Query word
 - 48. On the job: 2 wds.
 - 49. Fade away
 - 50. Bar bill
 - 51. Melville captain
 - 52. Vietnam city
 - 53. Young boater
 - 54. Revises (text)
 - 55. Allows
 - 56. Robert E. —
 - 59. "By Jove!"
 - 63. Jolt; shock
 - 65. Sense of self
 - 67. Holy sister



Solution to Easy Crosswords

5

S	P	U	N		S	T	A	B		S	T	O	W	
A	L	S	O		H	A	I	R	S		C	A	S	H
S	E	E	S		I	G	L	O	O		A	X	L	E
H	A	S	T	E	N		S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N
					R	A	Y	S		K	E	N	T	
S	T	A	I	R		H	I	S		T	E	A	C	H
O	R	A	L		W	I	T		C	I	R	C	L	E
F	I	R		G	E	N	E	R	A	L		R	U	N
A	B	O	A	R	D		M	A	N		B	E	E	R
S	E	N	S	E		A	S		M	E	S	S	Y	
					S	E	W	N		H	E	A	R	
P	O	L	I	T	I	C	S		S	T	R	I	P	E
A	D	O	S		C	H	U	M	S		I	D	O	L
P	O	S	T		K	O	R	E	A		E	E	L	S
A	R	T	S		R	E	L	Y		S	A	L	E	

SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given"- these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

102

	7			4	2			
				8	2		3	
	4		6			5		1
			3			8		
5	9			4				2 3
			2			6		
1		9				5		7
	5		2	6				
			7	8				4

Solution to Sudoku 101

4	9	8	1	2	7	6	5	3
6	3	2	9	4	5	7	8	1
7	5	1	6	8	3	2	9	4
1	8	6	5	3	4	9	7	2
3	2	5	7	9	8	4	1	6
9	4	7	2	6	1	8	3	5
2	7	3	8	1	6	5	4	9
5	6	4	3	7	9	1	2	8
8	1	9	4	5	2	3	6	7

News Extra

Inside the world of Obama's secret-service bodyguards

Protecting the US president has presented the secret service with the greatest challenge in its history. But who wants to kill him? And how likely are they to succeed?

The Southern Poverty Law Center began life in 1971 as a tiny law firm specialising in civil rights cases. It took on the might of the Ku Klux Klan, and was duly rewarded by having its offices razed and its senior lawyers targeted for assassination. But it kept on going and grew to be one of the most respected monitoring groups of rightwing extremism in America today.

Recently it brought out a report called *Terror From the Right*, which identifies, in chronological order, the serious home-grown plots, conspiracies and racist rampages that have been cooked up in America since the Oklahoma City bomb in 1995. The list runs to 10 pages of closely printed type and itemises 75 domestic terrorism events, from plans to bomb government buildings to attempts to kill judges and politicians.

Each of the incidents aimed to change the political face of America through violence, courtesy of groups with such titles as Aryan People's Republic, The New Order

As Kennedy proved at his own cost, a president can only be as safe as he allows himself to be

and The Hated. But in the summer of 2008 the chronology takes on a sharp change of tack. Entries, which had been running at one or two per year, start coming faster. And instead of a variety of different targets, one name crops up time and time again: Barack Obama.

The first such entry is for **8 June 2008**. Six people, linked to a militia group in rural Pennsylvania, are arrested with stockpiles of assault rifles and homemade bombs. One of the six allegedly tells the authorities that he intended to shoot black people from a rooftop and predicts civil war should Obama, who five days previously had cleared the Democratic nomination for president, be elected to the White House.

Next entry: **24 August 2008**. The day before the opening of the



BARACK Obama surrounded by bodyguards in 2008

Democratic convention in Denver at which Obama was nominated, three white supremacists are arrested in possession of high-powered rifles and camouflage clothing. They are talking about assassinating Obama.

24 October 2008: Less than two weeks before the election, two white supremacists are arrested in Tennessee over a bizarre plan to kill more than 100 black people, including Obama.

21 January 2009: The day after Obama's inauguration, a white man is arrested in Massachusetts, having allegedly killed two black immigrants and injured a third. He says he was "fighting for a dying race".

10 June 2009: James von Brunn, aged 88, walks into the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and shoots dead a security guard. Von Brunn, who died last month in jail awaiting trial, left a note that read: "Obama was created by Jews."

In the 13 months that Barack Obama has been the occupant of the Oval Office he has been the subject of an extraordinary outpouring of emotion from the American electorate. At the start it was largely adulatory, though more recently the adoration has been drowned out by a cacophony of criticism from tea party activists, birthers, global-warming deniers and viewers of Fox News.



ARMED security men hide in the bushes on the look out as President Obama plays golf.

At the same time, largely hidden from view, there has been a layer of antagonism towards Obama that lies well beyond the boundaries of reasonable political debate.

That has been a fact of life for Obama and his family since long before they took the keys to the

White House. On 2 May 2007, fully 18 months before election day, he was assigned a secret service detail – much earlier than any other presidential candidate in American history. The precise reasons for the move have never been disclosed, but there

was certainly a mood in the air sufficiently palpable to disconcert Michelle Obama. A senior US official in the State Department has told the *Guardian* that before he decided to run for the presidency, Obama had actively to win Michelle over to the idea by assuaging her fears about the potential of an attack on him, her and/or their two daughters.

Michelle would have been aware of the backstory here: that Colin Powell had declined to run for the 1996 Republican nomination partly because his wife Alma feared his assassination at the hands of white supremacists. Over the course of the long presidential race, Michelle spoke openly about her anxieties and how she had determined to overcome them, telling *60 Minutes* that she had decided to fling herself into the race because "I am tired of being afraid".

According to John Heilmann and Mark Halperin's new account of the 2008 election, *Game Change*, she eventually felt relaxed enough to crack sardonic jokes about the subject. "I've already gone out and increased our life insurance on [Barack]," she quipped. "You just can't be too careful!" But as the Southern Poverty Law Center survey shows, the issue of safety and the 44th president remains anything but a laughing matter. "Virtually every domestic terrorist event we have identified since June 2008 – when it became obvious that Obama was going to win – has been directly related to him," says the author of the report, Mark Potok.

Apart from the Obamas themselves, the burden of such a threat falls primarily on the shoulders of the US secret service, and as Joseph Petro, head of global security for Citigroup, puts it, the challenges facing the service today are unlike any period that has gone before. On top of all the usual risks associated with guarding the world's most powerful politician, there is now the added, explosive ingredient of his race. "As the first black president he creates a whole other set of issues for the secret service to deal with," he says.

Petro can claim to be something of an expert in this area: he spent 23 years as a special agent in the service, four of them, from 1982 to 1986, as the man who stood beside Ronald Reagan. He

Cont'd on page 41

News Extra

U.S. push for former President Reagan to be immortalised on \$50 bill

A bid to change the face of America's currency has come under fire from US historians and politicians.

Republican Congressman Patrick McHenry has introduced a new law to replace Ulysses S. Grant with Ronald Reagan on the \$50 bill.

The change is designed to coincide with next year's 100th anniversary of Reagan's birth.

But Democrats on the House Financial Services Committee, which will vote on the measure, complain they aren't ready to replace the Civil War general and 18th president with a former Hollywood star whose political legacy is still open to question.

Democrat lawmaker Brad Sherman said he will not vote for a note change for someone 'whose policies are still controversial'.

'Our currency ought to be something that unites us,' he

“Regan was immensely popular as President, boasting one of the highest approval ratings in history”

added.

'I'm very upset,' added Keya Morgan, a historian who created a web page in memory of Grant. 'I have all the respect in the world for Reagan, but what he accomplished is not anywhere near as important as what Ulysses S. Grant accomplished.'

But Congressman McHenry insisted: 'Every generation needs its own heroes. President Reagan is indisputably one of the most transformative presidents of the 20th century.'

'Like President Roosevelt on the dime and President Kennedy on the half dollar, President Reagan deserves a place of honour on our nation's currency.'



THIS artist's impression shows what Regan would look like on the banknote



U.S. President Ronald Reagan dances with Margaret Thatcher during the final state dinner of his presidency at the White House in Washington, on November 16, 1988



ULYSSES S. Grant is more famous for his Civil War exploits than his mediocre presidency

'President Reagan was a modern-day statesman whose presidency transformed our nation's

political and economic thinking.' U.S. banknotes have not been changed for more than 80 years.

So stubborn are U.S. citizens that they refuse to retire the \$1 bill in favour of a coin of the same value

despite the fact the move would save \$50million a year.

Joining Grant on the country's paper money are George Washington (\$1), Abraham Lincoln (\$5), inaugural treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton (\$10), Andrew Jackson (\$20) and inventor and diplomat Benjamin Franklin (\$100).

The most change came in 1929, when \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$100,000 bills were briefly produced.

It is not the first time Republicans have tried to put Reagan's

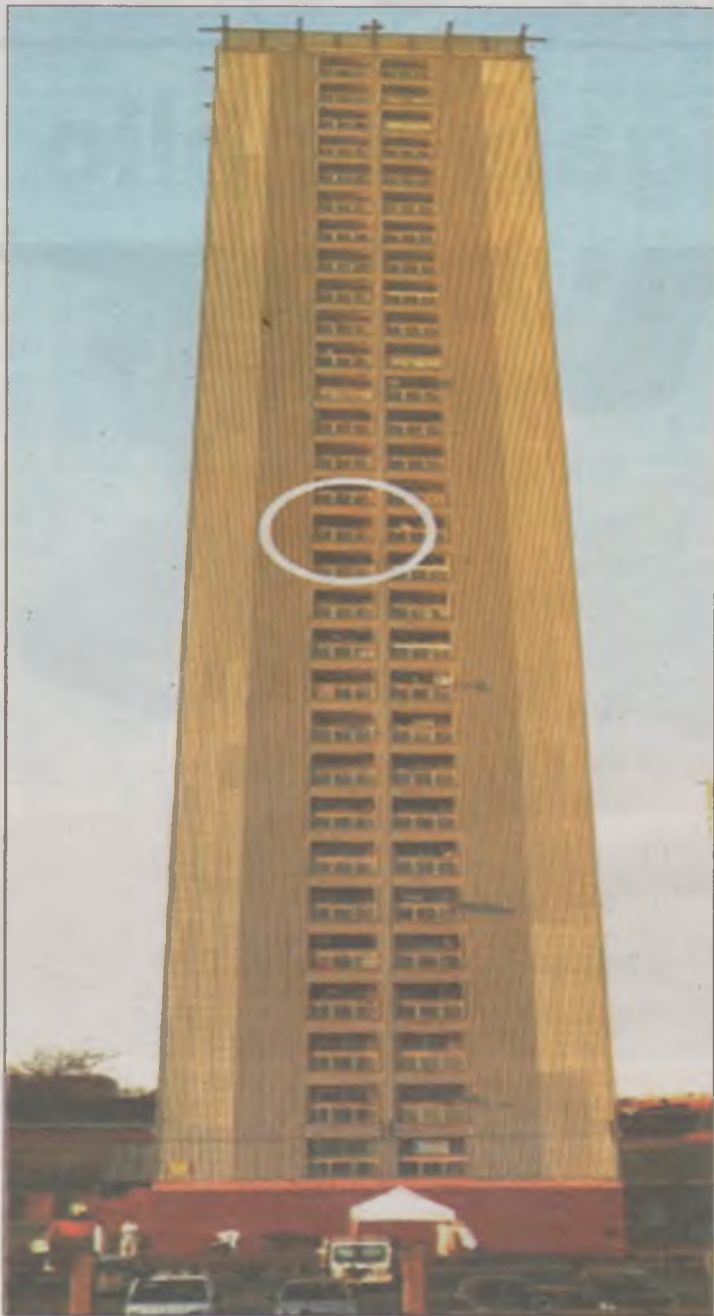
face on US money. Efforts to have the 40th president on the \$20 bill and the dime coin both failed.

Regan was immensely popular as President, boasting one of the highest approval ratings in history.

The drama of his acting days appeared to follow him into office, with the Iran Hostage Crisis ending while he was giving his inaugural as President, and just two months later he survived an assassination attempt in which he was shot in the chest.

The one time actor, who died in 2004 aged 93, has already had an airport, a motorway, an aircraft and one of the biggest government buildings in Washington named after him.

News Extra



TWO men and a woman died after plunging to the ground from the 15th floor

Three migrants die after making a 150ft suicide leap 'to escape deportation'

Three immigrants facing deportation died after jumping from the 15th floor of a high-rise flat on Sindy. The horrific incident happened at a notorious tower block complex in a run-down district of Glasgow.

The bodies of the victims - two men and a woman - were found after a cupboard was thrown from a balcony to break protective netting.

They tied themselves together before making the 150ft suicide leap.

Although the victims' identities have not been released, locals said they may have been Kosovans who faced being kicked out the country.

Detectives said there were no suspicious circumstances. The bodies were discovered at the Red Road flats at Petershill Drive, Springburn, at about 8.30am.

Strathclyde Police blocked off the street and officers stood guard. The area around the flat was cordoned off and two white tents were erected by forensic officers.

Elizabeth Neilson, 42, who lives in the opposite block, said: 'I opened my blinds and saw them lying there this morning at about 8.30am.'

'I saw two concierge staff standing there and three bodies lying on the ground. It is horrible.'

'I phoned the concierge and he said he couldn't say much but that three people had thrown themselves off the veranda.'

Elaine Sandford, 40, said she believed the deceased were from Kosovo and faced being deported.

She said: 'I think they had a letter through the door that said they were coming back for them.'

The victims' neighbour said they had lived there for two months but she did not know them.

Mark Johnson witnessed the grisly scene as he left his flat to play football.

Mark, 24, from South Africa, said: 'I saw three bodies covered with white sheets.'

'At first, I thought it was a movie scene but the concierge told me, "It's not a movie. It's real".'

'I then watched as the police put tape up and sealed off the area.'

'They marked certain things with numbers, just like you see on the forensic shows on TV.'

A spokeswoman for Glasgow Housing Association, which own the flats, said: 'We are very saddened to hear about the tragic incident.'

'The police and the emergency services are continuing their inquiries and we are helping in every way we can.'

A police spokesman said: 'Inquiries are ongoing to establish the identities of the three people involved and post mortem examinations will take place to establish the exact cause of death.'

'However, at this time, there does not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.'

A CCTV camera points at the spot where the trio landed. Last night, police were studying the footage for clues about the exact chain of events.

Residents of the tower block had to sign in and out with police if they were entering the building. For part of the day, residents were not allowed to return to the tower block once they had left.

A UK Border Agency spokesman said the agency was aware of the deaths but refused to comment any further. The Red Road flats complex features eight high-rises which were once the highest flats in Europe.

In recent years, they have been used to house asylum seekers from Kosovo, Africa, Asia, the former Soviet Union, Iran and Iraq.

Inside the world of Obama's secret-service bodyguards

Cont'd from page 39

knows what it's like to be the last line of protection, how it feels to be in a milling crowd in which you are surrounded by thousands of potential assailants, what it is to live with the constant knowledge that any mistake - a split second taking your eye off the ball - could be fatal.

Petro has a formula for measuring the potential dangers for any particular incumbent of the White House. You take the general atmosphere of the times in which they are in office and combine it with the specific personality that the president brings to the job. In both regards, he says, Obama presents a huge task.

'In Obama, we have a president with a very unique personality who likes to be out with the people. Put that together with the political atmosphere of these times that is highly partisan and vitriolic, then include race, and we've got a big challenge. There's no margin for error.'

Petro's point about the role the

president's personality plays in his own safety is ably illustrated by the single most disastrous failure in the secret service's history - the event that every incoming trainee agent spends hours and hours studying until it is drilled into his or her bone marrow. Judged by modern security standards, the shooting of John F Kennedy in Dallas on 22 November 1963 should for several reasons never have happened. The parade route Kennedy took was publicised in advance - a cardinal sin by the rule book of today. Lee Harvey Oswald had a relatively easy line of fire from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, which would these days have been thoroughly swept and sealed off. But it was the orders given by Kennedy himself that did for him - the president asked for the bullet-proof glass bubble to be taken off his limousine and for agents not to ride on the back of the car, thus leaving himself utterly exposed.

In the last analysis, as Kennedy proved at his own cost, a president can only be as safe as he allows

himself to be. Agents can advise the commander-in-chief what is best for his security, but they cannot give him orders. 'The secret service would want to take the president to Camp David straight after the inauguration and keep him there out of any contact with the public for the next four years. But they know that's not possible,' Petro says.

During his presidential campaign, Obama would regularly mingle among crowds of astonishing size. But since his inauguration he has clearly responded to the guidance of his protecting agents, detaching himself considerably from direct public engagement. To some extent, that is only normal - he is no longer running in an election. But for a president who promised to break down barriers between politicians and people, it is noticeable how sparingly he is seen in public these days, and how the events he does appear at are almost invariably staged indoors.

Over the years, the secret service has developed a range of technological devices for improv-

ing security. Petro recalls asking Reagan on several occasions to wear a bulletproof vest. (Reagan would grumble and groan but usually comply.) Over the last decade, such innovations have come thick and fast. A whole new array of gadgetry has been added to the service's armoury, from face-recognition technology to a new generation of armoured vehicles. Obama rides in a Cadillac with military grade eight-inch thick doors; on election night in November 2008 he gave his victory speech to a crowd of almost a quarter of a million people from behind bullet-proof glass walls designed to foil sniper attacks.

But gadgetry is only as effective as the people who use it. In the last analysis, the human factor remains supreme, as was illustrated last November when two reality show hopefuls gatecrashed a White House function, penetrating the inner core of the building and shaking Obama's hand. As it happened, they had no malice towards the president. But in the mindset of the mortified secret

service that didn't matter; they could have done.

Which on some level is the nature of the beast: being president of the United States is a high-risk enterprise, as Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, William McKinley and John Kennedy all found out the hard way. Danger can come at a president from any number of directions. It can come from the lone deranged gunman. It can come too, theoretically, from international terrorism of the Islamist variety. But al-Qaida experts point out that the closest the group has come to a direct attack on the president was 9/11 itself. 'From al-Qaida's view, to assassinate the president would be very desirable,' says Yehudit Barsky, a terrorism specialist at the American Jewish Committee. 'But it would be difficult for them to go after him not because they don't want to but because their capacity is so impaired.'

Culled from guardian.co.uk

HEALTH REPORT

The fresh offensive against polio

By Ruby Rabi

BEGINNING from Saturday March 6, Nigeria joined 19 countries in West and Central Africa in a campaign to immunize over 85 million children under five years old against polio. The four-day exercise ends today.

Nigeria's effort has been supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), and other international partners.

A schedule of the programme from the UNICEF office in Nigeria shows that staff at 19,112 fixed immunization posts will immunize babies and children while 32,172 house-to-house vaccination teams and 14,224 special teams carrying vaccine cool are travelling on foot or motorbikes and in cars and boats on the door-to-door vaccination drive.

The other countries involved in this special programme include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. All these countries are in the March 6 to 9 immunization programme.

Cote d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo will join at a later date because of transition programmes currently taking place in the three countries.

The campaign is being spearheaded by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a network of partners including national governments, the Rotary International, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the International Federation of the Red Cross, as well as the UNICEF and WHO.

The aim is to reach every child under the age of five. It is considered significant because without a critical mass of children being immunized, the virus will rage on. More than 400,000 volunteers and health workers are involved in the aim to reach the targeted 85 million children.

Part of a statement from UNICEF which relates the incidence of polio in the two subcontinents, reads, "For children in West and Central Africa, the threat of the crippling disease, eradicated in much of the world, still looms. In Nigeria, the virulent polio virus is still endemic. In 2008, it spread from the north of the country to other nations in the region. Many of these countries were on the way to being declared polio-free and had successfully eradicated the virus. Yet with the movement of people across borders, and the inadequate level of routine immunization in many areas, the virus has quickly spread. Now, many of these areas are re-infected, threatening more children with paralysis and even death."

In the current logistical exercise, vaccination teams are crossing some of the toughest and most challenging terrain in Africa to reach children. The teams, equipped with special carriers that ensure the vaccine remains below the required 8 degrees Celsius, go from door to door in search of every child under five.

Experienced health workers are being deployed to locations known to be the most challenging. A special plan is in place to focus on the border areas between countries with an independent monitoring system developed to



CHILD being vaccinated.

track progress.

Count Down, an internet newsletter produced every two weeks by the World Health Organization in Nigeria, provides an update on the effect of polio in Nigeria within the last one year. According to the update which comes under the caption, "Total number of children paralysed by polio 26 February 2009 to 26 February 2010," Kano State presents the worst case of 70.

Kano is followed by other affected states in this order: Katsina (25), Bauchi (23), Borno (16), Kebbi (14), and Niger (13). Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kaduna states had 10 cases each, while

Gombe and Yobe had nine and eight cases respectively. The states of Delta, Kogi, and Nasarawa suffered five polio paralysis each within the recorded year while Benue, Plateau and Bayelsa came down each with four. Three and two cases were recorded against Ogun and Ebonyi States respectively while Abia, Lagos, Edo and Kwara states had one each.

The Count Down newsletter, known fully as Count Down to Polio Eradication in Nigeria, also reports, however, that a more potent vaccine, the bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine (bOPV), which was administered for the first time in Africa in Nigeria during

the January National Immunization Plus Days (IPDs) would speed up the interruption of the polio viruses troubling Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

It explains in its report that the bOPV "simultaneously targets type 1 and 3 polio viruses and is at least 30 percent more effective than the traditional trivalent polio vaccine, according to a clinical field trial conducted in India."

The success of the polio eradication exercise will be significant. It will mean the prevention of a life of disability and physical hardship in communities already facing countless threats to survival.

Nigeria is winning the fight against polio –WHO

By Ruby Rabi

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) says Nigeria is winning the war against polio and its destructive effects.

"NIGERIA has made impressive advances in wiping out polio since religious leaders backed vaccination," WHO said in a statement published on Sunday.

The comment of the organisation came on the second day of the ongoing mass immunisation campaign targeting 85 million children in west and central Africa. The immunization of children 0-59 months of age is intended to halt polio which has spread from northern Nigeria and caused outbreaks in 17 African countries since 2008.

The organisation noted with enthusiasm that Nigeria's success

at wiping out polio will impart positively on the rest of polio-endemic countries.

"Nigeria's success is Africa's success. If we can eradicate polio in Nigeria we should be able to have Africa polio-free very quickly," WHO spokesman Rod Curtis, is quoted as saying.

Polio usually spreads in areas with poor sanitation. It attacks the nervous system and often causes irreversible paralysis. Children under the age of three are most vulnerable to the disease that until the 1950s crippled thousands of people every year in many parts of the world, including even rich nations that are more health conscious and have what they need to fight the disease.

Expectedly, therefore, the fight against it has been far more successful in rich countries and the

disease has come to be associated with Africa, West and Central Africa in particular. Nigeria presented the worst case until very recently when its neighbours which got close to being completely free of the virus came down with new infections.

Traditional and religious leaders throughout Nigeria have been helpful with fighting the disease in recent times. They pledged to support immunisation campaigns and have been encouraging their subjects to have their children immunized.

"Traditional and religious leadership has facilitated us reaching more children. The number of cases has collapsed," Curtis said.

He added, "If we can reach 80 per cent of children for three campaigns in a row, then we can eradicate polio from Nigeria."

GSK reduces cervical cancer vaccine's price by 50 per cent

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

DRUGMAKER GlaxoSmithKline Nigeria (GSK) has announced the reduction in price of its cervical cancer vaccine by 50 per cent in the country.

Making the announcement at a workshop on cervical cancer organized in Lagos at the weekend, the Managing Director of the company, Mr. Lekan Asuni, said more girls and women in Nigeria would now get the cervical cancer vaccine for N10,000.

He said the price reduction would allow more women to be vaccinated and protected against the deadly disease.

The GSK boss said there was a significant public health need in Nigeria to protect women against cervical cancer through both vaccination and screening.

He revealed that the company's cervical cancer vaccine was specifically designed with a novel adjuvant

(ASO4) to deliver high and sustained levels of antibodies aimed at providing long-term protection against HPV 16 and 18, the most common cervical cancer-causing HPV types.

Mr. Asuni said the vaccine had been approved in 103 countries around the world, including Nigeria, the 27 member states of the European Union (EU), Japan, Australia, Brazil, South Korea, Mexico, Taiwan and the US.

He said, "To ensure that more girls and women in Nigeria have access to the highly effective cervical cancer vaccine, GSK has reduced the price by fifty per cent. The new price is closely linked to the real life economic situation in Nigeria, taking into account the cost of living and rate of inflation in order that the vaccine is affordable for more girls and women. This change will allow many women in Nigeria to be vaccinated and protected against cervical cancer."

ENVIRONMENT

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Senate sets up technical c'ttee on environment

By Turaki A. Hassan

A technical committee comprising of members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Ecology, ministry of Environment and Ecological Fund Office was yesterday set up to find ways of tackling the immense environmental challenges facing the country.

The decision to set up the committee was reached at a meeting between officials of the environment ministry led by the Minister John Odey and members of the senate committee on Environment at the National Assembly yesterday.

Committee chairman Senator Grace Folashade Bent

(PDP, Adamawa South) who constituted the committee said, the action was necessary in view of the enormous environmental problems in the country saying, "Environmental problems are big threat to the survival of Nigeria as a nation. In the South East we are battling with gully erosion and landslide, in the far north we have desertification how can we tackle these problems with meager budgetary allocation of N5 billion naira?"

Senator Bent maintained that, her committee in line with the Paris declaration of 2005 which called for harmonized and coordinated approach to environmental assessment is constituting a technical committee on ecological projects.

"This meeting is therefore called so that the senate, ministry, the ecological fund office and representatives of civil society organizations will operationalise this Technical Committee and draw up a programme for joint supervision, and assessment of projects executed with the Ecological Fund to ensure quality projects delivery and value for money." She disclosed.

On his part, Minister of Environment John Odey lamented that, the his ministry has no access to the ecological fund due to the Act establishing it as it was directly disburse by the Accountant General of the Federation thereby denying them knowledge of how the money was being spent.

Kwara disaster victims get N5m

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE Special Adviser on Emergency and Relief Services to the Kwara state government, Alhaji Sulyman Kayode Yusuf, has disclosed that over five million naira has been approved to be distributed to victims of the recent fire disasters in some areas in the state.

The special adviser, who stated this in Ilorin while speaking with Daily Trust, said the areas include Bolanta and Yalumoh.

Alhaji Sulayman said that, "Government has provided relief assistance to about 4200 victims of various disasters in the state from last year to date and expended several millions of naira to this effect".

"I informed you that apart from these group of beneficiaries, report of other various fire disaster in the following locations have been reported to Governor Bukola Saraki for appropriate action which includes Abdulzeez Attah Road, Agbo Oba, Gaa Akanbi, Itamerin, Murtala Mohammed road, Taiwo Road, Shao, Adewole Housing Estate, Alagbede/Kilanko, Omu-Aran and Arandun and rainstorm victims in Shonga LGA".

He said that their cases would be promptly attended to in due course as the state governor had vouch to come to the aid of the victims.

Yusuf cautioned the entire populace on the need to exhibit extra-precautionary measure to avert further occurrence of fire disaster in farms and household.

"I wish to once again implore the teaming populace to always take precautionary measure to avert further re-occurrence of any kind of disaster in the state".

Responding on behalf of the beneficiaries, Alhaji Oba Bolanta, thanked the state government for coming to their aid and prayed to Allah to avert reoccurrence.



OFFICIALS of the National Environmental Standards and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) carrying seized items during a raid on illegal sale of wild life products in Abuja, recently

Agency clamps down on traders of endangered animals product

By Mustapha Suleiman

THE National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, NESREA, on Wednesday raided Trancorp Hilton Hotel and Arts and Craft village, close to Sheraton Hotel Abuja confiscating items made of animals that are considered "endangered wildlife" from traders that deal in them.

The enforcement team was led by Alhaji Maiwada Omar, Director Environmental Quality Control accompanied by armed policemen took the traders of hides and skin and other artefacts by surprise, leading to the confiscation of

many items ranging from elephant tusks materials made of snake, leopard, cheetah, crocodile and lion skin.

Speaking to newsmen during the raid, Alhaji Maiwada Omar said that hunting, trafficking or trading in endangered wild life is a criminal offence that may lead violators to jail in the country.

He explained that such acts is displacing our tourism and making Nigeria a n illegal transit point as people come from different Africa countries to trade in skin or parts of CITES listed endangered wildlife which include lion, apes, elephants, crocodile, parrots, snakes, tortoise.

Speaking to Journalists Public Relation Officer of Arts and Crafts Village Traders Association, Mr. Eruada Steve said that it is not all the animals that were hunted and killed as being alleged by NESREA, arguing that some might have been killed because they are destructive to human and agriculture and that they are only being used for their aesthetic purposes only.

Also speaking, Mr. KeleChukwu Udogu, Vice President Trancorp branch Of Arts and Craft Traders Association said that they were neither sehsitised about the endangered species nor informed prior to the "invasion" by NESREA.

Fashola calls for improved sanitation

From Nahimah Ajikanle Nurudeen, Lagos

THE governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN) has called on all Lagosians to observe propel level of hygiene and environmental sanitations against global warming and ahead of the 2010 raining season.

Speaking with airports correspondents at the Murtala Muhammad Airport 2 Ikeja, Lagos on his arrival from the Governors forum in Abuja stated that even though, Nigeria is located in safe region does not mean that people should not form the habit of good environmental up keep.

He said: "The government is not an abstract entity. The government is you, the government

is me, and the government is all of us. Let just roll up our sleeves, clean our drainages, manage water properly and ensure the best habit. You have seen what is happening in France, the whole of France was flooded a few days ago. Mud slides took place in Uganda just two days ago. There are had been Earthquake in Chile, warnings of Tsunami and heavy wind."

According to him, Nigerians especially people of Lagos state need to shun all acts that put lives and property in danger during raining season.

Fashola added: "We are part of that global village. We are in a safe zone, we are in a safe area but it is not enough to ride our luck. We must

stop those things that endanger us, bad management of drains, bad disposal of refuse, slitting of drainages. All those things were built with our tax money. Let's make them work for us now."

He called on everybody to take the monthly sanitation exercise more seriously, adding that daily sanitation of households and communities should be imbibed as a way of life and habit

On the current harsh weather condition, he said: "As we are having extreme weather conditions of heat I expect that as we have seen in even in Europe, snow is falling in places where it didn't fall many years ago. So we won't be insulated and have job here is that we have advance warning, we can prepare, we have time.

Environment



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'Oil coys can stop gas flare in 15 months'

THE Delta Government has restated its resolve to get major oil companies operating in the state to stop gas flaring in 15 months time.

The government's commitment was conveyed on Monday in Asaba by Gov. Emmanuel Uduaghan at a stakeholders' forum on climate change and the development of a low carbon economy.

Uduaghan said oil companies which still believed that they could not stop gas flaring would be passing a vote of no confidence in the National Gas Master Plan.

"It is possible to get a commitment from Chevron to stop gas flaring within 15 months; it is possible to get a commitment from Shell.

"But if you (oil companies) say you cannot stop gas flaring, it amounts to a vote of no confidence in the National Gas Master Plan in which you are stakeholders," he said.

Uduaghan also renewed the resolve to tackle the issue of climate change because of the derivable benefits.

"Climate change is here with us; we have to tackle it. It has a lot of opportunities for us in the Niger Delta and in Delta State.

"For years there have been arguments and quarrels on other issues, but these have not solved the problem. The era in which we are now is to deal with these issues.

"Today, our farms, our rivers, our waters have been polluted. These are major causes of the Niger Delta crisis; environmental pollution, we want to deal with it now," he said. (NAN)



PARTICIPANTS at a two-day capacity building workshop for institutions and NGOs working on emergency response and disaster risk reduction organised by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-Nigeria (WANEP) and Oxfam Great Britain at the weekend in Abuja.

Why FG embarked on N19bn shoreline project

By Mustapha Suleiman

MINISTER of Environment Mr. John Odey has said that the proposed dredging of the creeks and channels in the Niger Delta without environmental Impact Assessment is considered dangerous as it will submerged the communities if solid embankment to protect the shores is not put in place.

The Minister was speaking at a stakeholders forum tagged "Development of a low carbon economy and climate change stakeholders forum" organised by Delta State government in Asaba last week.

Odey explained that the decision to pro-

tect the shoreline is very important, saying it is the consideration of this fact that in a meeting with the Niger Delta governors and relevant ministries that they have agreed to utilize the proposed sum of 19 billion for shore line protection. He assured that the main dredging of River Niger is on-going without any hitches, contrary to insinuation in some quarters that it has been stopped and funds proposed for it diverted.

Speaking on the impact of Climate Change in Niger Delta he said: "Studies undertaken in our National Communications in 2003, have projected that with an accelerated sea level rise of 0.5 meter, 35 per cent of Niger Delta will be

lost. With accelerated sea level rise of 1.0 meter, 75 per cent of Niger Delta will be gone. Given this scenario, it implies that millions of people who live along the coastal zone are at risk of becoming environmental refugees. Offshore and onshore areas, as well as estuaries and lagoons, support artesian and industrial fisheries accounting for more than 75% of fisher landings in the country.

Speaking, Delta State Governor Dr. Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan said that he has decided to champion and pioneer the climate change mitigation and adaptation at state level because of its imminent danger to coastline areas which Delta state is among.

Fire destroys 80 shops at Nsukka market

NO fewer than 80 shops were raised by fire on Saturday night at Nsukka Main Market.

Mr Festus Onogwu, Chairman, Nsukka Amalgamated Traders Association, said that the fire started at about 8.20 p.m from the foodstuff seller's line.

"We have yet to ascertain the remote cause of the fire.

"Government should assist the affected traders whose sources of livelihood have been destroyed," he said.

The Commissioner for Rural Development, Mr Emecca Ani, who was conducted round the market, said Gov. Sullivan Chime was disturbed by news of the fire outbreak.

He said that he was at the scene to access the level of damage caused by the inferno.

Ani directed the local government authority and executives of the market association to ensure that the affected traders were assisted in setting up their businesses.

He commended the local government chairman and his team for ensuring that the market was not completely razed down.

Mr. Ofobuike Igwebueze, Secretary, Nsukka Local Government Area, said the chairman had already directed that a committee be set up to investigate the remote causes of the fire to prevent any recurrence.

"We will get to the root cause of the fire and ensure that the affected traders are assisted to start afresh.

"We will also ensure that all the access roads to the market are cleared of stalls.

"We take issues concerning the market serious because it is the major revenue earner to the council," he said.

The Chief Fire Officer in Nsukka, Mr Osmond Umeh, said his men were able to respond immediately to traders' distress calls, because the unit had good fire-fighting equipment.

Women seek role in climate change campaign

WOMEN in West Africa have called for integration of women in the global effort to arrest the adverse effect of climate change on humanity.

Arising from a two-day workshop on the effect of climate change and global

warming on women, the West Africa Women Association (WAWA) Nigeria said the health of women and children are adversely affected owing to the high rate of heat waves, food scarcity, malnutrition, cancer among others.

The workshop became necessary as a major vehicle for sensitization, mobilization and collaboration with Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations to check the health and socio-economic impacts of global warming and

climate change.

The objectives of the workshop are to create awareness about the risk of dis-empowering women in agriculture as a result of environmental factors such as excessive flood.

Environment



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The impact of bush fire and tree felling

By Misbahu Bashir

BUSH fires and felling of trees have been a part of Nigerian history for hundreds of years; People used bush fires to their benefit to manage the land and as a hunting aid and trees are used as or sold for fuel or a commodity to be used by humans. Climate experts and agriculturalists have said these human activities have contributed to global warming and deprived the soil the key nutrients elements needed by plants in large quantities.

Bush fires in Nigeria are ignited by farmers during the dry season in the process of land clearance. Bushfires have existed for as long as trees have been around. The devastating effect of any bush fire results in the loss of native flora and fauna which may take several years to regenerate. Fire is widely accepted throughout the country as being a valuable tool in the management of natural vegetation, agriculture including livestock production and in other land use systems. In the past and even in some instances today hunters, herders, farmers and cigarette smokers are the primary recipients of blame for uncontrolled and indiscriminate bush burning.

Muhammad Abdullahi, a local farmer in Abuja, said burning is emblematic of the cultural values and traditional farming system of the people. To him it is the easiest means of getting rid of weeds and other unwanted dry shrubs during pre-planting operations. This may be particularly the case where the soils are dry and desiccation is rapid. In the forest ecosystem, fire is practically the cheapest means available for clearing slash and felled trees from fields to create a larger planting area for crops. Burning is essential for a good crop with minimum of labour. Farmers share the opinion that when the vegetation is burned, large quantities of nutrient-rich-ashes are deposited on the soil surface which provides the newly planted crops with the benefits of the biomass that has grown on the site.

But most of these fires when set, are difficult to control and eventually spread to other farms and even towns thereby causing a lot of damage. Abdullahi said farmers in the local areas of Abuja usually remove all weed capable of spreading fires from the boundary of their farms but the flames are spread to other places by air. There are several major factors that affect the progress of a bushfire including high winds (provide more oxygen), amount of fuel (example dry leaves), low humidity and high air temperature. The kind of terrain such as hills and slopes also affect the spread of fires. For example fires tend to spread faster up sides of hills, thus in places like Abuja, the effects may be devastating.

Additionally flying burning embers of a main fire front can set spot fires ahead. The fire basically leaps ahead of itself helped by the wind.



BUSH fire

Another reason for setting fires, Abdullahi said is to enable the speedy growth of weeds for grazing. He said during the dry season when all grazing fields are dry, Fulani herdsmen set fire to burn dried grasses so that fresh leaves can shoot out of the rhizomes and roots. Few days later, the green grass that germinate, is used as animal feed by the herdsmen.

Deforestation is a contributor to global warming and is often cited as one of the major causes of the enhanced greenhouse effect. Tropical deforestation is responsible for approximately 20% of world greenhouse gas emissions.

Sabo Maifarauta is a hunter in Abuja who said fires have been used in the rocky areas of the middle belt region of Nigeria aid to hunting. He said the fires are mostly set at night when wild animals have returned to roost and others are coming out to look for food. The fires cover wider areas in a circle or semi-circular pattern in such a way that the animals escape the heat towards the centre. The hunters who position themselves both at the centre and outside the fire circle will chase and catch the animals frustrated by the heat. This type of hunting which is done basically during the dry season has caused enormous damage to farmers because the hunters, after evacuating their catch do not quench the fires but leave them and eventually they spread. Maifarauta said the only way to discourage dry season

hunting using fires is by making legislation banning it and even then, since it is normally done at night and in the bush, violators will always escape.

Audu said giant trees and others considered to be strong are used as timber and in making items such as pestles and mortars. Mortars and pestle are essential to the life of rural people because they are used in processing different kind of foods. They are therefore present in every household. He also said people cut down trees to acquire enough space for farming and do not consider their actions as detrimental to the climate. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, the overwhelming direct cause of deforestation is agriculture. Subsistence farming is responsible for 48% of deforestation; commercial agriculture is responsible for 32% of deforestation; logging is responsible for 14% of deforestation and fuel wood removals make up 5% of deforestation.

A participant in the recent climate change meeting in Copenhagen and Consultant to National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NES-REA), Dr. Vincent Okechi said cutting of trees without planting others as replacement has been a factor for climate imbalance which eventually lead to global warming. The carbon dioxide (Co2) level which would have otherwise been absorbed by the trees increases in the atmosphere.

Centre to hold workshop on conservation reporting

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

THE National Centre for Energy Efficiency and Conservation has concluded plans to hold workshop for journalists in the country.

Tagged Workshop on Energy Efficiency and Conservation Reporting, the

exercise is scheduled to hold between March 17 and 18, this year.

According to the Director of the Centre, Prof. Wole Adegbenro, the workshop is aimed at promoting effective reporting by the media, and to sensitize journalists to emergent developments in energy efficiency and conservation.

He explained that the workshop will focus on issues such as practical aspects of renewable energy sources in industries and homes, influence of energy on the environment and climate change, health and safety aspect of energy usage from the medical point of view.

Others include; energy efficiency

policy, regulation and legislation, project appraisal with respect to energy efficiency and conservation as well as effective reporting of energy issues on all sub-themes.

He said: "Participants will be enlightened on how individuals/communities can plan for efficient energy use."

Heat: Sachet water in high demand in Mararaba

SELLERS and hawkers of sachet water, popularly known as "pure water" have taken over the streets, markets and motor parks in Mararaba, a densely populated suburb near Abuja.

The demand for the "essential commodity" has risen considerably as the current heat which started in November becomes intense.

A housewife, Mrs Ibetedem Amos, decried the effect of the heat on children, saying "because of sweating and unreliable power supply coupled with rampaging mosquitoes, my family now sleep very late in the night."

Another resident in the Kabayi area of Mararaba, who simply gave his name as Mr. Emmanuel, said "my family now sleep in open space outside and we go inside the room later in the night with our windows open.

"It is risky but we do not have an option now."

At the Mararaba main market, intra-city and inter-state

motor parks and streets, hawkers of sachet water were busy making brisk business, while their number kept increasing daily.

On the ever-busy Mararaba-Abuja highway, it was common sight to see the sachet water hawkers running after moving vehicles at hold-ups to sell the commodity.

A sachet of the commodity is sold at N10, while a bag containing 20 sachets goes for N100.

Similarly, a 20-litre jerry can of water is sold at N20 in Mararaba by those who push the commodity around in wheel-barrows, locally called "mai-ruwa" as against N15 sold during rainy season.

A middle-aged woman, speaking on condition of anonymity and who sells the product in bags to "foot hawkers", admitted that "the business is very lucrative now."

"But demand will drop when the rains come.

"The current high demand is because of the heat as people drink more water and I sell up to 60 bags in a day, which fetch me about N6,000.

"But I always use my generator to run my deep freezers because the power supply in this area by PHCN is very erratic and I cannot afford to disappoint or miss my customers," she said.

She maintained that those who could not afford the operational cost of generators use iced blocks to cool their drinks.

Those who engage in the fast-moving sachet water hawking business include young men, ladies, teenagers and school drop-outs as well as children of primary school age.

Some of the children hawkers told NAN at Mararaba Shopping Centre that they were helping their mothers after school and at weekends. (NAN)

CITY NEWS



HOTLINES: 0803-3493-462 & 0703-8927-513
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Robbers injure one along Giri-Airport road

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

DARE devil armed robbers Thursday night attacked vehicles along the Abuja-Airport road, close to Giri village and injured one person.

Our reporter learnt that the robbery incident took place about 500 metres away from a police check point that is close to the permanent site of the University of Abuja.

An eyewitness from the village said the robbers numbering about 11 held sophisticated weapons and mounted a road block with heavy logs of wood at 11 pm.

They started shooting sporadically into the air and one person riding on a motorcycle sustained bullet injuries.

He said passengers of an ambushed bus, jumped out through the bus windows and fled into the bush for safety.

Residents spoken to near the scene, said the robbers operated on vehicles coming from Abuja-Gwagwalada and those going to Abuja for over two hours without response from the police.

The witness said the vehicles were forced to stop at Giri village for fear of attack.

"The sound of gunshots from sophisticated weapons threw the entire villagers in the area into disarray as most of them fled from the comfort of their homes to seek refuge in the bush," the witness lamented.



THE scene of the robbery incident on Thursday.

Our reporter also learnt that the injured cyclist was coming from Ido-Sariki village to Giri village, when the robber's bullet hit him.

When contacted, the Gwag-

walada Police Area Commander, Mr Isyaku Barau, an assistant commissioner, said immediately he got the report, he ordered his men on patrol to move quickly to the robbery scene.

According to him, as at the time the robbery incident was reported to the command, his men were on special patrol along Kwali-Abaji road and moved immediately to the scene when they were alerted.

The area commander however confirmed that one person sustained bullet wound and has been taken to a hospital, adding that investigations are still on to capture the fleeing robbers.

ITC student wins inter-gender quiz competition

By Lami Sadiq

A student of Islamic Training Centre, Madallah, Zulgornian Gambari, Friday emerged winner of the inter-gender Mathematics quiz competition that was organized by Great Heights Academy, Kado Estate.

Zulgornian scored 39 points to claim first position; while the second position went to Rukkaiya Bakare of Great Heights Academy

with 36 points and Hauwa Toko of Fou'ad Lababidi claimed third position with 15 points.

In the group category between boys and girls, the female students won the competition with 30 points, while their male counterpart scored 12 points.

Vice-Principal of Great Heights Academy, Mr Simon Odike, said the competition is aimed at ascertaining which gender is better in

understanding Mathematics given the advancement of girl child education in Nigeria, adding that both genders need to show and put interest in order to excel in the subject.

Mr Odike explained that the school will continue to organize periodic inter-gender Mathematics competition and appealed to all schools to provide a good learning environment for Mathematics as well as employ good teachers.

Store keeper jailed for stealing Nescafe

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

AN Abuja magistrate court last Friday sentenced a 35-year-old store keeper with Park 'N' Shop to one year imprisonment without fine option for stealing a carton of Nescafe and two other items, all valued at N48,410 from the shop at Wuse II, Abuja.

The accused, Emanuel Odey was a store keeper attached to Park 'N' Shop at Wuse II, Abuja and committed the crime inside the shop on March 3.

Prosecutor Mohammed Ahmed informed the court that on the said date, one Mr. Victor Okoh, a Chief Security Officer attached to Park 'N' Shop, Wuse II, Abuja, reported at the Maitama Police Station that the accused stole items in the

shop where he worked as a store keeper.

"The accused person entered the store and stole one carton of Nescafe, one bottle of leistering mouth wash and three pieces of Paris Fair & White, all valued at N48,410," the prosecutor said.

According to the prosecutor, the said items were recovered from the accused during police investigations, adding that his action contravened Section 287 of the Penal Code Law.

When the one-count charge was read to the accused person, he pleaded guilty and begged the court for leniency.

Chief Magistrate Ademuyiwa Oyeyipo convicted the accused person and sentenced him to one year imprisonment without fine option.

Butcher accused of cheating corps member

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

A 40-year-old butcher, Taofik Akande, was recently arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly cheating a female corps member, Margret Akpan of N70,000 on January 17.

Prosecutor Jeremiah Elijah told the court that on February 28, the corps member reported to the police that the accused cheated her.

"The accused collected the sum of N70,000 from her under the pretext that he would help her repair a house and later sublet it for rent," the prosecutor stated.

The prosecutor said the accused refused to carry out the repairs and dishonestly converted the money to his personal use, thereby committing offences punishable under Sections 312 and 322 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and requested for bail, which was not objected to by the prosecutor.

In her ruling, Magistrate Ann Akobi granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reliable surety in like sum, who must swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to March 29 for hearing.

Land scam leads civil servant to prison

By Usman A Bello

A 41-year-old civil servant, Umaru Bala Giro, was on Friday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly forging land documents and cheating as well as assaulting one Jamiu Arzika Madidadi.

Police prosecutor, Joseph Onwu, told the court that on February 25, the complainant petitioned the FCT police com-

missioner that the accused forged an offer and allocation letter for land at Gaduwa and Dakibiyu district respectively on November 2008.

The prosecutor said the accused deceived the complainant with the forged documents and dishonestly sold the two plots of land to him at N4.2 million and N6.2 million respectively.

He said the accused slapped the complainant when he approached

him for the return of his money after it was discovered that the documents were fake on October, 2009

"During police investigations, the sum of N2 million was recovered from the accused," the prosecutor said.

The accused pleaded not guilty when the charges were read to him, while his counsel, Muhammed Galadima urged the court to grant his client bail,

which was not objected by the prosecutor.

Chief Magistrate Oyebola O. Oyewumi ordered the accused person's counsel to formerly apply for his bail application and remanded the accused in prison custody until his bail application is heard.

The case was adjourned to April 14, for hearing while hearing for the bail application was adjourned to March 9, 2010.

Man denies duping charge

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

A 27-year-old man Thursday in court denied charges that he attempted to defraud one Pastor Bunmi Babs of the Rochas Foundations and another person of N1,250,000.

The accused, Henry Nganwu-chu of H and L Company Limited, was reported to have fraudulently attempted to defraud the complainants of the said amount on May 16, 2007.

Prosecutor Abu Okpanachi had earlier told the court that sometimes in 2007, one Stephen and Zeng of the Legal Services of Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Abuja, reported to the police that the accused fraudulently forged a document.

He said the forged document, which was dated November 14, 2006, was presented to one Pastor Bunmi Babs with the intention of defrauding the pastor.

"Also on May 15, 2007, the accused was granted bail in a criminal case but instead of him to report to the police on May 21, 2007, he decided to run to an unknown destination," the prosecutor said.

The prosecutor added further that when the accused was arrested by the police in November 2009, he criminally deceived the policemen and escaped from them, while he was taking them to his house.

He said during police investigations, it was discovered that the accused actually committed all the offences punishable under Sections 366 and 173 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charges were read to the accused, he denied them and sought for bail, which was vehemently opposed by the prosecutor on the ground that he might jump bail as he had done on two different occasions.

Chief Magistrate Ademuyiwa Oyeyipo granted the accused bail in the sum of N200,000 with two reasonable sureties in like sums, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The magistrate also ruled that one of the two sureties must be a federal civil servant of not below grade level 12, while the second must produce evidence of ownership of landed property in Abuja.

The case was adjourned to March 22 for hearing.

PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH



JESTERS moving along Abaji road ...Saturday.

NURTW chairman in court over mischief

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

THE police recently arraigned the National Union of Road Transport Workers Jabi Garage taxi section Chairman before an Abuja magistrate court for mischief.

The union's Chairman, Esho Moshood was accused of causing a cab belonging to Mumini Akinola to crash into a stationary trailer.

Prosecutor Mustapha Mohamed informed the court that on March 1, 2010, the complainant reported to the police that the accused forced his taxi cab to crash.

"The accused in an attempt to arrest the complainant's cab, struggled with the car's steering with the driver (Salihu) and in the process the car lost control and crashed

into a stationary trailer," the prosecutor stated.

He said the car is badly damaged and needs about N190,000 to effect repairs, adding that the accused committed an offence punishable under Section 327 of the Penal Code Law.

"During police investigation, it was discovered that only N55,000 was spent on the car repairs, while

the accused refused to complete the repairs work.

When the charge was read to the accused, he denied it and Magistrate Abdul Dogo granted him bail in the sum of N100,000 with a reliable surety in like sum, who must swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date. The case was adjourned to March 18 for hearing.

Five in court over theft

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

FIVE middle-aged men were last recently arraigned before an Abuja Magistrate court for allegedly stealing items belonging to one Timothy Adike and threatening to kill him.

The accused persons, Chukwuliwa Ndife, 25, Emmanuel Okechukwu, 38, Nnandi Ezeka, 35 Raphael Ojimba, 50 and Okon, 30, all of Jabi Park, were said to have jointly committed the offence on February 18.

Prosecutor Obed Amikor stated in court that Timothy Adike of Jabi Park

reported to the police that the accused persons formed common intentions and broke into his box at Jabi Park to steal some items.

"The accused persons jointly stole N30,000 cash, five AC burglaries valued at N7,500, two trousers/ two shirts valued at N3,500, two door protectors and two iron doors valued at N6,000 and N11,000, respectively," the prosecutor stated.

According to the prosecutor, when the complainant confronted the accused persons, they jointly threatened to kill him, adding that their

offences are contrary to Sections 79, 288 and 397 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charges were read to the accused persons, they all pleaded not guilty and sought for bail, which was not opposed by the prosecutor.

Magistrate Khadijat Mustapha granted each of the accused persons bail in the sum of N50,000 and two sureties, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction as well as swear to affidavits promising to produce the accused persons in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to March 18, for hearing.

Mother reports son to police over behaviour

By Gladys Ogechi Nworgu

A mother recently reported the unruly behaviour of her son to the police after he threatened to deal with her at their residence at Aso Zone 4 at Mararaba, in Nasarawa State.

The woman, who is popularly called Mama 'G', lost her husband in 1995 and had a problem with her son when the

boy could not account for N12,000 she gave to him.

A neighbour said the boy warned his mother that he will deal with her and the woman ran to the Aso Police Post to report the matter.

At the police station, Mr E.O. Emeka said the case was not filed because the mother just wanted to alert the police of her son's behaviour.



**NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION
INVITATION FOR THE PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS
FOR REHABILITATION OF WORKSHOPS, TRAINING SCHOOLS,
AND STATIONS (NATIONWIDE); PROCUREMENT OF WORKSHOP
EQUIPMENT; AND REHABILITATION OF WAGONS AND COACHES**

1. INTRODUCTION:-

In furtherance to the Federal Government's Railway Rehabilitation programme, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) invites interested and reputable Contractors with relevant and verifiable experience to apply for pre-qualification for consideration to tender for the projects indicated below.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS

The projects fall under the following categories:

- Rehabilitation of Workshops, Training Schools, and Stations Nationwide.
- Procurement of Workshop Equipment.
- Rehabilitation of Wagons and Coaches.

3. PRE-QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

A requirement for pre-qualification is that the Contractor must have a total annual turnover of at least N50M (Fifty Million Naira) in the proceeding year, from activities related to the category of interest. In addition the contractor is required to submit the under listed documents:

- Valid certificate of Incorporation/Registration.
- Profile of Company including CVs of key personnel.
- Evidence of similar work done in the past.
- Certified copy of last Annual Returns.
- Tax Clearance Certificate for last 3 years.
- Evidence of Value Added Tax Registration Certificate.
- Evidence of Strong financial support from a first rate financial institution.
- Evidence and List of Equipment, source and location.
- Evidence of compliance with the provisions of Public Procurement Act in respect of Pension obligations.

Failure to meet any of the criteria as well as submit any of the listed documents will be grounds for disqualification.

ENQUIRIES

Enquiries in relation to this invitation for pre-qualification should be directed to:-

Managing Directors Office,
Public Procurement Unit (Capital),
Nigerian Railway Corporation (HQ),
Ebute-Metta, Lagos.

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Three hard copies of the application and pre-qualification documents must be submitted in a sealed envelope and marked "PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS FOR (indicate project category for which you wish to be prequalified), and delivered either by hand or by registered mail to reach the address given below not later than 1pm on 2nd April 2010.

The Secretary,
Nigerian Railway Corporation (HQ)
P.M.B. 1037, Ebute-Metta,
Lagos.

Please Note:

- All documents submitted must be accompanied with an affidavit Sworn in any Magistrate/High court to confirm their authenticity.
- Only short-listed companies shall be invited to tender for works stated above.
- Late submission shall be rejected.
- This advertisement for pre-qualification shall not be construed to be a commitment on the part of NRC to award any form of Contract to your company nor shall it entitle any company submitting document to claim any indemnity from NRC.
- NRC reserves the right to take final decision on any of the documents received in your pre-qualification package.

Signed, MANAGEMENT

Ex-ANPP aspirant decamps to PDP at Kuje

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

A former chairmanship aspirant of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in the last 2007 council election at Kuje Area Council, Mr. Julius Bezhe Gado, last Friday decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Gado, who lost out to the incumbent chairman, Mr. Danladi Eisu Zhin of

the PDP in the 2007 polls said he decided to pitch tent with the PDP after thorough consultations were reached with his supporters.

He said the administration of Mr. Zhin has in the last three years improved the living standards of residents of the council, through the provision of infrastructures and social amenities, adding that youths have also been

empowered by the administration.

The ex ANPP aspirant assured the council boss that he will work tirelessly to ensure the success of the PDP in the forth coming election in the council.

In his speech, FCT PDP Chairman, Alhaji Aihassan Gwagwa, assured the aspirant that he will be involved in every decision taken by party.

Academy pupils display sporting talents

PHOTO: ABUBAKAR YAKUBU



PUPILS of Intelligence Quotient Academy display their sack race event on Saturday in Abuja.

By Abubakar Yakubu & Doris Aina West

PUPILS of Intelligence Quotient Academy Saturday displayed great sporting skills as they competed to win medals during the school's maiden inter-house sports competition that held at the Abuja National Stadium.

The junior athletes, who were grouped under Red, Blue, Green and Yellow Houses, dazzled their parents as well as guests as

they fought to win their houses for 100 medals.

In the 50, 100 and 200 metres girls' race, Maryam Adams (green house), Bilikisu Bappa (yellow house) and Mubarak Yusuf (red house) won gold medals respectively, while in the boys relay category, Mohammed Kabir (yellow house), Ibrahim Mallam (blue house) and Suleiman Adedoke (green house) also won gold medals respectively.

In the female parents' race, Ahmed Amina came first and was followed by Khaleel Hadiza and Suleiman Hamdalat.

Participants in the high jump category had a keen contest, that saw Mubarak Yusuf and Hauwa Ibrahim, both of red houses coming out first as well as second positions.

The parents' male race saw Sa'wafa Onaolapo winning, while Alhaji Dauda and Sanni Kaka came out second and third, respectively.

In his speech at the event, the school's Chairman, Alhaji Abdullahi Bukar enjoined parents to allow their children participate in sports as well as cheer them to victory during the event, adding that it was from the grass roots that great athletes emerged from.

Highlights of the event were the given of medals to individual participants that distinguished themselves, while Red House got the biggest trophy for coming out the overall winner.

Blue House and Green Houses also got trophies for coming out second and third positions respectively.

NGO organises seminar for students

By Romoke W. Ahmad

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), 'Centre for Youth Initiative on Self Education' (CEYISED), recently organized a leadership seminar for student's prefects in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and its environment, titled 'catch them young initiative'.

Our reporter learnt that seminar was aimed at promoting integrity and enhancing leadership

capacities of class captains and assistants, in various secondary schools.

Director of the NGO, Sharafadeen Olatunji Muhammed, said the organisation intends to influence the behaviours of youths positively, by teaching them how to imbibe good leadership qualities.

He said a good leader must not lord over others but serve those that voted him in diligently.

Also speaking, Mrs Ese

Okwong, senior education officer, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), said the workshop is a welcome development, adding that the commission has continued to vigorously pursue its public education mandate in order to engender zero tolerance for corruption and raise youths, who will shun corruption as well as all forms of social vices.

Inside Politics

2011 and the heightened tension in Katsina

The PDP in Katsina, the home state of President Umaru Yar'adua, is under trial of sort, because of the dispute between two factions, one loyal to Governor Ibrahim Shema and the other loyal to some politicians in Abuja allegedly led by Agric Minister Sayyad. Will the President who should hold the joker have the chance to resolve the crisis?

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

SOME interesting events have begun unfolding in Katsina, the home state of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua. The political aspects of the events generated by challenges of the President's health condition seem to be building up at an alarming rate ahead of general elections in 2011. At the moment none of the political actors, especially those who have an eye on the Katsina Government House can say with a certain degree of certainty, where the pendulum will swing.

Following the recent transfer of presidential powers to Acting President Goodluck Jonathan, leaders of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state have been meeting secretly to discuss their fate in the emerging political equation. Katsina PDP has been sharply divided between members who claim to be close to President Umaru Yar'adua and popularly referred to as Abuja politicians and led by the Minister of Agriculture Sayyadi Abba Ruma and those loyal to Governor Ibrahim Shema.

But whatever that is being contemplated by the warring politicians at the moment is premised on the probability of President Yar'adua's return to full power. Since 1999, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has remained the sole determinant of the direction of the PDP in Katsina State and is widely seen as one that could contain the raging dispute between the

opposing groups. But his continued absence from the scene, according to political observers, will no doubt worsen the crack within.

With Jonathan at the helm of affairs, there are wide spread fears about the continuous stay of Ruma and others believed to have played a role in the bid to stop Jonathan's presidency in the cabinet. Many believe that the Acting President is only taking his time before he gives them the boot. If this eventually happens, the political equation in Katsina will certainly change in a way as to accord Governor Shema an edge over the so called Abuja group.

At the moment, the Abuja group is seen to be more politically rooted and have a hold of the party's machinery; a situation some analysts say could give Governor Shema sleepless night ahead of 2011. But the state House of Assembly last week passed a law empowering the Katsina State Governor to dissolve local government councils before the end of their three year tenure if he sees the need to do so. The tenure of the incumbent councils is supposed to end in March 2011, probably after general elections. But the governor can now dissolve the councils before then if he so wishes. This legislative move is said to be aimed at enabling the governor to begin to take full control of the political environment.

These developments appear to be creating more fear amongst residents of Katsina. Those who understand the terrain contend that unless President Yar'adua bounces back to



GOVERNOR Ibrahim Shema



DR. Sayyadi Abba Ruma

intervene and resolve the crisis before the 2011 elections, the two forces which appear to be balanced in power are likely to cause serious chaos, if not bloody scenes across the state.

Recently, the state leadership of the PDP also summoned a special meeting at the state secretariat to discuss the unfolding developments but the meeting was scuttled by the sudden appearance of the Speaker of the state House of Assembly, Hon Ya'u Umar Gojo Gojo, who is known to be a strong supporter of Governor Shema.

Since then, the tempo within the party has not been the same. Governor Shema was also alleged to have postponed a trip abroad and barely a day after his return from Saudi Arabia he summoned the entire 34 local government chairmen and some party leaders to a close door meeting at Government house which lasted over two hours. This is among series of secret meetings being held at different locations in the state capital.

Sources close to the PDP secretariat in Katsina said the meeting may not be unconnected with the alleged desire of the governor's loyalists to ensure that the state party executives, believed to be loyal

to the powers in Abuja, are replaced. Already a group of concerned PDP members are re-lunching their campaign against the continuous stay of the Katsina party exco in office beyond the stipulated constitutional term. The exco has been in office since 1999. If they are successfully removed, the development will signal a new political era that will see Governor Shema and his associates taking full control of the party.

Tanimu Ibrahim, a member of the party in Dutsinma local government told our reporter that the absence of Yar'adua in 2011 elections will spell problems for the political environment in Katsina. It will certainly disastrous, he said. According to the politician, the President is the only 'father' that can call everyone to order and force the actors to queue behind a particular candidate. But can the President bounce back to reckoning? That is one question that has dominated the lips of many observers.

Already, the supporters of the Executive Secretary of the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Engineer Mutaqha Rabe Darma, whose posters have been pasted all over the capital city, have alleged that they are being witch-hunted by the authorities.

Spokesman of the PDTF boss, Abdulaziz Muntari Lumme, told journalists in Abuja that he and other supporters of his principal were in danger. Lumme who is the councillor representing Kangiwa ward alleged that many of them have had brushes with security operatives for no obvious reasons. But Engineer Darma himself has denied nursing any political ambition and declined having a hand in the posters seen all over the city and beyond.

However, a former state youth leader of the PDP Alhaji Sabo Musa Hassan has allayed fears of any violent political clashes in the build up to the 2011 elections. He said many supporters, especially the youths, who sacrificed their lives, and many more who were maimed, in the course of ensuring victory for some political office holders in 2007 have been highly disappointed. "No one is prepared again to die for anybody who cares only for himself," he said.

Sabo described the ongoing fight between the Abuja politicians and the Governor's group as a creation of the devil, stressing that the ultimate losers are the people at the grassroots, especially those who stood for them in 2007. He observed that even though

President Yar'adua had given many of the big shots lucrative positions so that they could help the people, they have very well ignored that noble essence and paid more attention to in-house fight for the control of political power in future.

But according to Alhaji Sanusi Attahiru, a PDP stalwart, unless the Katsina PDP addresses certain burning issues and reorganises itself, it stands the risk of losing to the opposition. According to him an opposition led by former presidential candidate of the ANPP, General Muhammadu Buhari, will certainly explore the crisis within the PDP to launch an onslaught on the party. It is widely believed that without the influence of President Yar'adua, who lacks the capacity for now, none of the political gladiators in the PDP has the capacity to stop General Buhari.

For now, the tempo of the political rumpus has cooled down. This is owing to the physical return of the President to the country. But further activities within the PDP in Katsina will depend on the return or otherwise of the ailing President to the seat of power. Another option is for the party to cement the crack within, which many say is a hard nut to crack giving the underlying issues.

Inside Politics

Jos: PDP has failed to protect Nigerians – Sen Bukar

By Turaki A. Hassan

THE incessant crisis leading to loss of lives and property in Plateau State is the result of failure of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)-led government to provide security for Nigerians wherever they reside, Senator Bukar Abba Ibrahim (ANPP, Yobe East) has said.

Speaking to newsmen at the National Assembly yesterday

on the fresh violence that eruption in some parts of Plateau state at the weekend, the Senator Bukar argued that if the Federal Government had lived up to the expectations of Nigerians by providing adequate security to lives and property, the crisis would not have persisted.

The Senator, who was three times governor of Yobe State, said the PDP has failed in such a way that makes it easy for the opposi-

tion to defeat it in 2011.

"We will defeat them because Nigerians are tired of this persistent failure of governance. It is not the ANPP alone that will show them the way out, it is the disgruntled Nigerians in millions all over the country because they are tired of the PDP and its misrule," Senator Bukar said.

Referring to the situation in Plateau State, he said: "The PDP has failed the people of Pla-

teau. There have been governors before PDP came but they never witnessed this kind of thing until the PDP took charge of the state. It happened during Dariye and it is now happening under the watch of Jang, both PDP governors."

"No governor has ever allowed the situation in Jos to deteriorate to this level. SDP which was a progressive party ruled Plateau for two years and there was peace in the land. There were no killing and

maiming of people like it's happening now," the Senator added.

Bukar also disclosed that a coalition of opposition parties will merge and put their strength together to unseat the PDP in 2011 general elections. "Nigerians in their millions will show them the way out. The opposition the whole of the progressive class in this country will unite and show them the way out not just the ANPP alone," he said.

There's no opposition in Ogun – Gov Daniel

From Terkula Igidi, Abeokuta

AS means of deepening democracy, opposition politics is healthy, the Governor of Ogun State, Otunba Gbenga Daniel said, but lamented that there was no such opposition in Ogun State.

According to him, opposition in the state exists only on pages of newspapers. "How can people sit in Lagos and write all manner of things?" he queried.

The governor who was responding to questions from members of the peer review team of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) secretariat, who were in the state yesterday to assess and familiarize themselves with the performance and governance style of the state government declared: "Yes, Ogun state is in the hands of one party but it happened because of the work we have done."

Otunba Daniel said there was no opposition politician good enough to challenge him. He however lamented that instead of the perceived opposition politicians in the state to dwell their criticisms on real issues, they have moved to mundane issues that have



GOVERNOR Gbenga Daniel

no basis.

"I stand before you here to say that since the inauguration of this administration, there has been no single assassination in Ogun State. Can you get something out of nothing? I went to all the 236 wards in the state and you still do not expect me to win elections and be a popular gov-

ernor?" He queried.

Earlier, the Director General of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Mr Asishana Okauru thanked the governor for transforming the state into an 'industrial hub of the south-west'. "There are some things here that we will benchmark when we finished our familiarisation tour," he said.

Ex-guber aspirant condemns call for Dambazau's removal

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

AN ex-Kano State gubernatorial aspirant on the platform of Alliance for Democracy (AD) Alhaji Yahaya Muhammad Kyabo Fegge has condemned calls from the Northern Elders Christian Forum (NOSCEF) for the removal

of the Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Abdurrahman Dambazau.

Fagge told Journalists in Abuja at the weekend the call was ill motivated.

"Is it because of the role the military plays in cooling tension in places like Maiduguri, Bauchi and Jos? The Military has the right

to protect the life of every Nigerian not to talk of sitting president," he declared.

"It is surprising for our Christian brothers to call for his removal. The Chiefs of Naval Staff, Defence, SSS, NIA and the IG police are all Christians. Why Dambazau, is it because he is a Muslim?" he asked.

Group wants Jonathan to act on Uwais report

By Abbas Jimoh

ACTING President Goodluck Jonathan has been urged to immediately act on the Justice Muhammed Uwais led Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) report in the interest of socio-political development.

National coordinator of the G6 Patriotic Group (GPG), Mr. Richard Victor made the appeal in Abuja at the weekend while addressing reporters on the state of the nation.

"We as a body reiterate the national call that the Justice Uwais electoral committee report and recommendations be strictly adhere to by the federal government. This is consistency with international call by international personalities like British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former US President George Bush, among others, that Nigerian democracy be built on transparent and credible elections.

"We are not unaware

that the president's health challenges might have contributed to the delay in the implementation of Uwais report. We urged Acting President to toe the line of reason and wisdom by effecting the Uwais recommendations on electoral reform," Victor said.

He said that if Nigeria can get it right on the electoral reform, other problems, especially corruption, bedevilling the country can be taken care of easily and faster too.

South-East traditional rulers applaud Anambra polls

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

THE meeting of South East leaders and elders in Owerri last weekend applauded what it called the peaceful conduct of the governorship election in Anambra State on 6th February 2010.

In an address on behalf of the leaders, chairman of the South East Council of traditional rulers, HRH, Eze Cletus Ilomuanya commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for conducting a peaceful election 'devoid of irregularities'.

While congratulating Governor Peter Obi on his victory at the polls, the monarch commended the people of Anambra State for being orderly during the election.

He said that the peaceful conduct of the election is a clear indication that Igbos are capable of leading Nigeria for national recovery.

The monarch said that the purpose of the meeting was to look into the declining socio-political fortunes of the Igbos in Nigeria and to discuss on ways of redirecting the destiny of Igbos in the country.

He attributed the prevalent cases of robbery and kidnapping to the high level of unemployment among the youths, adding that if urgent attention is not given immediately, the situation might escalate.

Eze Ilomuanya who is also the chairman, Imo State Council of Traditional Rulers restated the call for creation of additional state in the South East to bring the geo-political zone at par with others in the country.

According to him the call for additional state in the zone is based on fairness, equity, justice and good conscience.

PDP wins LG by-election in Rivers

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has won the by-election held in two local government areas in Rivers on Saturday.

The party won the councillorship seat in ward six in Abua/Odua Local Government Area and the Chairmanship and council-

lorship elections in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government election.

The Commissioner, Public Affairs and Civic Education, in the State Independent Electoral Commission Mr. Nimi Wilson-Jack said on Sunday in Port-Harcourt that

the election was free and fair.

"The majority of voters conducted themselves satisfactorily," he said.

He said elections in two units in ward 9 and 10 in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni were cancelled due to irregularities. (NAN)

SPORT

Eneramo
fires to top of
goals chart

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Lagerback should be given freedom –Kaave

By David Ngobua

FORMER chieftain of the then Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Barrister Chive Kaave has said for the newly appointed Technical Adviser of Super Eagles, Lars Lagerback to succeed he must be given the freedom which Dutchman Clemence Westerhof enjoyed in his days as Super Eagles coach.

Speaking to *Trustsports* on the appointment of the Swede, Kaave said Lagerback is eminently qualified to handle the Super Eagles and his appointment ahead of top coaches like Bruno Mestu, Glenn Hoddle and Goran Sven Eriksson did not come to him as a surprise.

“If he is given the freedom to carry out his assignment the way he wants, he will succeed”

He said going by the credentials and records of achievements of Lagerback, he will succeed with the Super Eagles but before he succeeds, he must be given enough freedom to operate.

“I have no doubt in my mind about his ability to deliver but a conducive atmosphere. If he is given the freedom to carry

out his assignment the way he wants, he will succeed because he knows what he wants and he knows how to go about things.

“Part of the reasons why Westerhof succeeded as Super Eagles coach is that he was given the necessary freedom. There was nothing like undue interference in his job and whatever he needed was provided for him without delay. I believe that if given such presidential support, Lagerback will also succeed,” he said.

Kaave maintained that it would have amounted to serious blunder had the Nigeria Football Federation settled for any other coach from the list of those who were interviewed for the coaching job.

He also said whatever would be the performance of Super Eagles in South Africa should not be enough to deny the Swede contract extension as he argued that Lagerback should be given enough time to develop Nigerian football.

According to him, the coach should be given the opportunity to prepare a team for the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea/Gabon and then lead the team to the 2014 World Cup in Brazil where he said Lagerback would win something big for the country.

“In my opinion, whether Super Eagles do well in South Africa or not, the Coach should be given contract extension. He should build a brand new team for the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea/ Gabon and then lead the Eagles to the 2014 World Cup,” he stated.



Former Equatorial Guinea tactician, Lars Lagerback will need the freedom enjoyed by his predecessor Clemens Westerhof to succeed with the Super Eagles.

Nigeria may participate in 2014 Winter Olympics

By Orkula Shaagee

THE Nigeria Winter and Extreme Sports Federation has concluded plans to raise athletes that would represent Nigeria at the next Winter Olympic Games to be staged in Russia in 2014.

President of the Federation, Dr. Louis Obyo Obyo Nelson, who stated this at the FCT SWAN Hot Seat in Abuja,

said the Federation has already started the hunt for foreign-based athletes of Nigerian origin who are into such sports to return home and represent their fatherland at the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Besides, Nelson informed that the Federation in conjunction with international organizations would build an Oval with facilities for five winter sports

for the training of athletes in preparation for the Russia 2014 Olympics.

“I would like Nigeria to be at the next Winter Olympics in Russia in 2014, and to win laurels. We have already started the search for Nigerians who are outside the country competing for other countries to come and represent their fatherland.

“We have also contacted inter-

national organizations to come and build oval for five sports that will not be capital intensive. This will enable us train our people locally in Nigeria for the games”, Nelson stated.

Nelson, who said it will cost the Federation between 30 million to 40 million Euros to provide the facilities required for training of athletes, also informed that the Federation has

already written to the National Sports Commission for consideration as a recognized sports body in the country.

While expressing confidence that Nigeria will not lack athletes to practise winter sports, he stated that the essence is to provide opportunities for Nigerian youths to express their sporting talent as well as project Nigeria to the rest of the world.



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)

2011 General Elections: Issues and Challenges (National Conference for Stake Holders in the Electoral Process)



The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as part of its efforts towards a successful conduct of the 2011 General Elections, has scheduled a Preparatory Conference for Stake Holders in the Electoral Process. It will provide a platform for a formal presentation of the Commission's Operational Plans for the conduct of the 2011 General Elections, for public review.

Venue: The Africa Hall of the International Conference Centre, Central Business District, Abuja
Time: 10am
Date: Tuesday 16th Thursday 18th March, 2010

SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR:

Acting President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, GCON

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr. Navin Chawla, the Chief Election Commissioner of India, who will share his country's experience on "Electronic Voting and the Concept of Staggered Elections".

INVITED SPECIAL GUESTS:

President of the Nigerian Senate; Speaker of the House of Representatives;
Chief Justice of the Federation; Former Presidents/Heads of State of the Federal Republic;
Former Presidents of the Senate; Former Speakers of the House of Representatives;
Former Chief Justices of the Federation; Executive Governors of the 36 States of the Federation;
Members of the Federal Executive Council; Leaders of the 57 Political Parties;
Reps of Invited Civil Society Organizations; Reps of Invited Development Partners; and
Other Invited Guests;

The Acting President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is expected to declare the Conference open.

INEC: Consolidating Nigeria's Democracy

Signed
ABDULLAHI A. KAUGAMA
Secretary, INEC

PREPARATORY CONFERENCE PROGRAMME DAY ONE (Opening Ceremony)

Time	Activity
8.45 - 10.00am	Registration
9.00 am	Arrival of Participants
9.30am	Arrival of INEC Chairman, accompanied by Commission Members and Secretary
9.45am	Arrival of Special Invitees
10.00 am	Arrival of Special Guest of Honour, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCON; Acting President of Federal Republic of Nigeria.
-	National Anthem
-	Opening Prayers
10.05am	Introductions
10.15am	Electoral Reforms: Issues and Challenges, a Keynote Address by Chairman INEC, Prof. Maurice M. Iwu.
10.30am	Goodwill Messages (from the Legislature, Development Partners, etc.)
11.00am	Opening Address by His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCON; Acting President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria
11.30am	Vote of thanks by the Secretary of INEC, Abdullahi A. Kaugama
-	National Anthem
-	His Excellency, Acting President departs
11.40am	Tea/Coffee Break

PLENARY SESSION ONE:

12.00 (Noon) Topic I: **Use of Electronic Voting Machines and the Concept of Staggered Elections** by the Special Guest Speaker, Mr. Navin Chawla, Chief Election Commissioner of India.

Chairman of Session: Gen. Yakubu Gowon, former Nigerian Head of State.
1.00pm Interactive Session with Focus on:
(a) Opening Address by Special Guest of Honour
(b) Presentation by Special Guest Speaker
(c) Keynote Address by Chairman INEC
2.00pm Lunch Break

PLENARY SESSION TWO:

3.00pm Topic II: **Overview of Elections in Nigeria: 1998 Till Date**
Chairman of Session: Chief Arthur Mbanefo, former Nigerian Ambassador and Special Representative to the United Nations
Speaker: Alhaji Abubakar Jauro, former Secretary to INEC.
3.40pm Discussions on Topic II
4.00pm Topic III: **The Roles of Civil Society and the Media in Evolving Sound Democratic Culture.**
Speaker: Chief Mike A. A. Ozekhome, SAN, Constitutional Lawyer & Human Rights Activist.
4.40pm Discussions on Topic III
5.00pm Announcements/Adjournment

DAY TWO:

Plenary Session Three

9.30am Topic IV: **Ensuring Effective Legal Framework for the Conduct of Elections in Nigeria**

Chairman of Session: Chief Anyim Pius Anyim, former President of the Senate

Speaker: Chief Kanu Agabi, SAN, former Attorney General & Minister of Justice.

10.10am Discussions on Topic IV

10.30am Topic V: **Party Discipline and Cohesion: Administration, Congresses, Conventions and Finances**

Speaker: Prof. Adele Jinadu, former National Electoral Commissioner

11.10am Discussions on Topic V

11.30am Tea/Coffee Break

PLENARY SESSION FOUR:

12.00 (Noon) Topic VI: **Preparations for 2011 Elections: Administrative and Logistical Challenges.**

Chairman of Session: Alhaji Shehu Shagari, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Speaker: Prince Adedeji Soyebi, National Electoral Commissioner, Operations

12.40pm Discussions on Topic VI

1.00pm Topic VII: **Security of the Electoral Process: The Roles of the Police, Political Parties, Candidates and INEC.**

Speaker: Mr. Ogbonna Onovo, Inspector General of Police.

1.40pm Discussions on Topic VII

2.00pm Lunch Break

PLENARY SESSION FIVE:

3.00pm Topic VIII: **The Imperatives of Effective Voter Education: Citizen Participation and Gender Issues in the Electoral Process.**

Chairman of Session: Rt. Hon. Dr Joseph Wayas, former President of the Senate.

Speaker: Barr. Nkoyo Toyo, Nigerian Ambassador to Ethiopia.

3.40pm Discussions on Topic VIII

4.00pm Topic IX: **Election Observation and Monitoring: The Role of Relevant Stake Holders.**

Speaker: Amb. Brownson Dede, INEC Consultant

4.40pm Discussions on Topic IX

5.00pm Announcements/Adjournment

DAY THREE:

PLENARY SESSION SIX (SHOW CASE OF ELECTORAL PUBLICATIONS)

9.30am **Interactive Sessions:**

Chairman of Session: Prof. Maurice M. Iwu, Chairman INEC

Special Focus On:

- * Voter Education Alhaji Ibrahim Biu, Director, VE
- * Voters' Registration Mr. Charles Mbanaja, HOD, Voter Registry
- * ICT (EVS) - Engr. E. T. Akem, Director, ICT
- * Publicity/Enlightenment Mr. E. I. Umenger, DPA
- * Civil Society and Gender Desk Mrs. Margaret Ikwunja, Director, Civil Society & Gender Desk
- * Election Observation Mechanism Mrs Nma Halliday, HOD, Election Observation & Monitoring
- * Monitoring of Party Congresses and Conventions - Mrs. Regina Omo-Adeola, HOD, DS
- * Staggered Elections Barr. Abdulrahman Madaki, DS, Operations
- * Alternative Dispute Resolution in Settling Electoral Conflicts: Augusta Ogakwu, Esq, HOD, ADR.

11.00am Discussions on In-house Presentations

11.30am Tea/Coffee Break (Display of Electoral Publications)

PLENARY SESSION SEVEN:

12 (Noon) **Chairman of Session:** Prof. Maurice Iwu, Chairman INEC

Presentation by Conference Rapporteurs:

- Code of Conduct for Political Parties Before, During and After 2011 Elections.
- Conference Report

2.00pm

Lunch Break

3.00pm

Chairman of Session: Prof. Maurice Iwu, Chairman INEC

Discussions on:

- Code of Conduct for Political Parties Before, During and After 2011 Elections.
- Conference Report
- Adoption of Report
- Close of Conference

North Korea wants Eagles friendly

WORLD Cup finalists North Korea have proposed a warm-up against Nigeria to be played in Pyongyang between April and May, officials have disclosed. "The North Koreans have proposed late April and early May for the match in Pyongyang," said the secretary-general of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Bolaji Ojo-Oba.

"WE are still considering the dates because we all know that between now and start of the World Cup in June, there is no other international date and so it would be difficult to get our best players."

Top sports official, Patrick Ekeji, said the North Korean proposal was good for Nigeria.

"Every country now wants to play against Nigeria," said Ekeji.

New Nigeria coach, Lars Lagerback, has asked for the Super Eagles to play at least four friendlies ahead of the World Cup, where they are drawn in the first round against Argentina, South Korea and Greece.

The NFF have already confirmed two test matches in London against Colombia on May 26 and Ukraine three days later.



EVERTON striker Yakubu Aiyegbeni is fouled in the area by Kamil Zayatte and Boaz Myhill of Hull City to give away a penalty during their English Premier League match at Goodison Park on Sunday.

Idahor's death shocks NFF

By David Ngobua

THE sudden demise of ex-junior international, Endurance Idahor in Sudan during a match in the Sudanese League has come to the Nigerian Football Federation as a rude shock.

This was the feeling which the Secretary General of the football federation, Dr. Bolaji Ojo-Oba expressed when the unfortunate incident was conveyed to him.

The former national team star was playing in a Sudanese top division league match for his Al-Merreikh Omdurman against Al Amal when he suddenly collapsed in the 13th minute after obviously being hit by an elbow and colliding with a team-mate.

NFF General Secretary, Dr. Bolaji Ojo-Oba said: "This is a very rude shock to all of us at the Football Federation. What actually happened? How did it happen?" Ojo-Oba asked.

He later disclosed efforts being made by the football federation to know all the details about the sad incident.

"We're making serious efforts to get all the details. This is an unfortunate development," he said.

Idahor, an attacking midfielder was a member of the national U-20 and U-23 teams at different periods but never made the cut to major championships. He was however doing very well in the Sudanese Premier League before his untimely death on Saturday night.

The former Dolphin FC of Port Harcourt ace becomes the latest in the unsavoury tale of Nigerian footballers who had died in action at home and abroad.

Samuel Chukwuma Okwaraji died on the turf of the National Stadium, Lagos on August 12, 1989, 13 minutes to the end of a 1990 World Cup qualifying match against Angola, and Amir Angwe died during an African Cup Winners Cup match involving Julius Berger FC and Maxaquine of Mozambique at the Onikan Stadium, Lagos in October 1995.

Ex-Eaglet John Okwara died in a training session with a club in the Middle East earlier in the decade, and former Eagles' goalie Sam Okoye and defender Charles Nduka were brought home dead from Iran and South Africa respectively.

Task Force to pay Lagerback's salary

THE six-month salaries of Super Eagles Coach, Lars Lagerback, will be paid by the Presidential Task Force (PTF), according to Chief Patrick Ekeji, the PTF Secretary.

In an email made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Ekeji said the decision to take up the responsibility of paying the coach's salary was because the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) lacked the resources to do so.

Lagerback is expected to earn

1.5 million dollars during the six-month period, starting from March.

Ekeji said the PTF would intensify efforts to get the Presidency to release the N600 million balance of the N1 billion pledged to the task force.

In addition to the salary, the PTF will also take charge of paying the 30-day hotel accommodation of Lagerback and his assistant in a five-star hotel in Abuja.

The salaries of the coach's cook, steward, security guard and

driver for the period will also be taken care of by the PTF, according to Ekeji.

A well-furnished accommodation of a three/four room detached duplex in a high-brow area of the federal capital will be provided for the Swede.

He will be provided with a car and driver.

The PTF will also be responsible for business class passage for all approved trips for the coach and his assistant.

Lagerback was named as the

Super Eagles coach on Feb. 26 by the NFF after interviewing Bruno Metsu, Ratimir Djukovic, Glen Hoddle and Sven Goran-Eriksson in Abuja. The PTF was set up in 2009 to complement the efforts of the NFF during the Eagles' campaign for the World Cup ticket, which was almost slipping away.

The decision to hire a foreign coach for the team was taken during the Africa Cup of Nations in January in Angola following Nigeria's unimpressive showing at the continental championship.

Coaches storm Abuja for NFF seminar

NIGERIAN football Coaches are bound to learn much at a two-day seminar being organized by the Nigeria Football Federation and Newage Sports Services in Abuja mid-week.

The seminar, with the theme "The Nigeria Football Coach in the 21st Century - Challenges and Prospects", will kick off on Wednesday at the FIFA Technical Centre, within the National Stadium Complex, and will be addressed by new Technical

Adviser of the Super Eagles, Mr. Lars Lagerback.

After Wednesday' opening ceremony, former NFF General Secretary, Dr. Ahmed Tijjani Yusuf will deliver a paper on "Leadership and Power - The Panacea for Effective Coaching", while Professor Lasun Emiola will speak on "Modern Scientific Methods used in Football" and Dr. Ola Olajide will lecture the audience on "Development of Sustainable Football Academies:

Problems and Prospects".

Discussants for the first day include FIFA Advisor and NFF Technical Consultant, Chief Adegboye Onigbinde, renown psychologist, Professor Philomena Bolaji Ikulayo and former Nigeria Coach James Peters.

Later on, Professor Ikulayo will talk on "Psychological Preparation for Football Competition" while Dr. E. O. Morakinyo will deliver a paper titled "Integration of Mental Skills into Everyday

Coaching in Football".

On Thursday, Chief Onigbinde, the Modakeke chief who turned 72 at the weekend, will speak on "Attributes of the 21st Century Football Coach", with Professor K. Venkateswarlu lecturing on "New Dimension in Football Leadership: Coach/Player Relationship", and Dr. Ademola Abbas of the University of Ibadan talking on "Group Dynamics in Football: Developing and Sustaining Group/Team".



IDAHOR



England batsman Matt Prior picks up some runs during day two of the tour match between Bangladesh and England in Chittagong, Bangladesh, yesterday.

Amateur League Div Two season begins March 13

THE 2010 National Amateur League Division Two season will begin on Saturday, March 13, an official of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) said yesterday in Abuja.

Emmanuel Adesanya, Secretary, National Amateur League Unit in the NFF, said that all was set for the competition to begin.

"Everything about the competition is set and we are confident that the Week One matches in the league will be played on March 13," he said.

The National Amateur League Division Two is the fourth tier of the Nigerian male football league competition.

The competition is below the Premier League, the Nigeria National League and the National Amateur League Division One respectively.

Adesanya said the fixtures for

the competition, which has eight groups (A to H) of five clubs each, are ready and had already been circulated to the clubs.

"The clubs are all ready just as we in the NFF are set. That is why we have done all the fixtures for the season so as to have a smooth competition," he said.

Two matches each have been slated for each group every match day, making a total of 16 matches involving 32 clubs every weekend.

However, eight clubs will rest on each match day as each group is to have one of its clubs drawing bye since each group has five clubs.

In Group A are Gateway Feeder FC of Abeokuta, Police Machine FC of Akure, Injectors FC of Ilorin, Afijio FC of Ilora, Oyo State, and Otunbushin FC of Ijebu-Ode, Ogun.

Group B has West-Side FC

of Ile-Ife, Dynamos FC of Ilesa, both of Osun, C.O.D. FC of Lagos, Akwa City FC of Lagos and Fenix Athletic FC of Uromi, Edo.

Group C has Akpabio FC of Calabar, Ankpa FC of Ankpa in Kogi, Ottar FC of Enugu, Polavis FC of Warri and Abia Comets FC of Umuahia.

In Group D are Go Round FC of Omoku, Rivers, St. Paul's FC of Benin, Oghara FC of Oghara in Delta, Omaka United FC of Aba, Abia, and Imo United FC of Owerri.

Group E has Tahir Babes FC and Kano United, both of Kano, Gadawur FC of Dutse, Wunti FC of Bauchi and Bakoji FC of Kaduna.

Group F has Zabgai FC of Bauchi, Boro FC of Kachia in Kaduna State, Scouters FC of Kano, Black Stars FC of Minna and Doma FC of Doma in

Gombe State.

Clubs in Group G are Nasarawa FC of Birnin-Kebbi, Arewa Pillars FC of Sokoto, Fadama FC of Birnin-Kebbi, as well as Emirate FC and Admiral FC, both of Kano.

Group H has Vet. Rovers FC of Vom, Plateau State, Gurara United FC of Kafanchan, Kaduna State, Bida Lions FC of Bida in Niger State, AMAC FC of Abuja and IMAD FC of Kaduna.

The league's first round is to end with week five matches on April 9, with the mid-season break from April 10 to April 22, while the second round begins on April 23.

The league season is scheduled to end on May 21, with the group winners qualifying for the Division One of the National Amateur League.

NBF holds trials for Youth Olympics

NIGERIA Boxing Federation (NBF) said its trials to select U-18 boxers for the Youth Olympics qualifiers in Azerbaijan in April will hold from March 11 to March 13.

NBF Secretary Patrick Uwagbale told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Lagos that the boxers would compete in eight weight categories.

Uwagbale said the selected boxers would immediately be camped in Lagos to prepare for the qualifiers.

"We are expecting a full house and only the competent boxers will be selected," he said.

The boxing federation scribe said that renovation work was in progress at the Brai Ayonote Boxing Gym, venue of the competition.

"We want to ensure that the broken floor is put in order, the boxing ring as well as general update of the environment," he said.

He added that the federation was arranging to procure equipment for the training of the boxers while in camp.

Uwagbale regretted that the championship was postponed from February to March because of lack of funds.

He disclosed that the eight boxers and four officials, who would represent the country at the qualifiers, would depart the country on April 19 for Baku, Azerbaijan, aboard KLM airline.

The tournament holds between April 20 and May 2.

Scrabble: Kia Rio up for grabs

By Orkula Shaagee

THE Nigeria Scrabble Federation yesterday said a Kia Rio car valued at N2.2 million and other prizes running into millions of Naira will be won at this year's edition of the Kwete Scrabble Open.

President of the Federation, Chief Toke Aka told Trustsports in a telephone interview that the championship will hold March 11-14.

According to Aka, the prizes were donated by the Hama Bachama of Numan, Goro Ngakye, Kuzo Vudeto, HRH Asaph Zadok.

"The first prize for the Masters Category is a brand new Hatch Back Kia Rio valued at N2.2 million, while the first prize in the Opens Category is N100,000", Aka stated.

He added that other prizes in the Opens Category will be announced by the Technical Director shortly.

He said registration for the annual event is in progress and urged those yet to do so come forward for the exercise.



GLO/CAF AWARDS COUNTDOWN

Lighting the World Cup fire in Africa

THE 2009 edition of the Glo-CAF Awards ceremony will show-case the burning pas-

sion of the African footballer to excel on the world stage as well as celebrate his natural fluidity and the rapid development of football skills on the continent.

Globacom, the telecoms giant and sponsor of the awards said the theme for this year's Glo Caf Awards, "The fire within" was chosen because it symbolises the burning passion of African footballers to excel on the world stage.

"Fire acts as a messenger and spreads quickly just like the passion for football has spread throughout Africa.

That fire is now making African footballers to excel on the world stage as symbolised by the historic victory of Ghana at the last Under-20 World Cup in Egypt", said Charles Jenarius, Globacom's Regional Director, West Africa, Marketing Communications.

"The ceremony, coming in the year of the first World Cup in Africa, symbolises the passion that has brought the World Cup to the continent.

The Glo-CAF Awards in Accra will celebrate the icons of this fire which is burning brightly within Africa and galvanise them to excel at the forthcoming World Cup and any other football tournament", he said.



Fabregas absence no excuse – Wenger

ARSENAL manager Arsene Wenger has said the absence of captain Cesc Fabregas cannot be used as an excuse by the Gunners when they face Porto in their Champions League clash tonight.

The Premier League side, 2-1 down from the first leg of their last 16 tie in Portugal, suffered a fresh setback on Monday when Spain midfielder Fabregas was ruled out with a hamstring problem.

Fabregas missed training on Monday because of a right hamstring injury that saw him limp off after scoring in the 3-1 league win over Burnley on Saturday.

It is the same injury that sidelined Fabregas at the turn of the year.

"Cesc is ruled out," Wenger told reporters at Arsenal's training ground here on Monday.

"He has a hamstring problem and we could not even take a gamble with him," the Frenchman added.

"Ideally we wanted him to be there but we want to qualify and

the absence of Cesc is no excuse at all.

"We have enough players and a strong enough squad to get round that and have enough chances to qualify."

Fabregas is Arsenal's leading scorer this season with 17 goals but Wenger said the risk of playing him against Porto was too great.

"We don't know how long he will be out. He is having a scan today (Monday). He has a small chance of getting back for next weekend against Hull, but to play him again (on Tuesday) would mean significant damage."

Arsenal, who've never been crowned champions of Europe, have plenty of injuries to contend with, aside from Fabregas's hamstring, ahead of Tuesday's match at the Emirates Stadium.

Fellow midfielder Aaron Ramsey (broken leg) will miss the rest of the season while William Gallas has a calf problem and will not return until next week.

Robin van Persie is still out with ankle ligament damage and Kieran Gibbs is also out with a broken foot.

It's almost 30 years since the Gunners, who lost the 2006 Champions League final to Barcelona, overturned a first-leg defeat in Europe, but Wenger believes veteran defender Sol Campbell's away goal in Portugal could prove vital in turning the tie around.

"We have scored away from home which is still a massive advantage, and that's why we are confident we can do it," Wenger said.

And his faith extends to misfiring Danish striker Nicklas Bendtner.

The 22-year-old failed to convert several fine chances against Burnley, a side battling to avoid relegation from English football's top flight, but Wenger reckons Bendtner could yet help guide Arsenal into the Champions League quarter-finals.

"He has good mental strength



and even if he was disappointed with the chances he missed, it will not diminish his desire and confidence going into the next game," Wenger said.

Wenger will replace Polish goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski, who gifted Porto two goals in the first

leg, with Manuel Almunia.

The Spaniard, who will also captain the side in place of Fabregas and Gallas, claims he is now back to his best after a difficult six months.

Almunia was struck down by a stomach bug in September which robbed him of his place in the Arsenal side and the 32-year-old was then told his mother-in-law had been killed in a car crash in Spain.

He has since come to terms with his grief and has volunteered to be a father-figure to any of the club's youngsters.

"At that time, I was very low, not very strong to continue, but I took my time and now I am ready again," Almunia said.

"Every person, every player has had experiences, where the next day you have to wake up and continue working, getting on with your life."

"This squad is very young, and if anybody needs help, I am here for them."



Fiorentina keeper Sebastien Frey has pinpointed the threat posed by Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben.

Frey champions Fiorentina belief

SEBASTIEN Frey hopes his assertion that team spirit can beat "great individual players" rings true when ACF Fiorentina tackle FC Bayern München in the second leg of their first knockout round tie tonight needing to overturn a 2-1 deficit.

The Viola gave a solid performance at the Fußball Arena München three weeks ago, losing to a late Miroslav Klose goal having played the final 17 minutes with ten men following Massimo Gobbi's dismissal. Should the Serie A club display the same kind of endeavour on home soil, then the French goalkeeper is confident Fiorentina will be celebrating a place in the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals.

"Bayern have great individual players but we've got a great team," Frey told UEFA.com. "And we showed that as a team, even when on paper we're supposed to be inferior, we can succeed in seemingly impossible situations. We've proved that, so we've got to try and repeat those sorts of performances, being really compact and united as a team."

Fiorentina illustrated they are more than capable of doing that, having registered five victories on the way to topping Group E, taking the famous scalps of Olympique Lyonnais and Liverpool FC en route. "The one against Liverpool, in Liverpool, is a game that people in Florence really remember," Frey continued.

Pato in Milan squad for United

ALEXANDRE Pato will play for Milan in their Champions League showdown against Manchester United on Wednesday.

Coach Leonardo included the young Brazilian after he made a full recovery from a hamstring injury. Pato has been out since the 3-1 over Atalanta on February 28 in which he sustained a problem after scoring two goals.

But he raced against time to be fit for the clash, and he is likely to start the game. Clarence Seedorf

is also back in contention.

Here is the 22-man squad list Leonardo has picked for the trip to Manchester.

Goalkeepers: Abbiati, Dida, Roma;

Defenders: Abate, Antonini, Bonera Favalli, Jankulovski, Nesta, Thiago Silva, Zambrotta.

Midfielders: Ambrosini, Beckham, Flamini, Gattuso, Pirlo, Seedorf.

Strikers: Borriello, Huntelaar, Inzaghi, Pato, Ronaldinho.

Falcao confident ahead of Arsenal clash

REIGNING Portuguese champions Porto beat Arsenal 2-1 in the first leg of their Champions League encounter and the Dragoes will do their utmost to protect their lead in the return this week. Colombian striker Falcao, who netted once in the first leg, is confident Porto are up for the challenge.

"I had the happiness of scoring the goal that gave Porto victory in the first leg, so that was a beautiful

experience in my sporting career," Falcao was quoted as saying on the official uefa website.

"Arsenal are always going to be the favourites, I think, but at this stage of the Champions League the matches are really closely contested.

"We are conscious of the team we have and of the capabilities of our squad and we have a strong desire and conviction that we can go through to the next round."

THE TUESDAY COLUMN

Sanusi Abubakar

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Post-coup Niger (1): The slain ram has risen again!

Two words best describe Niger Republic in the immediate aftermath of the February 18th coup d'état: relief and uncertainty. Relief that, with President Tandja's controversial *Tazarce* finally laid to rest, the country could now turn a new leaf.

Yet, there is also palpable uncertainty at what the future holds. Nobody can say for certain how long the army intends to hang on to the power, or what sort of political future awaits the republic.

Driving through Birni N'Goure, on my way to Niamey, the country's capital, I stopped to allow a large, peaceful procession to pass on its way to the venue of Maulud (Prophet Muhammad's birth day) celebrations and, surprisingly, all the placards and chants had nothing to do with anything religious. In addition to the bold inscription "VIVE le CSRD" (Long live the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy, the name chosen by the military junta) and the names of their political parties, CDS Rahama and ANDP Zaman Lafiya, they were all chanting "RAGO YA TASHI", or the "the ram has risen up!" This is in reference to ousted President Mamadou Tandja's remarks when asked whether there was any chance that he could reverse the steps he had taken. He told the radio reporter that slain rams don't get up, they remain slain.

Besides Tandja's core supporters, I did not come across anyone who supported his *Tazarce*, or continuation (of his regime) in Hausa, the most widely spoken language of Niger. Even after an hour's chat with his erstwhile Minister of Information, Moc-tar Kassum, just released from military detention, it was difficult to fathom why Tandja decided on that course. Their claims that the rural areas supported the tenure elongation and constitutional changes were not easy to establish since I only conducted interviews in the two largest cities, Niamey and Maradi.

Journalists are supposed to arrive at a given situation with an open, objective mind. I admit not living up to this standard. I got to Niamey with some prejudice and vivid imaginings. Plus plenty of contradictions. *Tazarce* was not something I support, and I thought Tandja should have bowed out after the ten years allowed. I also thought some countries must have encouraged the coupists, and that coups are, somehow, passé and should be condemned. But, as Samuel Johnson said, "The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are." However, after a week's sojourn, I left convinced that what we were faced with was a result of greed, refusal to compromise, crass incompetence and

political opportunism. For most of Africa, greed and incompetence is nothing new; we live with them all the time, and actually face the danger of not being able, in future, to imagine anything better. As for compromise, our politicians are learning that if they are to maintain this unjust edifice they erected, to continue milking their countries, they should learn to tamper their intransigence.

This recent coup in Niger did not come as a surprise, not even to Tandja. Clearly, he had it coming. Niger was like a pregnant woman, waiting to deliver something, either normally or through caesarean assistance. It was just a question of time. The complaint that it was mainly soldiers from Tillabery and Dosso that carried out the putsch is an admission of miscalculations. If Tandja, a former soldier himself, knew that the military

is dominated by people from the "other" side, why take the chance of doing something as absurd, and as divisive, as extending his tenure and changing the constitution to enable him stay on indefinitely? Why this African malaise of deluding oneself that one is irreplaceable? For anyone to think that they must continue in power after their time is done is to admit failure; failure to build the people and the institutions that will be left behind to carry on. This "*Tazarce*" nonsense in Niger, as in Nigeria, is an admission that we have failed to build future leaders and lasting parties and institutions. South Africa's ANC has no such fear because it is a genuine political party. So Mandela and Mbeki could come and go, Zuma would be there for some time, to be replaced by when the time comes. Tandja seemed so power drunk, that even when ECOWAS mediators offered him a chance to remain as President, and simply expand his

regime to accommodate members of the opposition, and to even contest again in future. He somehow refused to see the opening being offered. The opposition politicians had their faults also. They were the first to ignore the Constitutional Court when it said they (the politicians) had no power to unilaterally increase their fat take-home pay and already too-juicy allowances, astronomically. They continued to pay themselves unrealistic sums. Later, they wanted Tandja to listen to the same Court.

So the politicians messed up. What else is new? The new strong man, Squadron-Leader Salou Djibo, heads a new government under a Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy. And if you, the reader, are uncomfortable with soldiers coming in to restore democracy, I assure you that you are not alone.

“Nobody can say for certain how long the army intends to hang on to the power, or what sort of political future awaits the republic”



A.K. Goukoye, one of the Niger coup leaders

SPORTS REPORT



VICTOR Moses

Moses may dump England for Eagles

Wigan Athletic youngster Victor Moses is on the verge of answering a call-up from Nigeria for the 2010 World Cup, after being snubbed by England Under-21 boss Stuart Pearce, according to The Mirror.

The U-21 gaffer stuck with his old favourites last week, and Moses is consequently believed to be frustrated

with his situation in the youth set-up.

Although the 19-year-old has displayed the kind of potential that has prompted critics to speak highly of him, the lure of playing in South Africa is believed to be proving harder to resist following the snub from Pearce.

Moses can claim allegiance to the land of his birth, Nigeria, since he has only represented England at youth levels.



MICHAEL Eneramo

Eneramo fires to top of goals chart

Nigeria international striker Michael Eneramo has shot to the top of the goals' chart in Tunisia with 12 goals after he scored in his club's top-of-the-table 3-1 victory away at CS Sfaxien at the weekend.

Eneramo, who was dropped at the last minute from the Nigeria final squad to the recent Africa Cup of Nations in Angola, found target for champions Esperance after 25 minutes in Sunday's league cracker against closest rivals Sfaxien.

He has thus toppled Ahmed Akaichi of Etoile du Sahel, who has netted 11 goals.

The former Lobi Stars of Makurdi striker, 24, was the goal king in Tunisia last season with 22 goals.

This season, Esperance again lead the standings with 42 points from 18 matches, four points clear of second-placed Sfaxien.