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VOL. 13 NO. 22 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006 MUHARRAM 16, 1427 A. H. N80

The Man of the Moment
The Great Reformer

2007

Kyan Tafiya
Dawowa



Courtesy: Dr. Haruna Usman Mashegu

COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006

(21 - 25 March)

35 DAYS TO GO

ALL PERSONS WILL BE FINGERPRINTED TO ENSURE
NOBODY IS COUNTED MORE THAN ONCE



Courtesy: National Population Commission

ORJI KALU
for
PRESIDENT
2007
For Generational Change

Phone bills may go up

There may soon be an increase in the tariff charged for telephone calls in the country as a result of multiple taxes charged telecommunications operators by government at different tiers and their agencies.

The chairman of the CDMA Forum, an association of companies using CDMA telecommunications technology in Nigeria and executive director of the Multi-links Telecommunications Limited, Mr. Ezekiel Fatoye, who gave the warning while speaking with *Daily Trust* in Abuja yesterday, said telecomm companies in the country are faced with tax challenges from various tiers of government and agencies.

The most recent of such tax, Fatoye said, is the tower and mast taxes introduced by some state governments and the Nigerian Civil Aviation

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

Authority (NCAA). He said in the case of Lagos state, already a law was passed but not yet implemented which proposed that every tower and mast in the state should attract N1500 per metre a year and each dish on the tower will attract N60,000 per annum, depending on the height of the tower.

He said the Lagos state government has pioneered such tax, and was followed by the NCAA which said that for each tower, the companies must pay N500,000 per annum.

He said just last week, the Federal Capital Territory Administration intended to impose the same charges on towers and masts ranging between one and three million naira per annum.

Cont. on Pg. 2



Prof. Ali Mazrui (left) with Emir of Kazaure, Alhaji Najib Hussein Adamu at the 30th anniversary lecture in honour of late General Murtala Muhammed in Kano... yesterday.
Pic: Musa Umar Kazaure.

I was approached for 3rd term

House of Representatives member, Hon. Uche Onyeagucha, has disclosed that he was approached by canvassers to support the third term campaign for President Obasanjo.

In an exclusive chat with *Daily Trust*, Hon. Onyeagucha representing Owerri federal constituency, said he was also aware of other legislators "who have been approached and have succumbed to the inducements."

By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor

"I would like to say that if every other legislator has been denying that he has been approached by the third term crusaders, you can now go to the market, go to the street and say you know of a legislator who has been approached."

The lawmaker however refused to mention names of those whom he alleged approached him.

"I will leave that for another day because the battle is still a long one."

He also refused to divulge further details of how he was approached and the amount he was offered.

"I was approached to support the third term and I turned it down. That is all I can say. I turned it down vigorously with all the strength and vigour I could muster. Details of that would be left for the battle in Phillipi," he said.

Also, attempts to get Hon. Onyeagucha to mention names of other legislators approached with a similar demand met a brickwall.

"I am a lawyer and I know that confession is only used against the man who has made the confession. So I'm only talking about myself for now."

"I will wait for others who have the courage to talk for themselves. But quote me, I have been approached and I turned it down and I know of so many who have been approached and they accepted."

"Very close friends of mine across the length and breadth of this country who have accepted to support it from the North-West, North-Central, South-South, North-

East and every other place," he said.

The legislator described groups such as Northern Members Forum and the Northern Senators Forum as insincere, adding that such groups are "peopled by hypocrites who say one thing in public and do something else

in secret."

Onyeagucha said he cannot trust state governors not to renege on their commitment to constitutionality.

Similarly, he mentioned his lack of faith in the public hearings on the amendment of the constitution, stressing that it will be a charade and a

— Rep

waste of funds.

"I do not have any faith in the public hearings because I attended one before becoming a legislator."

Cont. on Pg. 2

...It's invitation to violence - Gov Kalu

Abia state governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, has internationalised his opposition against President Obasanjo's third term agenda, declaring yesterday in Abuja that any attempt to amend the 1999 constitution to provide for tenure extension would be an invitation to trouble.

He spoke with reporters shortly on arrival from the United States where according to his Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr. Chuka Odom, he met with Secretary of State, Ms. Condolezza Rice, Chairman and members of the Senate Committee on African Affairs as well as members of the Commonwealth Office in London.

He said the 1999 consti-

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
Special Correspondent

tution should be left the way it is until 2007 when a new government can begin the process of amendment.

"To me there is nothing

wrong with the 1999 constitution. Anybody trying to amend it is just trying to look for trouble because the 1999 constitution is very clear. The problem is with the people running the constitution.

"The only thing that can be amended in the constitution is to give the South-East one extra state so that every

Cont. on Pg. 2

Three bodies found in Kaduna river

Three decomposed bodies were yesterday discovered in Kaduna after being washed ashore by the River Kaduna along the Western bye-pass expressway.

The bodies were all mutilated with vital parts missing, leading to suspicious that the deceased were victims of ritual killings.

Two of the discovered bodies under the bridge on River Kaduna had their heads severed and were in a high state of decomposition while

From AbdulRaheem Aodu,
Correspondent (Kaduna)

the third body had the eyes and other vital organs missing. It is uncertain where they were killed or when they were dumped into the river, but eye witnesses believe they were victims of ritual killers and might have been dumped into the river before being washed ashore.

Efforts to speak with the divisional police officer at

Cont. on Pg. 2

2007
Sal Kuyi Insha Allah!

Courtesy: Verima Solidarity Association

News

Rep Cont. from pg. 1

Between 1999 and 2003, Senator Ike Nwachukwu was in-charge of the committee that toured the South-East on this same issue.

He further decried the rush with which the Mantu committee is undertaking the constitutional amendment, maintaining that it was part of the plan to manipulate the process and introduce the third term plot.

"The Mantu committee was not set up yesterday. That committee was set up at the inception of this Assembly in 2003. So, if they genuinely and honestly wanted to amend the constitution, they could have done that in 2004 or 2005.

"But because there is a hidden agenda in the whole project, that is why it is coming up now," he said.

Kalu Cont. from pg. 1

zone will have six states but we can leave it till after 2007. But we want every member of this nation to take a political note of it. This is the kind of issues people are supposed to be discussing and not the issue of tenure.

"Obasanjo has done his best and he should allow our generation to continue. There might be policy continuation but there has to be human-to-human transition. I am saying that eight years for the executive is over and we should do person-to-person transition. Whatever my party likes to do, I want to assure you there will be human-to-human transition unless they want to cause trouble because here is not Togo; it is not".

He stated that Nigeria's transition in 2007 was very crucial to both the nation and the international community, stressing "that will be our turning point. This is why it is very essential for everybody to be very careful with what we are going to do because if we are not, it may mar or make the country.

"I want all my colleagues and all people who love democracy to allow this turning point fast so that we will be a

democratic country".

Reacting to a question on whether or not there is vacancy in Aso Rock, Kalu said, "Well, what I want to do is contest an election. There is vacancy because by that time, we would have done eight years and it will be time-bound and constitutionally limit-bound. Even if any other person wants to contest, I will put my box there."

"It is a matter of choice. Nigerian people must make a choice. I want to assure you nobody will rig the election again; it will cause a lot of uproar in this country. My generation will not take it.

"It is about generational change. We are not going to take it any longer that anybody will come and mortgage our future. It will not happen again in this country".

The decision of governors to support constitutional amendment with the aim of pushing through tenure extension, he said, will amount to challenging God.

"We have a covenant with God and the people of Nigeria and we must keep to that covenant. These people must respect the covenant with God and the covenant with the people".

Three bodies Cont. from pg. 1

Rigasa and Kakuri divisional police headquarters proved abortive.

Kaduna state police command public relations officer, Sa'ad Yahaya, was also not forthcoming as he refused to pick his calls when *Daily Trust* rang his mobile phones to seek confirmation.

However, a police detective, Mr. Afolabi Adeyemi, said the police received a radio call from the state police headquarters yesterday directing them to visit the scene where the decomposed bodies were found.

"When we came here, we saw the two headless bodies partially washed on the rock, so we moved them out of the river. They must have been dead for at least a month considering the state of decomposition.

"We also learnt that another fresh body was found and removed from the Rigasa end of the river," he added.

Most residents spoken to by *Daily trust* believe this is just one out of the numerous evil acts that are perpetrated along that expressroad particularly between Abuja junction and Bakin Ruwa.

"I came here to see if it is my brother Sylvester Kantyok that was found. He left home and boarded a cab from Abuja Junction to Kawo since Sunday (yesterday), we are yet to see or hear from him," Baba,

an elderly man told *Daily Trust*.

"Yesterday night at about 9pm, I was on my way from Nasarawa to Bakin Ruwa, on my return, I found a corpse by the side of the road. I saw some cement blocks around him but since it was late I sped off," Sadiq Abdulmalik, a commercial motor-cycle operator at Nasarawa said.

Phone Cont. from pg. 1

He said in other countries, the call tariffs are less compared to Nigeria, saying that high cost of doing business coupled with the multiple taxes has become the primary factors that will make Nigerians pay more on calls in future if care is not taken.

Fatoye said the fear is that every state government or even local governments will use this opportunity to introduce the same taxes in their own locality which at the end of the day, will become a huge burden on the operators.

He said the problem has started moving to community levels, "where in Lagos, some area boys have started threatening Globacom to pay up to N2 million for their mast"

He said the operators have since presented their case to government for possible intervention in order to curtail the situation.

He said in order to stop the problem, there must be a



From left: Former Minister of Information, Prince Tony Momoh, Chairman House Committee on Media and Publicity, Hon. Abike Dabiri and Deputy Chairman, Hon. Abdulazeez King during the training workshop for journalists on positive reportage held in Abuja... yesterday.

Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Ban on Hisbah: Kano sues FG

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

The Kano state government has instituted a suit at the Supreme Court against the federal government challenging the recent ban of the *Hisbah* Board law alleged to maintain peace, order and good governance in Kano state.

The action is coming on the heels of the recent press briefing by the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero where he characterised the activities of the *Bakkasi* boys in Abia

state and *Hisbah* in Kano as illegal and contravenes the 1999 constitution.

The police boss announced that he intends to clamp down massively on both outfits.

He urged the two respective governments to respect the provisions of the constitution and immediately disband the two illegal outfits or be faced with arrest and prosecution.

The Kano state government filing its document through the Attorney General's office, in its writ of summons to the Attorney General of the Federation, is asking the apex court to make a declaration that the *Hisbah* which has an enabling law in Kano state, was legally made by the state House of Assembly, dully assented to by the governor and is legal, lawful and constitutional.

The state is also asking for a declaration that the group was established to keep peace, order and good government in the state so its laws are valid, lawful, legal and constitutional.

The government also sought a declaration that the *Hisbah* was made, in accordance with the powers

vested in the state's House of Assembly by the provisions of section 4[6] and 7 of the 1999 constitution and was assented to by the governor of the state in accordance with the constitution.

They also want the court to declare that the federal government and all its agents have no powers nor authority to declare as unconstitutional, the *Hisbah* law without a court order or pronouncement to that effect and so the *Hisbah* law remains valid, extant and operative until it has been otherwise declared by a court.

Kano state is asking for an order restraining all agents of the federal government, especially the police, from disturbing, stopping, disrupting or in any manner whatsoever, stopping the implementation of the *Hisbah*.

They are also praying the court to restrain the police from arresting, harassing or intimidating any person who is lawfully executing the laws of *Hisbah* and also an order stopping the arrest and prosecution of any of the officials of the state carrying out the *Hisbah* law.

In their statement of claims, the Kano state government averred that in 2003, they had laid down a

bill before the state Assembly to enact as law, the activities of *Hisbah* and that after adherence to the constitution, they had passed it and sent it to the governor for his assent which he did on November 7, 2003.

The plaintiff alleged that sometime in 2005, the president wrote a letter to them expressing his concern over the activities of the *Hisbah* to which the governor replied him to allay his fears.

They denied allegations that the *Hisbah* had sought foreign assistance from Libya and Iran to train as a terrorist group which he described as a calculated attempt to bring friction between them and the federal government.



Governor Shekarau

News

Bird flu: Fear grips Plateau

***FG sets up c'tee**

***PAN criticises N250 per chicken**

Fear has gripped residents of Plateau state over the discovery of the deadly bird flu in the state as many have now abandoned the consumption of chicken and other poultry products.

Many people who hitherto consumed chicken disclosed that they have stopped the habit for fear of being infected by the bird flu virus.

A housewife, Mrs. Aisha Aliyu, asserted that, "for me and my family, no more

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Jos, Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina, Nasir Imam & Joe Oroye, Abuja.

chicken and eggs till further notice."

Also, Mr. Danjuma Musa, a businessman said it is better for him to avoid eating chicken than contracting the disease, adding "after all, there are alternatives to chicken. Why must I put my life at risk just because I want to eat chicken? No way."

Poultry farmers and

others in the poultry business are worse hit by this sudden change in attitude.

At the chicken market in Jos, a trader lamented that people are now afraid to come close to them, not to mention buying the birds.

However, the Plateau state Committee on Bird Flu set up by Governor Joshua Dariye, last week following the discovery of the deadly virus in the state, assured the public that they have nothing to fear.

Chairman of the committee, Dr. Elvis Chinke, who said control measures have been put in place, assured that the committee will continue to monitor progress until the disease is

controlled.

Dr. Chinko urged poultry farmers and the public to continue to take interim measures to check the spread of the virus.

Such measures, he said, include the use of protective clothing such as hand gloves, washing of hands and other parts which come in contact with birds or poultry and proper disposal of burnt birds and feathers.

Meanwhile, the Poultry Association of Nigeria, Katsina state chapter, has kicked against the N250 compensation the federal government set it will pay poultry farmers for each bird infected with bird flu.

Speaking through their chairman shortly after the association's meeting in Katsina, Alhaji Kabir Faskari, said an average layer sells for N1,300 and appealed to the federal government to increase the compensation.

However, the federal government will today inaugurate a public enlightenment

committee on the recent outbreak of avian influenza in some parts of the country.

A statement from the office of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, signed by his Chief Press Secretary, B. O. Ajakaiye, said the minister approved the constitution of the committee which has Mr. C. K. Alabi, Director, Production, Publication and Documentation in the Federal Ministry of Information as chairman.

The statement said the committee's mandate is to design and implement an effective nationwide publicity campaign that will enlighten the general public on all issues relating to the disease.

Other members of the committee include representatives of the Federal Ministries of Health, Finance, the National Planning Commission and the National Orientation Agency (NOA).

Others include representatives of the Nigeria

Television Authority (NTA), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Daily Trust and ThisDay newspapers.

President Obasanjo commended the World Bank for its assistance in the fight against bird flu in some parts of the country.

Receiving a delegation of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank at the presidential villa yesterday, the president said as soon as the report of the outbreak was received, it immediately swung into action by setting up well-equipped laboratories to serve Nigeria and the sub-region in checking the spread of the disease.

President Obasanjo also commended IFC's involvement in the country's economy and assured the new IFC's executive vice president of the administration's commitment to uphold accountability and transparency in its reform programmes.

FG grants tax relief to 24 companies

The federal government has presented pioneer status certificates to 24 companies that qualified as pioneer services and or products in the country.

With the presentation of the certificates, beneficiary

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

companies stand to enjoy tax relief of five years maximum.

The companies include; Karflex Fisheries Limited, British American Tobacco Agronomy Limited, Multi-Links Telecommunications, Dana Pharmaceutical Limited, MINL Limited, Benue Brewery and Champion brewery.

Others are West African Portland Cement Plc, African Steel Mills, Sara Foods Limited, Amioun Steel Limited, Zenith Construction, Integrated Dairy Farm, Bel Impex, Glass Force Limited, Pentacles Nigerian limited and Glass Force Limited.

Also, Prime Nigerian Wood Products Company, Superior Metal Manufacturing Company, Dufil Prima Foods Limited, Sunflag Steel Nig. Limited, Haruna Holistic Welfare services Nig., Rainbownet Limited, Sun and Sand Industries Limited are among the beneficiaries.

Presenting the certificates yesterday, the executive secretary of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Mr. Mustafa Bello, said the decision is part of the effort to build confidence through closer interaction with existing investors.

He said the pioneer status is one of the key incentives to stimulate and encourage investors to expand their businesses.

He explained that the incentive is derived from Nigeria's industrial policy which seeks to promote and encourage activities that government believes would lead to a Nigeria that is fully industrialized.

In 2004, the federal executive council had approved pioneer status to companies in the information and communication technology, tourism, real estate development and utility services. The present number of companies enjoying pioneer status in the country is now 69.

Responding, some of the representatives of recipient companies said the gesture will go a long way to attract more investment in to the country and urged the federal government to do more to provide a conducive environment for business in the country.

Senate'll defend the constitution

—Nnamani

By Habeeb I. Pindiga

Senate President, Senator Ken Nnamani, yesterday in Abuja said the upper chamber will defend the constitution and democratic tenets in "matters of grave national importance."

He spoke while declaring open a one-day capacity building workshop for National Analysis and Research Project (NARP) in conjunction with the House of Representatives Committee on Media and Public Affairs.

"I can confidently state that in matters of grave national importance, Nigerians believe that this Senate will stand firm on the side of the law, on the side of the constitution and democratic governance," Nnamani said.

Represented at the event by senate's spokesman, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba, the senate president said the legislature and the press are watchdogs of democracy.

He vowed that the senate will do its own part to defend the system and sought collaboration with the media to achieve this.

"It is clearly evident that the press and the legislature play important roles to protect the rights of the citizens in the republic and consolidate good governance. The second estate of the realm plays its role through formal procedures while the fourth estate impacts on the state by informal procedures.

"Whereas the power exercised by the legislature is official; that of the press is unofficial. But, notwithstanding the defence, a better collaboration is required of the estates if democracy will flourish," he added.

Those who presented papers at yesterday's event include former Minister of Information and Culture, Prince Tony Momoh and consummate journalist, Dr. Reuben Abati of the Guardian.



R-L: Chris Duggon, the Canadian High Commissioner, Imam Muhammad N. Ashafa and Dr. Umar Turgay of McGill University, at the interaction session on Religious Pluralism: The Canadian experience, organised by Muslim/Christian Dialogue Forum, held in Kaduna ...recently. Pix: Shehu K. Goro.

2007: APGA, AD in alliance talks on consensus candidate

National chairman of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Chief Chekwes Okorie, said yesterday that the party has opened alliance talks with the Alliance for Democracy (AD), for the 2007 general elections.

Speaking with Daily Trust on phone from Enugu, Okorie said the talks have reached an advanced stage and that

By Sufuyan Ojeifo (Special Correspondent)

a three-man committee forum of APGA met with a three-man committee of the AD. The APGA team was led by Chief Benji Auru while former Ekiti state governor, Chief Niyi Adebayo led the AD team.

He said a draft memorandum of understanding,

containing the views of both parties on the alliance is being harmonised.

Okorie said they expect two or three more parties to be part of the alliance before the agreement could be signed, pointing out that, "we were looking at the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), until they had this leadership problem. Even, if they did not have problems,

we did not trust the national chairman, Chief Don Etiebet.

"But once the leadership problem is resolved, particularly now that they have resolved to sort themselves out at their National Executive Committee (NEC), meeting on March 30, this year, it is a party that we will like to consider going into alliance with".

He listed other parties being considered for the alliance to include the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD), which is seeking registration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"But we also understand that the same personalities in the MRDD are the ones in the Action Congress of Democrats (ACD). Maybe, it is the ACD that we will be talking with", he added.

Okorie explained that the desire of APGA to produce a presidential candidate in 2007 "remains sacrosanct and that is why we are not into merger but alliance; we will present our presidential candidate and others will present theirs, and we will meet in the field," he said.

Nigeria lacks charismatic leader —Mazrui

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Kano

The world renowned professor of history, Dr. Ali Mazrui, has observed that Nigeria has been less productive of charismatic national leadership than most other post-colonial countries in Africa.

"On the contrary, this flamboyant country has had a genius for producing a disproportional number of dignified but self-efficient chief executive (with the possible exception of Murtala Mohammed and Ibrahim Babangida)," he told the gathering of Nigerian leaders and international scholars in Kano yesterday.

Professor Mazrui, who was the guest speaker at the 30th memorial anniversary of late General Murtala Mohammed, noted that the prominent leadership in Africa are mobilization and reconciliatory. The former, he said, the leaders aspire to arouse the masses and stimulate popular enthusiasms. In the later, leaders seek to build bridges by contending forces and conflicting interest.

To some extent, he said, Murtala Mohammed was probably a mobilization leader but fell short of being a

charismatic figure because a fusion had not yet been achieved between personality and situation, probably also due to his short tenure as a leader.

The erudite scholar noted with dismay that the most persistent of all social and political pathologies of Africa as a whole is corruption, adding that some African countries suffer from law and order problems while others suffer from acute proneness to militarization with the armed forces constantly intervening in civilian politics.

News

Don't go on strike, Obasanjo tells policemen

President Olusegun Obasanjo has called on officers and men of the Nigerian Police not to embark on their proposed strike, reminding them the ethics of their profession.

He made the statement during a meeting held with senior officers of the Nigeria Police at the Banquet hall of the Presidential villa yesterday in Abuja.

Senior Special Assistant to President Obasanjo on Media and publicity, Mrs. Oluremi Oyo, who briefed journalists on the outcome of

By Joe Oroye, State House

the meeting said president Obasanjo was vehemently against the proposed strike by the Nigeria police.

She said President Obasanjo reminded the officers who attended the meeting that the Nigeria Police Force is a para-military organisation and therefore its members must adhere strictly to the ethics of their profession.

"Going on any form of strike, the president stated

will not give the Nigeria Police a good image," Mrs. Oyo



Mr. Sunday Ehindero, IGP

said. According to the president, a Non-performing police cannot be good for the nation's social-economic and political development and advised top hierarchy of the force to pay special attention to recruitment, training, provisions of equipment, attitude and job orientation.

The President thereafter directed the Inspector-general of police to set up a committee that will take a holistic look at Nigeria Police force.

In addition, the

Presidential spokesperson said, President Obasanjo is considering the establishment of a high-powered personnel which will look at the administration of justice in the country.

The panel she said will complement what the Nigeria Police reform committee will

do, adding that the President is emphatic about what his government will do to improve the performance of the Nigeria Police.

On corruption, President Obasanjo said the Nigeria Police must work hard to ensure that they rid the police of all forms of corruption.

Bird flue can kill millions in a short time -Health Minister

*US pledges \$25m

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Senior Reporter

Should the Avian Influenza (Bird flu) virus finds its way in human beings, it could kill between 50 to 150 million people within a short period of time, the minister of health, Professor Eytayo Lambo has said.

Disclosing this yesterday in Abuja while addressing a world press conference on the reported isolation of the highly pathogenic strain of the H5N1 bird flu virus in some poultry stocks in Nigeria, the minister noted that experts on epidemiology and disease control has pointed out that the virus has the potential of claiming more lives than other diseases.

He said it is in view of the destructive tendencies of the avian flu virus that government is doing everything possible to mitigate its impact on the population and the economy of the country.

The minister disclosed that government, on confirming the outbreak of the virus last week in Jaji, Kaduna state and other parts of the country embarked on a number of activities to strengthen its position in the health sector to fight the virus and to most, especially prevent bird to human transmission of the virus.

Some of these activities, he maintained include among other things the institution of active surveillance system among the people living around affected areas as well as investigating reported or rumoured cases. Introduction of quarantine measures, and preparation for the isolation of infected person, revision of the action plan for the Avian Influenza Emergency preparedness and Response with emphasis on the retirement of the costing of the planned interventions in the various stages, mobilising partners for

effective response and coordination and sending team of health experts to assess the situation and provide technical support and advice as some of the government's activities in the wake of the outbreak of the virus.

The minister, who said government has started getting positive response from Development Partners in the war against the avian influenza, said the United States country team, led by the deputy chief of mission, Thomas Farey has announced the commitment of the US government to provide a grant of 25 million dollar to help the country address the bird flu problem.

Partners, her said have sent in health experts to support in active surveillance and effective diagnosis of the virus, adding that WHO has promised to provide drugs for treatment as well as the provision of personal protective equipment units.

"Our major areas of immediate needs include the supply of relevant drugs, such as Tami flu, the strengthening of laboratories for effective diagnosis and confirmatory tests, social mobilisation and community awareness, capacity building for health personnel, effective epidemiological surveillance, supply of personal protection equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks, gown etc. and provision of other technical and logistics supports," Prof. Lambo stated.

He directed healthcare facilities in the country that come across symptoms like fever, running nose, pain in the throat, difficulty in breath, eye and muscle pains to report to the federal ministry of health through any of the following telephone lines; 080-31133345, 080-37006849, 080-33585484 and 09-6726132 for appropriate action.

Dariye revelation: MRDD, Afenifere wants PDP account probed

Chairman of the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD), Alhaji Gambo Jimeta has called on the federal government to set up a judicial panel of inquiry to look into the financial accounts of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

This call is coming against the backdrop of revelations by Governor Joshua Dariye who said he donated part of the ecological fund of the state to the PDP.

The MRDD call coincides with similar plea by the Ayo-Fasanmi-led faction of the Pan-Yoruba cultural organisation, Afenifere, which said it is imperative to "look into the books of the PDP."

According to the Inspector-General of Police, the PDP collects N140 million monthly source that should be probed.

"I support what some people said in the South West (Afenifere). Between the federal government, the EFCC, Dariye and PDP, we are yet to know who is telling the truth. "I'm suggesting that a high powered

By Emmanuel Bello, Political Editor

judicial inquiry be established under a judge of the Supreme Court where the EFCC, Dariye himself, PDP, and the presidency will come and give evidence," he alleged, adding that source of PDP funding dubious, "the PDP is heavily funded. Where do they get the money from? What business do they get? And who is contributing to that fund?"

"It should be transparent, they are duty bound to make public their statements of

account at the end of each year. They have to show where the money is coming from and for what," Gambo said.

According to him, the PDP may be using public funds to run its elections "we are told they collect N140 million monthly. Where does such money come from? The public wants to know how the PDP run such huge party machinery.

"Is their money coming from the contributions of governors, businessmen and the presidency? If it is from the governors, where did they get it? If it is from the Presidency,

where did it get it from, if not from the public funds? We want to know."

Governor Dariye, in a dramatic revelation last week had said that he shared the N1.6 billion ecological fund with the PDP.

According to Dariye, he gave the PDP southwest a sum of N100 million; PDP South, N100 million; PDP directives N66 million and Plateau PDP received N800 million.

Although the PDP had since responded to Dariye's allegation, Afenifere, last week called for a judicial probe into the issue.

World Bank grants Nigeria N6.5 billion to fight Bird flu

The World Bank has set aside a total of \$500,000 (about N6.5 billion) to help Nigeria tackle the deadly Avian Flu scourge.

Country director of the

By Anas A. Galadima, Ass. Business Editor

bank in Nigeria, Mr. Hafez Ghanem told newsmen in Abuja yesterday where he said the funds which are

provided on a zero interest rate will help Nigeria quickly contain the disease to avoid further spread.

He observed that "world bank has set up a special fund to support countries which are affected by the Avian flue.

"Therefore the moment we heard that the avian flue had reached Nigeria, we immediately got approval from our senior management to support Nigeria to the tune of around \$50 million dollars", he said.

He said the bank is currently working with the ministry of agriculture and ministry of health as well as other partners in an effort to control the spread of the deadly disease.

He said the funds have been made available because time is very important in fighting a scourge like the avian flue.

He observed that the funds being provided carry a 0% interest rate with 0.75 percent service charge as well as a 10 year grace period after which the country will begin to pay back over a period of 35 years.

He said between 2005 and 2006 the World Bank's procedures and we will move as fast as is needed to support the country we are really heartened to see that the Nigerian authorities have moved so fast, which is what ought to happen. And we as your partners we will move as fast as possible."

The avian flue which was first discovered in Kaduna state has been reported to have spread to other states namely Taraba, Kano, Plateau and Lagos states amongst others.

IFC grants N52 billion loan facility to Nigerian coys

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the business arm of the World Bank, has granted a total of \$400million (N52billion) in loan facilities to various companies in the country to enable them expand their operations.

Executive Vice President of the Corporation, Mr. Lars Thunel made this known during a press conference yesterday in Abuja to mark the end of his working visit to Nigeria, where he said the corporation also intends to provide more funding to the tune of \$100million (about N13billion), to investors in the country, to enable them further expand their operations, within the next six months.

He said some of the beneficiaries of the funds include DBA, MTN Nigeria and Obajana Cement Company in Kogi state amongst others, pointing out that the corporation is currently holding talks with some other investors in power and petrochemical sectors of the economy with a view to extending such facilities to them.

He said DBA got a total of \$75million (about N9.7billion) for onward lending as long term credits to people who want to build their own houses but do not have access to the capital to do so.

By Anas A. Galadima, Ass. Business Editor

Obajana Cement, a subsidiary of Dangote Industries Limited, also got the same amount of money to facilitate the construction of the factory which he described as the largest cement project in Africa. The amount, he said, represents less than 10 percent of the money need for the project.

The corporation is currently holding talks with Geometrics Power Project Limited, Aba, which is private sector initiative to build a power plant in the city, Thunel said, adding that IFC was also providing the company with technical assistance on the project.

Mr Andrew Alli, IFC's Country manager in Nigeria noted that the facilities are provided as loans and not donations, pointing out that it operates purely as a commercial entity and the interest rates are not revealed.

"We don't disclose our interest rates because it's a confidential agreement between us and our clients. I think what you will find is that IFC behaves like a commercial entity so our lending is done on commercial terms. We are not to subsidise finance and we are definitely not a donor agency", he said.

Mr. Thunel said the government needs to do more to fight corruption and entrench transparency in the public sector, just as he emphasized the need for the government to ensure quick clearing of cargo in the nation's ports.

According to him, it takes about 71 signatures to clear goods in the nation's ports as against about two or three required in most European countries.

He said the process of starting a business in Nigeria is very cumbersome, with Nigeria ranking as the 105 in position, in terms of the ease at which businesses can be started across countries of the world.

He said his visit to the country has been "a very good trip, and the discussions with government was very positive"



Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Minister Finance

News Focus

Bird flu: Counting economic and social costs in Maiduguri

Although a preponderance of poultry production in Maiduguri is the so called backyard poultry farming which are usually small-scale, veterinary experts say there is a high consumption rate of poultry products which is now seriously threatened by the outbreak of bird flu in some parts of the country, as fear for dear life makes people alter their food consumption habits.

There are no confirmed cases of bird flu in Maiduguri yet, even though in many parts of the town, such as the Damboa road area where a lot of local poultry farming takes place and Shagari low cost housing estate, there have been cases of several numbers of chickens dying from unconfirmed diseases since December last year. Our correspondent learnt that in one case at the Shagari low cost area, about 143 chickens died within 48 hours last December, only for people nearby to collect the dead chickens thrown away at a refuse heap to cook for food.

Nonetheless, there is a general air of apprehension and a lot of public comment over the bird flu outbreak, even if some people tend to brush aside the threat posed by the disease as merely one of those 'many diseases that once in a while afflict chickens'.

Daily Trust checks in markets and places where poultry is sold in Maiduguri yesterday shows that the 'market' for poultry products has gone down by over fifty percent, as consumers turn to alternative sources of meat and protein in the Borno state capital.

The chairman of the Poultry Sellers Association at the Tashan Baga market, Alhaji Uba Ciyaman, told our correspondent that less people go to buy chicken and other poultry products, since news filtered in about the outbreak of bird flu in Kaduna and Kano states.

Describing the situation as economically bad for

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (North East)

people engaged in the poultry business, Alhaji Uba Ciyaman explained that young people who have found job selling chicken on the road side may now be thrown out of business, because those who sell up to 100 chickens per day, for instance, now sell less than 20 pieces. "These young people are complaining of the low sales situation. But we are asking them to be patient until there is light at the end of the tunnel. The situation for now is bad even though we have no cases of dead chickens or birds that are sick as a result of this newly reported disease. But since the problem comes through God's decree, we are praying that it will soon go away", he said.

Our correspondent learnt that some poultry sellers around the Monday market area have also been chafing under reports of outbreak of the avian flu, complaining that their business has been put under a lot of strain when, in fact, in their view "there is nothing much to worry about". These people, erroneously it seems, maintained that the disease is simply hyped to achieve an effect, but that they have seen nothing in years of engaging in the business to generate any alarm.

Daily Trust's checks at some restaurants within Maiduguri metropolis also showed that the number of people who order for chicken or even eggs on their menus has gone down, compared with recent weeks before the reports of bird flu outbreak.

On the other hand, it appears to be 'bumper harvest' for fish and meat sellers in Maiduguri, whom the consumption equilibrium now seems to favour. Although Maiduguri has been an international market for fish for a long time, local demand for fish has gone up in the last



few days since the bird flu outbreak, resulting in increased prices for different specie of fish.

Mohammed Nura, a businessman who enjoys eating fish and buys it on a regular basis, told Daily Trust that the price of fish has jerked up considerably, as dealers cashed in on the growing demand in the last few days. "I used to buy four pieces of average sized fish for N350. Yesterday, I had to buy that same quantity for N830 after a lot of bargaining. That's more than fifty percent increase in the price", he said.

Already, the receding waters of the Lake Chad from where almost all the fish sold in Maiduguri markets is found, has so affected the quantity of fish available for sale that experts fear a drastic fish shortage overtime, unless efforts to recharge the Lake Chad through water transfer from East Africa is given added impetus.

The federal government, Daily Trust learnt, has released some money for the execution of feasibility studies regarding the water transfer, but multilateral initiatives at addressing the issue comprehensively and ensuring that the idea becomes a reality are largely stillborn.

Speaking to Daily Trust, the head of the department of veterinary medicine in the University of Maiduguri, Dr Nuhu Adamu, said it is to be expected that the climate of fear over a catastrophic disease outbreak as avian flu would naturally affect people in the poultry business, who depend on daily sells to cater for their family needs, including the payment of their children's school fees.

The University don, however, observed that the economic cost of bird flu outbreak would be comparatively low in places like Maiduguri, where poultry production is, for the most part, not large scale. Even at that, he added, a lot of caution is needed on the part of the community and the government to ensure that the disease does not spread due to negligence.

Dr Adamu explained that because people in the Borno state capital normally leave poultry and other birds to grow in a free-range manner in the environment, a bird flu outbreak would be very difficult to control.

"Poultry production here is largely very rural in nature with small numbers of poultry and other birds spread in several households in the neighbourhood. If there is a disease outbreak, it will be

very easy for it to spread since the poultry freely moves around the neighborhood", he said.

The poultry expert added that once people begin to notice something unusual about the health of their chickens or about any respiratory illnesses affecting people, they should report to the nearest health centers or veterinary clinics for immediate medical attention.

"People should report any unusual clinical signs of diseases in poultry and other birds. Indeed, both people in the community and the government need to be extra cautious because there are birds who may not even show the clinical signs of the disease but still may be carrying it and spreading it in their droppings", he explained.

Speaking about the future of poultry production in the country, following the outbreak of bird flu and the public reaction that followed, the head of veterinary medicine at the University of Maiduguri noted that the killing of thousands of infected birds across states where bird flu is reported would lead to a depletion in poultry stocks, which would take time to replenish, thereby leading to increases in product prices and even the cost of production. "It takes roughly 19 to 20 weeks to raise a day old chick to the level where it would begin to lay eggs itself. That space created might lead to increases in prices as the demand situation stabilizes", he said.

The university don also noted that since the cardinal people usually at risk in the

event of an outbreak of the avian flu are farmers, rural dwellers and animal health workers, who always come in to try to contain the situation, the government needs to provide adequate protection for them through the supply of veterinary drugs and vaccines, among others, as well as ensuring quarantine in places where the outbreaks have been reported.

Dr Adamu also advised veterinary doctors and animal health workers not to treat any reported bird diseases perfunctorily but to ensure thorough checks and analyses in order to understand the problem and what needs to be done to tackle it.

As the government, with the support of international organisations, pushes on with efforts to contain bird flu in the country, it seems that the disease would need to be fought on the medical as well as the social front, in view of the cultural and economic factors which seem to limit people's understanding of the harm that bird flu can inflict and their willingness to jettison age-old habits about dealing with birds.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as MARTINA INYA, now wish to be called MRS. MARTINA OGENYI. All former documents remain valid.

"People should report any unusual clinical signs of diseases in poultry and other birds. Indeed, both people in the community and the government need to be extra cautious because there are birds who may not even show the clinical signs of the disease but still may be carrying it and spreading it in their droppings", he explained.

News

Wilmot to return to ABU

Eighteen years after the Ibrahim Babangida's administration bundled him out of the country back to Britain on allegations of being an agent of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Professor Patrick Wilmot has agreed to take up fresh appointment with the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, as a visiting professor.

The controversial university don who first joined the services of the Ahmadu Bello University in 1971 until March 1988 when he was deported to London after unbroken service of seventeen years, obliged to the request extended to him by the Council of the university through the Vice Chancellor, Professor Shehu Usman Abdullahi, to come back to the institution as a lecturer.

Professor Wilmot who confirmed this to *Daily Trust* in an exclusive interview after his second lecture on "the role of the African intellect," in the university yesterday, regretted that the university, despite its past record of academic excellence and popularity, lacks equipments such as computers and vibrant intellectuals to face

From Waziri Isa Gwantu,
Correspondent (Zaria)

the challenges of the 21st century of Nigeria.

"With the appointment, the university is offering me as a visiting lecturer, I will be coming to the university from time to time to give lectures to both lecturers and students. I also intend to help the ABU acquire modern tools of academic development such as books and the rest," he stated.

Earlier in his lecture on "the role of the African intellectual," Professor Wilmot described the intellectual as a person who evolves to lead, to show the people the way, to guide them toward physical, psychological and moral objectives. The word intellectual is the one so advanced that his ideas have relevance across physical and spiritual borders.

He said Africa is so endowed with all manners of intellectuals who have excelled in different disciplines in the world and have contributed to the development of Europe and the Western world, but unfortunately, the continent is not respected and recognized and its contributions not appreciated

by Western imperialists today. "The imperialists," he said, "do not see anything good in Africa. To them, Africa is no historical part of the world it is a continent that is pathetically dependent on European guidance.

"Incredibly, some African intellectuals accept this European conceptions of their continent and its people and advice their leaders to become even more pathetically dependent on Europe and America," he lamented.

Professor Wilmot noted that "through the betrayal of their continent and its people, these intellectuals justify their imperialist masters in a self-fulfilling prophesy. The continent which produced the first state system in Nubia and Egypt and revolutionary social theorists such as Ibn Khaldun and Amilcar Cabral, is reduced to a disaster area permanently in need of famine relief."

Professor Wilmot however pointed out that Africa is the richest continent, the one with least natural disasters, reduced to penury by men, who cause more havoc than hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes and monsoons. "That Africa is in constant need of aid therefore, is an indictment of those who

misrule it. And the hypocrisy of seeking foreign investment is belied by the stolen money invested in Europe and America," he noted.

He urged African intellectuals to develop social and political theories to recapture the leadership of the world once dominated by black people. They must devise measures to block, from leadership, the class of corrupt incompetence who have destroyed African peoples and institutions over the past half century.

He charged African leaders to learn from the examples of China, India and other victims of imperialism on how to restore their country to a position where they control their social, political and economic destinies. "These leaders must think in terms of their nations and continents, not glorify regional, ethnic and religious warlords, thieves and degenerates," he added.

Wilmot lamented that although African leaders are the worst time keepers in the world, they wear the most expensive watches, festooned with diamonds and other precious stones. "A governor of one of Nigeria's oil rich states, with probably the highest proportion of poor people in the country, boasted of possessing a three million dollar watch, of which only three exist in the world, one owned by the Sultan of Brunei," he lamented further.

Hisba is victim of Obasanjo's 3rd term - NBA

From Sani Babadoko,
in Kaduna

One-time chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Kaduna State, Barrister Aliyu Umar, has said political considerations were behind the federal government's attempts to ban the *Hisba* corps in Kano State.

He told *Daily Trust* in Kaduna at the weekend that the federal government is not comfortable with the anti-third term agenda of the Kano state governor, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau which is why both the Inspector-General of Police and the Minister of Information came out to discredit the *Hisba*, the *Shari'a* enforcement corps.

Aliyu said section 11 of the 1999 constitution provides that state Assemblies should make laws for public order and good governance which is what the Kano State Assembly did and is being implemented by the governor.

"The law and the *Hisba* corps has been in Kano state for over two years. Zamfara has a similar outfit for the past six years and nobody said anything, so why now?" Aliyu wondered.

He said even if the *Shari'a* law or *Hisba* formation was against the federal law, it was not for the federal government to declare it illegal but the Supreme Court.

Aliyu said the allegation by the federal government that the *Hisba* was being trained for Islamic Jihad was untenable and ridiculous even if somebody has written seeking assistance on its behalf.

He said nothing stops the *Hisba* from seeking foreign assistance just as other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been asking and receiving foreign assistance.

"The mention of Abia by the federal government is incidental but we all know that both Abia and Kano state governments are against Obasanjo's third term bid.

"Shekarau is right to insist that the *Hisba* corps is a legal entity and unless and until the Kano State House of Assembly repeal that law or it is set aside by the Supreme Court, the corps remains," Aliyu added.

Cartoon: Ulama ask FG to sever ties with Denmark

From Isa Umar Gusau,
Correspondent (Damaturu)

Religious leaders in Yobe state have joined others across the world to protest against the recent blasphemous cartoon published in Denmark and Norway, asking the federal government to cut off bilateral relations with Denmark and Norway in the interest of peace and harmony.

This position was taken through a communiqué issued yesterday after a joint meeting of the Yobe state Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamic organisations, Chief Imams of Juma'at and state mosques, security, among others, over the blasphemous cartoon which caricatured the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The communiqué signed by the Chief Imam of Damaturu, Sheikh Muhammad Shettima Ibrahim, among others, after a meeting presided over by the Yobe state Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Ustaz Hudu Mohammed, condemned the blasphemy in strong terms and called on Muslims in the state to boycott all products made by Denmark and Norway and urged the federal government to sever ties with the two countries.

"The meeting unanimously condemned the recent satire published by the Danish magazine depicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a terrorist." Consequently, the meeting resolved "that a letter be written to Mr. President through the state governor of Yobe, calling on the President to extend our annoyance to the Danish and Norwegian embassies, that the federal government should boycott all bilateral relations with Denmark and Norway."

The communiqué, which described the act as unfortunate, said the cartoon was capable of threatening world peace and security, but however, called on Muslims in

Yobe state to exercise restraint in reflecting their disapproval in order to avoid acts that will breach public peace and security, stating that Islam is a peaceful religion that accommodates all persons provided such people do not contravene the principles of Islam.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Ustaz Hudu Mohammed, had said that the blasphemous publications were aimed at provoking Muslims across the world so as to label them as terrorists.

He noted that enemies of Islam, many of whom are in the Western world, will continue to do things that will provoke Muslims so as to tarnish their image.

"The relevance of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to every Muslim is beyond emphasis, and will remain as said, and whoever ridicules the Prophet is liable to being killed in accordance with Islamic injunctions," Hudu added.

He noted that even if the blasphemous cartoonists defy being killed, they will never live in peace as various calamities will befall them.



Sultan Maccido



The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero briefing the journalists on the meeting with President Obasanjo with senior officers held at the State House, Abuja ...yesterday
Pic: Joe Oroye

Obasanjo uses South to blackmail North - Afenifere

North - Afenifere

From Samson Ojo,
Correspondent (Lagos)

term agenda.

According to him, last year's Southern Leaders Forum sponsored by the Enugu state governor, Chimaroke Nnamani, was not actually a Southern Leaders Forum but a "Presidency agenda with a mandate given to Nnamani to ensure that the Presidency should stay in the South after 2007."

He revealed that the Enugu meeting convened by the governor of Enugu State, Nnamani, was sponsored by the Presidency with N150 million and be-

cause Nnamani failed to comply with the directive given to him, the "EFCC were dispersed to Enugu to start investigating him."

The *Afenifere* declined to participate in the meeting because, "we knew that it was a third-term forum not a Southern Leaders Forum. It was a Southern third-term forum and when you saw the ubiquitous presence of Aneni, Femi Fani-Kayode and others, it was clear who actually sponsored the meeting."

Explaining the sudden decision of Governor Chimaroke of Enugu to support President

Obasanjo's third-term bid against his earlier position, Odumekhin stated that "it was a way of getting the EFCC off his back."

Asked whether or not he believes that President Obasanjo is actually behind the North-South dichotomy, the *Afenifere* scribe said, "the President is a military man, a strategist on Machiavellianism that uses the act of deception to get what he wants."

He added, "of course, if he is not promoting this thing and using the strategies, barely ten months to the next general elections, the President has not spoken on whether or not he is going for the third term, but all the body language have shown that he wants to stay."

Afenifere, the Yoruba social political organisation, has accused President Olusegun Obasanjo of using the South to blackmail the North in order to surreptitiously achieve the ambition of extending his term in office beyond 2007.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust* at the weekend, the *Afenifere* national publicity secretary, Yinka Odumakin, alleged that President Obasanjo was behind the North-South dichotomy, by planting his supporters in the South-South Leaders Forum as well as the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), in a bid to heighten the political tension that will enable him to easily implement a third

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

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Seven docked over exportation of Radioactive materials

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

Seven suspects have been arraigned before a federal high court for allegedly exporting some radioactive materials [depleted isotopes] disguised and misdeclared as 'mould return' from Nigeria to the United Kingdom without proper authorization from the government.

The suspects who are standing trial on an eight count charge could not take their plea as four of the accused persons were absent in court and the matter had to be adjourned pending their appearance.

The suspects include Onwugbuta Kingsley, Greenwich Maritime Agencies Nigeria Limited; a company; Okey Omodu, Sunday Ubaniocha, SGS Inspection Service LTD, Gerald Van Aswegen and Bert Ramsden.

The charge sheet made available to Daily Trust revealed that the first accused person, Onwugbuta Kingsley, who resides at No 16, Railway close, D/line, Port Harcourt, Greenwich Maritime Agencies situated at the same address, Okey Omodu and the other four accused persons, on November 29, 2004, at Lagos, conspired to commit felony to wit: exportation of some Radioactive materials [depleted isotopes] disguised and misdeclared as 'mould return' from Nigeria to the United Kingdom and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 516 of the criminal code Act and punishable under the same Act.

Count 2 states that the accused persons had exported the said materials without pre-shipment inspection as provided for

under the terms and conditions of the Export Licence by the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority and so committed an offence contrary to sections 21 [5], 41 and 42 of the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Act which is punishable under section 45[1] [a&b]& [3] of the same Act.

Count 3 states that the

Bert Ramsden, had transferred security responsibility of radioactive materials to the first accused without valid authorization / license which is in violation of terms and conditions of the export license by the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority [NNRA].

Count 5 stated that the seven accused persons had handled the materials without authorization from

Lagos airport which is in violation of the IAEA regulation for safe transport of materials while count 8 alleged that they had disguised the materials so as to avoid payments of some customs charges.

At the proceedings before Justice Steven Adah of the federal high court, the 6th and 7th accused persons were absent as they are foreigners and have since returned to their various

allow those suspects who were absent to return and face trial and also enable the prosecution to amend the charge sheet since those who were in court might have their names removed.

Counsel to the three accused persons in court, Mr. Sikiru Oke, had moved a motion for the bail of the suspects adding that they have been in police custody since their arrest.

But the application was



Men of the Nigerian Police Force out to combat crime in the FCT... recently

suspects had conspired, handled and transported Radioactive Materials from Port Harcourt to Lagos in violation of section 77 [I & j] of Nigeria Basic Ionizing Radiation Regulatory 2003 [NIBBR] without valid authority by the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority and thereby committed an offence.

Count 4 alleged that Gerald Van Aswegen and

NNRA. Count 6 said that they had exported the items through Murtala Mohammed International Airport which is in violation of the terms and conditions of the export license by the NNRA.

Count 7 alleged that the seven accused persons had conspired and repackaged the radioactive materials at NAHCO warehouse, at the

countries. The Director of Public Prosecution, (DPP) Salihu Aliyu, had urged the court to prevail on the three suspects before the court to take their plea, adding that since the others were foreigners, they might not return to stand trial.

Counsel to the 5th accused, Mr. Abiodun Owonikoko, asked the court for an adjournment to

opposed by the counsel to the federal government, Salihu Aliyu, who said that the offences for which the accused persons are being arraigned are grievous ones and that they carry a minimum sentence of 7 years.

Justice Steven Adah adjourned the case to March 6, to enable the foreigners who are alleged to have left the country to come back

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



A cross section of vandals of NEPA high tension cables detained in Kuje Prison, paraded before newsmen during the management of NEPA tour of their facility in Abuja ...recently. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Suspected assassin throws weapon into river to avoid arrest

The communal strife between the Biara community and their neighbours at B Dere village, has assumed a new dimension, as suspected assassins allegedly hired by the B. Dere people to kill some members of the other community were arrested by the police at Kpor division in the Gokana local government area of Rivers state.

One of the arrested suspects identified as Uche Gbarata of Bera community, threw his locally made pistol into the river, immediately he discovered that the police had closed in on him. The police said the suspect was trying to destroy evidence against him, but could not succeed as one live cartridge was recovered from him.

The police in Port Harcourt said the other two arrested suspects are Baritudo Chani of Mogho community and Baraila Viko of Bomu community, all in the Gokana local government area.

The police public relations officer in the state, DSP Ireju Barasua, in a statement said the state criminal investigation department is conducting a thorough investigation as to

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani,
Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt

the mission of the suspected assassins and kidnapers in Biara community.

The two communities of Biara and B. Dere have been having a running battle over the ownership of farmlands in some parts of the area, leading to attacks and kidnappings on both sides of the conflict.

In another development, the police have recovered 12 locally made single double barrel guns from suspected members of a cult group in Port Harcourt. The recovery followed the arrest of four suspected members of the group. A statement from the police in Port Harcourt said the suspects arrested are Sunny Bekanwa, Suana Ikeh, Daniel Ipoaka and Nwibara Menebe.

The arrested cultists allegedly threatened the life of a member of the public, who is also alleged to have been involved in cult related activities.

The police are still investigating the matter and would soon charge them for illegal possession of firearms and cult related activities.

Two jailed for vandalising NNPC pipeline

An Abuja chief magistrate yesterday sentenced two men to two years imprisonment each with an option of N3,000 fine for the charges of criminal conspiracy, vandalism of NNPC pipeline and illegal dealing in petroleum products.

According to the presiding magistrate, Usman Ahmad, the convicts Ozichukwu Okonkwo and Joshua Patrick, all of no definite address, were found

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi

guilty under section 97 of the penal code and section 7 subsections A and B of the Miscellaneous Offences Act, Cap 410 laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Narrating to the court how the convicts were arrested by the police, the prosecuting police officer,

Assistant Superintendent of Police, ASP Joseph Onuh, said the vandals were arrested at midnight in Abaji area council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja by Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Manager Fergus, a unit commander attached to the Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC/NNPC),

Federal Task Force on Vandalisation.

The convicts, according to the prosecution, were also caught with 50 litres jerry cans at the scene of the crime.

The prosecutor added that when the two suspects were interrogated at the police station, they could not give any reasonable account of how they came about the tools they were caught with at the pipeline sites.

The suspects who were not represented by any counsel, pleaded guilty to the charges and asked the court to temper justice with mercy.

The prosecution urged the court to try them summarily under section 157 subsection 1 of the criminal procedure code (CPC).

The presiding chief magistrate sentenced the accused to two years imprisonment each or in the alternative, pay an option of N3,000 fine.

Police man kills one at wedding

A police man has shot dead one Malam Suleiman Sale and injured one other in Farin Haki village of Dutsi local government area of Katsina state. The police officer was alleged to have disagreed with festive villagers while trying to abort a wedding in the late hours of the night.

Daily Trust investigations revealed that a five man police patrol team led by one Sergeant Baffa Ma'aji, were on patrol duty when they heard drumming inside the village and headed in that direction only to discover it was a wedding occasion. They ordered them to stop as it was illegal and contrary to the Shari'a legal system enforced in the area moroso at the night hours of the day.

The source informed Daily Trust that the landlord then apologised to the police and tipped them with some money at which point the police team left only to surface and ask for an additional sum which later led

From Lawal Ibrahim,
Katsina

to a disagreement between the people and the police, subsequently a corporal fired a shot which killed the deceased and injured one Idris Suleiman.

However, when contacted, the police public relations officer, SP Adamu Yusuf, confirmed the shooting of late Malam Suleiman Sale but disputed that inadequate money given to the officers was a reason for their behaviour but according to him, the investigation is yet to confirm. He however lamented the unethical conduct of the police officer.

The police spokesman said the shooting was occasioned by a disagreement arising from the village resistance to allow the police pick their ring leaders who were drumming in the late hours of the midnight.

He also disclosed that the investigation is yet to confirm who actually fired the

gun between Sergeant Baffa Ma'aji and Corporal Adamu Garba, as the only two officers in the team with live ammunition. He however confirmed the arrest and detention of both officers, pending the conclusion of the police investigations over the matter. The officers are however claiming protection under Force Order 237 bordering on self defence.

Pastor's driver disappears with car

A pastor of one of the new generation churches in Port Harcourt is searching for his driver and his car, after the driver who was sent on an errand has not been seen.

Rev. Ala Ibinibo who has reported the matter to the police, said he is worried about the whereabouts of his driver who disappeared with his Peugeot 306 car since February 2.

The blue car has

registration number Rivers DD871 PHC, engine number PSA046423220 and Chassis number VF37Bk6D833055487. The driver's name was given as Nwaigwe of Igbodo village in Etche local government of Rivers state.

The police have called on members of the public with relevant information on the whereabouts of the driver and the car to report to the nearest police station.

POLICE COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Seven students arrested for possessing Indian hemp

Seven senior secondary school students in Delta State have been arrested for allegedly possessing a substance sus-

pected to be Indian hemp. The arrest was made at the weekend at St. Michael's College, Oleh, in Igoko South council area.

A source in the school told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the suspects had used the substance to cook their meal of beans porridge.

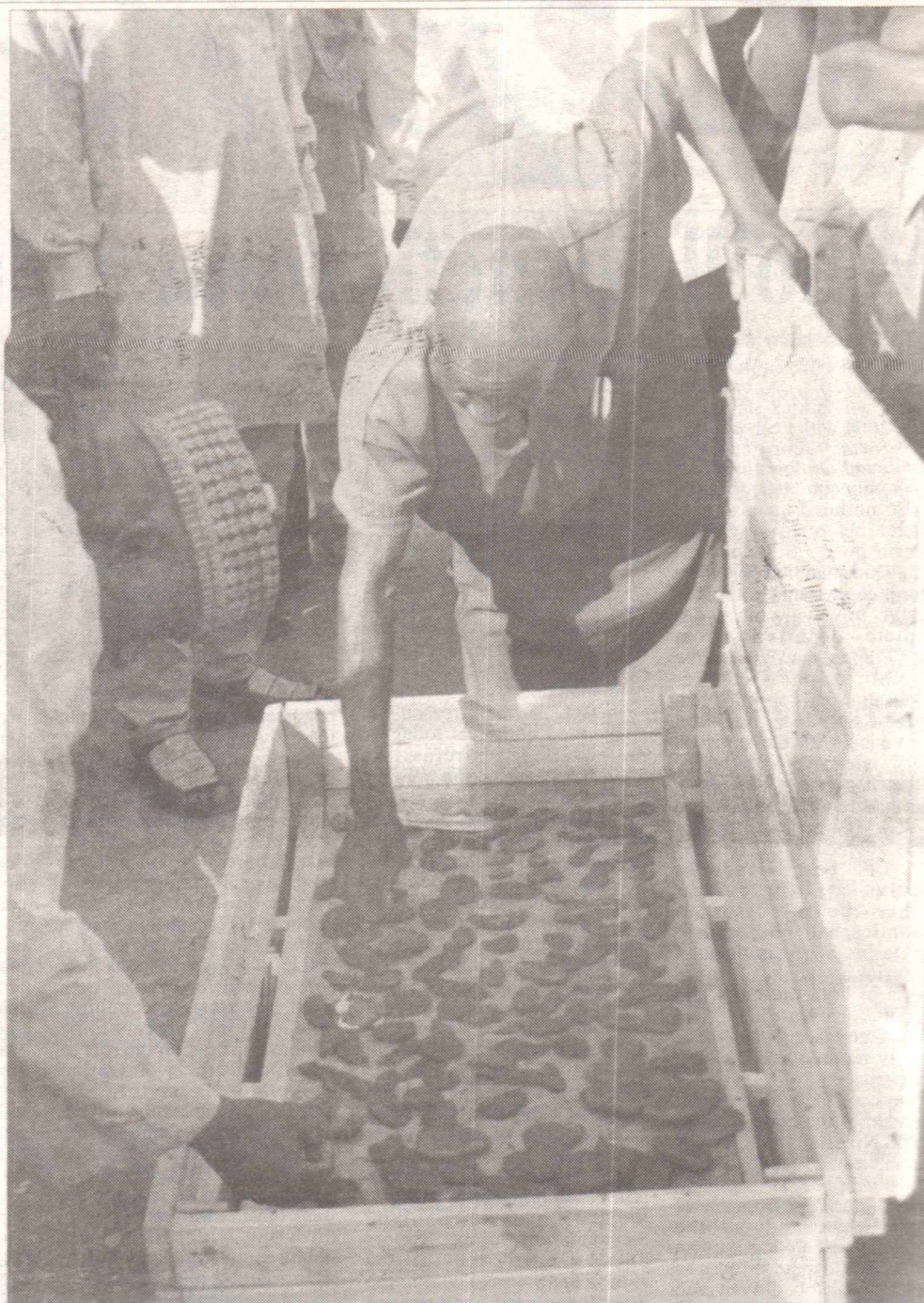
The source said the students, numbering more than 10, carried out the act under a tree in a bush behind the school during labour period.

The boys had earlier stolen a fowl belonging to the vice-principal after gathering beans and other condiments for the porridge, the source said.

The suspects were rounded up when some other students who perceived the aroma of the boiling porridge alerted the school authorities and the police.

The source added that the other suspects escaped but seven were nabbed and some quantity of the suspected Indian hemp recovered from them.

The Divisional Police Officer in charge of Oleh, Mr Michael Akhigbe, confirmed the incident, saying it was being investigated.



An alleged dealer on human parts right, caught by the police at Piwoyi ...recently

Man bags 60 days for stealing motorcycle

One Sale Sani of Durumi village in Abuja was yesterday sentenced to 60 days in prison by an Abuja Chief Magistrate for stealing a motorcycle.

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

was, however, arrested while fleeing on the motorcycle after he had an accident with the same motorcycle.

The prosecutor, Corporal Amiko Obed, told the court that the police received the report of a stolen motorcycle at Utako 'B' Division from one Mohammed who said that his motorcycle (Jincheng motorcycle), worth N60,000 was snatched by the accused person and one other who is presently at large. He added that the accused

The accused person (Sale Sani), pleaded guilty to the charges and was summarily tried by the court under section 107 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC).

While giving judgement in the case, Magistrate Akani Idayat, warned the accused from such acts as she sentenced him without an option of fine.

Police to pay N500,000 for unlawful detention

The Nigeria Police Force has been ordered to pay N500,000 as exemplary damages for the unlawful arrest and detention of the National Publicity Secretary of the Afenifere, Mr. Yinka Odumakin.

Adelanwa Bamigboye, in Lagos

complainant for the unlawful arrest and detention.

In her ruling, Justice Yetunde Idowu also ordered that the Lagos State Commissioner of Police should tender a letter of apology to the

"I hold that the arrest and detention was not in accordance with the law," Justice Idowu said.

According to her, the plaintiff was not informed about the allegation that warranted his arrest and deten-

tion hence he is entitled to an apology and compensation from the appropriate authorities.

The court held that fundamental human rights formed the live wire of the constitution of any country, adding that because it is the supreme law of the land, it must be guarded and must not be toyed with by government or its agents.

Child slavery syndicate discovered in Jos

A syndicate that specialises in child slavery has been discovered in Plateau State.

From Rakiya A. Muhammed, in Jos

this while on a tour of Plateau North Senatorial district.

The traditional ruler of Jos, Gbong Gwom Jos, Dr. Victor Pam (DIG retired), disclosed

The royal father said the syndicate was discovered in Beromland, warned people against engaging in such acts.

He called on people of the state to ensure they are counted in the forthcoming National Census while urging the district heads under his domain to mobilise their subjects for the exercise.

Dr. Victor Pam urged the youths to always be united and follow appropriate channels in achieving anything

the area where youths who were aggrieved over the activity of the National Electric Supply Company (NESCO), did not follow appropriate channel in presenting their grievances.

Teh royal father stressed the need for unity of purpose and obedience to constituted authorities at all times.

Chairman of Barkin Ladi local government, Mr. Moses Gwom Shill, who received the traditional ruler, described his visit as a very laudable initiative.

According to the council chairman, such initiative would keep the people close to their traditional institutions

Family wants victim's body exhumed

The family of late 23-year-old commercial motorcycle operator, Peter Ede, allegedly shot dead by a Naval officer late last year, wants the Lagos State government to exhume the body and hand it over to them for proper burial.

From Bola Oguola, in Lagos

ment should guide against a reoccurrence.

Speaking on behalf of the family yesterday in Lagos, Mr. Nwabuike Edechime, a legal practitioner, said it was shocking to hear that the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital had buried the deceased in a mass grave without notifying the family, the police or the navy.

Edechime who alleged that the move was an attempt to cover up the murder, also called on the federal government, to as a matter of urgency, set up a judicial commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing and ensure that the naval officer is brought to book.

alleged killer is still serving in the Nigerian Navy, going about his business even though the naval authorities have convened a court-martial to try the accused person.

The family, he said, is demanding that the Nigerian Navy be made to pay adequate compensation to them and that the govern-

The late Peter Ede was a factory worker with the Nigerchin Company Limited, Ikeja, and a part-time student of Business Administration, Lagos State University, Ojo.

On the day he was killed, the deceased in company of a female relation, was riding his motorcycle when he was involved in a crash with the vehicle driven by



the naval officer, Mr. Femi Odulani.

The officer allegedly came out of his vehicle and shot the deceased in the mouth with his service pistol.

Enraged witnesses attempted to mob the naval officer but he was rescued by policemen



Governor Joshua Dariye

Opinion

Who'll benefit from Soludo's banking reforms

By Pilakya Vih

Nigerians have watched Professor Charles Soludo's banking reforms, which kick-started on July 4, 2004 with keen interest. The reforms were generally overdue and Dr Joseph Sanusi had not only commenced them, but also nurtured them to near revolution before Charles Soludo came on board. Soludo's 13-point agenda handled down to a Committee of Bankers on July 4, 2004, however, marked a complete departure from Sanusi's approach. Two of the 13-point emphasised recapitalisation and consolidation. Professor Soludo rationalised his decision with the statistics of CBN's quarterly industry performance report (June 2004), which had ranked banks based on CAMELS parameters loosely adopted by the CBN as part of best practices insupervision. It is not clear whether the professor of economics had bothered to validate his analysis through comparison with Annual Reports of both the CBN and the NDIC or even did a trend analysis covering three-four quarterly reports before taking his decision.

In any case, the erudite scholar concluded to the conviction of gullible Nigerians that by his decision, he had saved 34 banks from collapse. It took an informed journalist from one of the dailies to advise the professor that banking was no judo; he should tread softly. The journalist probably did not read the mood of his employers as they soon awarded the best banker of the year to the professor. We are yet to be told which criteria they used and who the other contestants were. Between July and December 2004, Soludo's thesis, which initially appeared as policy proposal, soon became law to the extent that whosoever dared to sound contrary to it, no matter how informed, became an instant enemy to be crushed. Public commentators and leading bankers, including the Chartered Institute of Bankers' suggestion that banking institutions should be categorised into Mega, Medium and Small met with stiff opposition from the CBN, which is also believed to have influenced the National Assembly to scuttle the proposal. As a consequence, operators in the industry had to swallow the bitter pills, more so,

when the fangs of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were handy tools to intimidate those considered recalcitrant. Matters were made worse when business decisions leading to properly packaged credits that had had to develop delinquency due to the prostrate economy had to be elevated to a criminal conduct notwithstanding that most of such loans were explained to have been used in executing government contracts that were held unpaid.

In fact, the main reason for abandoned contracts today is the government's refusal to honour its side of the bargain despite what probably went in to win such contracts. This attitude has even affected its (government) liability on pension commitment to retired civil servants who had served the country meritoriously. Thank God for the third term budget that has sufficiently emphasised the need to pay arrears of pension and local contractors. It is our hope that the unfortunate bankers would not have died in EFCC detention camps before the budgeted sums are released to contractors to pay their commercial debts.

At the time of Soludo's reforms, information available at the CBN vide its Banking Supervision Annual Report 2004 tended to suggest significant improvement in the overall industry performance over 2002/2003 indicators. For instance, banks' capitalisation averaged 14% as against the threshold of 10% of risk weighted assets. Deposit was at its peak with an even spread of over N25 billion for the first 60 banks out of about 90 in the system. Relatedly, loan growth was high, though with correspondingly high delinquency rate, which can be explained away from the perspective of the state of the economy.

Soludo stated, as one of the reasons for the reforms, that the level of capitalisation was inadequate to support development and when compared with South Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia and Egypt, Nigeria could not stand any global competition. The thesis sounded interesting, but

economically illogical in that it failed to properly disclose to the government the other imperatives for a functional banking system. In the same vein, Charles Soludo's thesis failed to inform the government that a good number of banks held loanable funds (deposits) in excess of N25 billion if the threshold was the antidote to lending problem. In any case, if he was convinced that the real lending source (deposit as opposed to capital) was low, as a central banker and adviser to the government, he was duty-bound to find out what has persistently accounted for the low deposit base in the economy and whether such factors are within the control of bankers. Solutions to the above posers would definitely have given the professor the bases to predicate his reforms on sustainable premises. Dr Ayo Teriba, one of the most celebrated economists in Nigeria today, has consistently posited that low savings that constitute core deposit for lending stem from the prostrate economy. Soludo's thesis appears to be criminally silent on the role of government in incentivising economic growth, by articulating policies that will not only encourage saving culture in Nigerians but to ensure its longer tenor. On the contrary, Soludo has tended to usurp the weak Finance Minister's role by directing which banks the public sector funds should go to or floating poorly designed higher naira denomination, with the cost of campaign for the public acceptance in excess of its original production cost despite the growing need for cheque system and e-banking as mitigants against financial crimes and money laundering activities.

Being that as it may, the reality of the Nigerian business environment is that:

*The economy is shallow with harsh policies that are inimical to business growth and initiatives such as frequent recourse to monetary policies as tool for economic planning, hacking down business premises, over-regulation or politicisation of business policy.

*High operating risk, with minimum mitigants, like high cost of transportation, absence of security, inadequate basic infrastructure and high energy cost.

*Conflicting policies, for instance, while fiscal policies are contractionary, monetary policies tend to move in direct opposite direction.

*Lack of accountability at all levels of governance with antiquated laws that have become business unfriendly while multiple taxes, community levies and ransom levies hold sway.

*A legion of inelegant National Assembly members whose knowledge of oversight functions regarding business support rules is suspect.

*A political leadership that alienates itself from the generality of the public, thus, rendering information difficult to get out, among others.

In such an environment, no banking reforms, no matter how well-intentioned, will achieve the desired effect. Besides that, Soludo's approach of consolidation and capitalisation as opposed to enabling environment, efficacy of management and the institution of best practices based on the rule of law has already spelt doom to the industry. Wrong management can deplete any amount of capital accumulation while good management can add value to any size of shareholders' fund.

Part of the regime's reform was to eliminate small banks, which he referred to as family banks. In the end, he has made such banks not only to become bigger but also with firmer same family grip. In fact, he has even added a first generation/public bank to the list of family banks (UBA Plc). Family practices will now be elevated as standard banking practices, thus, rendering the institution of good corporate governance difficult. Already, mundane labour issues like appropriate basic academic qualifications for staff members have become major industrial problems when in fact, the precipitators of such problems themselves lack basic banking qualifications to practise banking at the level they are. In any case, state universities and polytechnics graduates are therefore the immediate victims of the reforms.

The absence of good business prospects has informed most of the so-called mega banks to begin to route for business in the neighbouring countries where the environment is much friendlier. It is debatable whether the professor would regard that

as an intended benefit of his reforms. Meanwhile, the industry has lost, at least, one third of its qualified workforce to Europe, America and other African countries as economic refugees.

Most of the small banking institutions were merchant banks just licensed as universal banks in 2000. They are at their formative stages in terms of niche focus and targets, which rendered them ill-prepared to face Soludo's challenges of capitalisation and merger. As a direct consequence, a good number of them have had to suffer hemorrhage leading to insolvency. The depositors are licking the wounds of the reforms.

Closely followed are regional banks that were established to fill the nee-gap of their respective locations due to the hesitation of established banks to make credits available. Bank of the North is one of such banks. Compelling it to merge is tantamount to denying the Northern region their economic identity, and by extension deprivation in the emerging Nigeria. In fact, it will trigger agitation for state authorisation to begin to grant licences to state banks as it is the practice in the United States.

Soludo's reforms have tended to freeze liquidity. Although media information abound on several billions that had been attracted in the country by the exercise. When related to the persistent failure of most banks, that ostensibly raised much from the market, to meet depositors' demand, we are constrained to conclude that either such deposits had been converted to shares or the much talked-about inflow was a sham. In any case, depositors whose deposits have been converted to shares, thus, precipitating illiquidity, are the immediate losers in the reform.

"Dr Ayo Teriba, one of the most celebrated economists in Nigeria today, has consistently posited that low savings that constitute core deposit for lending stem from the prostrate economy. Soludo's thesis appears to be criminally silent on the role of government in incentivising economic growth, by articulating policies that will not only encourage saving culture in Nigerians but to ensure its longer tenor."

Appraising Governor Idris of Kogi

By Abdulazeez Sani

Leadership is all about service delivery to the people. Government at all levels is expected to provide a conducive atmosphere for the citizens to carry out their individual and collective engagements. These include subsidising agricultural inputs, enhancing business practices, provision of functional and qualitative education, provision of potable drinking water, provision of good roads and provision of qualitative and

affordable healthcare service to the people.

Kogi State which was created in 1991 is one of the most complex and sophisticated states in the country often referred to as the "Confluence State." It is predominantly inhabited by the Igalas to the East, Ebiras to the South and the Okun people to the West.

The diverse nature of the state makes it one of the most difficult states to govern in the

country. For any governor to succeed, therefore, in this state, he must combine the rare qualities of Solomon, Wisdom; Socrates, Political Sagacity and the fear of God. When the present governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, popularly called "Ibro" indicated his interest in the race in the year 2002, he was never given any chance, because he was seen as the "Dark Horse" among the pack of aspirants. How he swam through the murky waters of Kogi politics against all odds to become the state's Chief Executive is now history. Since he became the governor on May 29th 2003, there is no doubting the fact that he has impacted positively on the lives of the people.

Lokoja, which was more of a glorified local government headquarters prior to the inception of the present administration, is now wearing a new look, befitting the status of a state capital. All major roads within the confluence town are being dualised to ensure free flow of traffic. Residents whose houses were earmarked for demolition to pave way for the

project were paid compensations running into millions of naira. A multi-million naira ultra-modern market is also under construction in the state capital. This will no doubt enhance the commercial activities of the people and ultimately boost their economic status.

The recurring problem of water scarcity, which has been on for years, is now being tackled holistically through the expansion of the Lokoja Water Works and the replacement of obsolete and burst pipes.

Most of the health centres in the three senatorial zones have been upgraded to full-fledged General Hospitals while more basic health centres have been constructed, all aimed at bringing quality healthcare services closer to the people. At various times, government purchased and distributed drugs and medicaments worth millions of naira, which were administered free of charge in the state.

Since electricity plays an important role in the socio-economic development of any

society, the Ibro administration has ensured that no fewer than five communities in each of the 21 local government areas were electrified and connected to the National Grid. Massive road reconstruction programme aimed at opening up the rural areas have been embarked upon. This has enabled the government to tar at least five roads in each of the three senatorial zones while others are ongoing.

In the area of education, the Ibro administration having realised the importance of education as the key to every human success, embarked upon an aggressive reform in the education sector. Every well-meaning and honest person residing in the state knows that today, no parent is asked to pay or bring a desk to school for the use of his or her child. New blocks of classrooms have been built in most of the primary and secondary schools in the state. The state polytechnic and university have received development grants to make them centres of academic excellence. This perhaps explains the

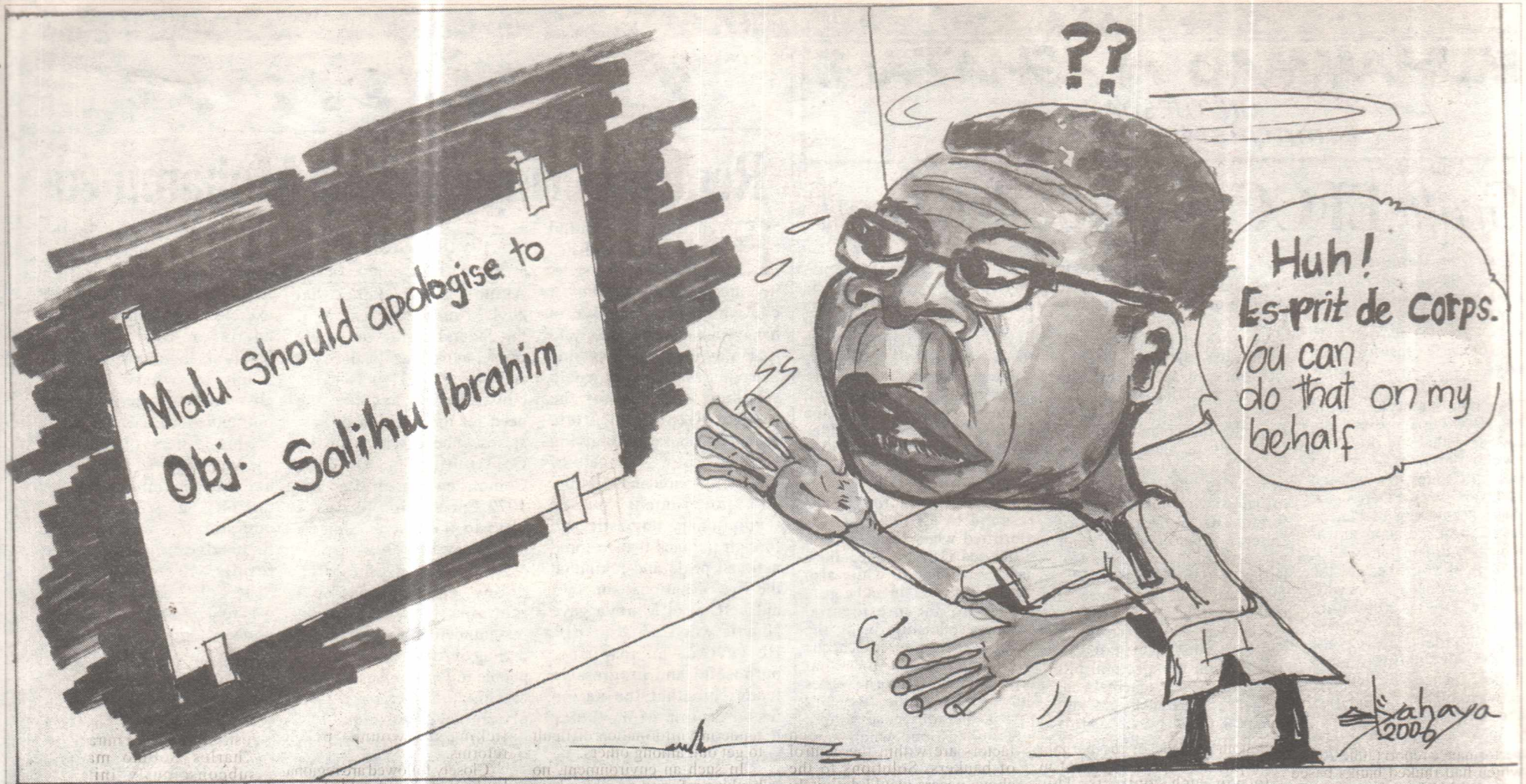
of those of the courses at the state university by the National Universities Commission.

The government has purchased hundreds of tractors while fertilisers were procured and sold to farmers at subsidised rate. These measures have gone a long way in boosting the economic capacity of the farmers through increased agricultural yields.

Particular attention has been paid to the welfare of civil servants, as they are the engine room through which government policies and programmes are actualised. Salaries are paid promptly while leave grants and other entitlements are not allowed to accumulate.

Agreed that there is still room for improvement vis-a-vis the available resources, the present administration in Kogi State under the able leadership of Idris Ibrahim deserves the commendation and support of all Kogites both at home and in the Diaspora. It will therefore not be out of place to call on all political gladiators to rally round the governor.

"The diverse nature of the state makes it one of the most difficult states to govern in the country. For any governor to succeed, therefore, in this state, he must combine the rare qualities of Solomon, Wisdom; Socrates, Political Sagacity and the fear of God. When the present governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, popularly called 'Ibro' indicated his interest in the race in the year 2002, he was never given any chance, because he was seen as the 'Dark Horse' among the pack of aspirants."



YOUR LETTERS

Nigeria's priorities are misplaced

It is pretty obvious that even foreign observers, including the Western media, cannot help chuckling away at the paradox of our domestic agenda: investing resources and lives of our soldiers to resolve conflicts in Africa while the third term agenda and the worsening state of violence in the Niger Delta are posing new challenges to the nation's very political existence.

This paradox was brilliantly captured by Lydia Polgreen, a Foreign Desk reporter of the *New York Times* (Jan. 23, 2006). She noted that while Nigeria assumes the contradictory role of being an "enforcer" and "guarantor" of democracy in Africa, the virus of dictatorship did not die automatically with the election of President Obasanjo to office in 1999. According to her, Nigeria's political crisis, which is shaking the delicate balance of the nation's unity, is not unconnected with the widespread speculation that... "Mr Obasanjo will seek to alter the constitution in order to run for a third term in office - a possibility the President has not ruled out..."

The manner the third term agenda is overshadowing domestic issues of more relevance to the quality of life of the ordinary people appears to capture the curiosity of foreign observers. While Nigeria is simmering with crises, largely created by the third term diversion of energy and silent expenditure of resources to secure the unpopular project, foreign observers wonder why Nigeria's own domestic problems could not be on the agenda at the just-concluded African Union (AU) summit in Khartoum, the Sudan, at a time Nigeria was leading the peace offensive in Darfur, Ethiopia, Chad, Congo and elsewhere in conflict zones of Africa.

In the words of the *Times* reporter, there is a direct connection between the renewed violence in the Niger Delta and the needless tension created by the desperate ambition of third term advocates. "The two crises," she said, "are not entirely separate. The political confusion has created the space for Delta militants seeking more local control over oil wealth to seize the national stage."

Since the end of the June 12 crisis of 1993, no political issue has put Nigeria on tenterhooks in recent memory like the current third term controversy.

Surely, the issue has already put Nigerians psychologically at war. In other words, the level of fear and distrust among the diverse elements that make up Nigeria's complex federation has been exacerbated to a frightening degree as a result of the dangerous third term politics, initiated by self-seeking loyalists or kitchen cabinet members of the president and his "friends" and "admirers" outside the Villa. The strategy of denial, concealment of intention and the deliberate policy of either blackmailing or breaking the political backbone of third term opponents has only added to the confusion and tension in the land.

The current Niger Delta youth violence is already taking its toll on the economy, because Nigeria is now losing 225,000 barrels of oil per day as a result of disrupted output of production. Our president, however, must be humble enough to embrace dialogue as Prof. Wole Soyinka has urged. There can be no military solution to a crisis that has political, economic and social dimension. The ailing Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Ariel Sharon, despite his

no-nonsense posture, was eventually forced to embrace dialogue by reality, because his tough language and bellicose strategies had only complicated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

President Obasanjo has to change his tack and style in dealing with the potentially-dangerous crisis in the Niger Delta and the tension unnecessarily generated by his silently burning ambition to continue in office beyond 2007. And now that he is relieved of the burden of solving African problems, he should concentrate his time and energy on dealing with domestic issues. A president

should not judge his achievements merely by the number of foreign conflicts he has solved; how successfully he deals with the domestic agenda is just as important.

He should imbibe the lesson of former President George Bush, Sr of the United States, who was decisively defeated by Bill Clinton in 1992. Despite his arguments that he liberated Kuwait from the grip of Saddam Hussein of Iraq, the American voters chose to judge former President Bush by his domestic record of performance. His 90-point popularity or approval rating

after the decisive defeat of Saddam Hussein in 1991 did not cut any ice with the American voters who were more concerned about the positive impact of domestic agenda of their leaders.

Any president that runs his country on the philosophy of knowing all the answers, of being wiser and of having superior morality will inevitably come to terms with his limitations. No leader achieves effective dialogue when he is held hostage by the passion to hear the sound of his own voice while other members of his audience are intimidated into submission to his

opinions.

It is incredibly sad that the enthusiasm and hope that greeted the return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999 are being systematically undermined by the president's cavalier style to governance. A man who was once viewed as the beacon of hope is now being perceived with suspicion. If our president had to condemn past leaders such as Generals Babangida and Sani Abacha for insincerity, Nigerians expect him to live by his own standards.

Deji Omotunde, Apapa, Lagos.

Why the hate campaign against el-Rufai?

As a citizen of Nigeria who has been resident in the Federal Capital Territory in the past 25 years, I feel deeply pained by the grievous injury *The News* magazine and other publications have been inflicting on the FCT Minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai in recent times.

Since my stay in Abuja in the past two and a half decades, I have seen several ministers of the FCT come and go, but none has equalled Nasir el-Rufai in performance and sense of integrity.

When the magazine's edition of January 13, 2006 came out with its cover story entitled "The el-Rufai scandal: How FCT Minister Hired Crooked Banker Jimi Lawal," I eagerly bought a copy to read and find out for myself whether el-Rufai, who is my hero, has joined the train of those who seem determined to ruin Nigeria.

To my immense relief, I found that nowhere in the story was there any concrete fact that el-Rufai had been enmeshed in anything scandalous or that Jimi Lawal whom the magazine dubbed a crook, had indeed done anything crooked.

Rather, the story dwelled mostly on Mr Jimi Lawal's so-called ugly past. I asked myself what professional judgment was responsible for linking el-Rufai with Jimi Lawal and associating him with a scandal.

It is true that el-Rufai hired Jimi Lawal as a consultant over the sale of federal government houses in the FCT, but there is no mention of any facts that Jimi Lawal or el-Rufai had done anything wrong. The magazine merely wrote its cover story based on the rumour that Mr Lawal had made away with one billion naira from the proceeds of the sale of the houses.

This rumour has been debunked as false by the Special Assistant to the FCT minister on information and strategy, Amina Salihu, in a press conference. If the magazine did not believe the denial of any wrongdoing on the part of Lawal or

el-Rufai, what anyone would expect to read about in that magazine is concrete evidence such as an audit query about missing money. But there is nothing of the sort in that magazine's cover story.

It is very clear that the magazine was merely using the name of the honourable minister to sell its product. In journalism, there is the dictum that personalities make the news and scandals sell a medium like hot cake.

But what the magazine had done to the personality and integrity of el-Rufai was grossly unprofessional. As indicated earlier, the real story on el-Rufai and Lawal do not match the scandalous headline. This surely is a violation of journalistic ethics.

As a keen stakeholder in

the Nigerian project, I wish to advise the magazine and other media of mass communication to be careful lest they get used by those mischievous people who have axes to grind with some public officers.

Nasir el-Rufai should be celebrated for what he has been able to achieve in his less than two and a half years tenure as minister of the FCT. Anyone who has lived in the FCT before the coming of el-Rufai and now can tell the difference. Abuja is today a much better place to live in, thanks to el-Rufai's strength of character and sense of mission.

Gbenga Awoniyi, Abuja-based public affairs commentator.

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

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
tempthist@yahoo.com

Graft: EFCC as exotic delicacy!

"I am from Mushere and we eat dogs, my brothers from Pankshin eat dogs also, likewise Anaguta and Berom; if these dogs come from Abuja again, we will eat them" - Joshua Chibi Dariye

By now, it must be clear to all except perhaps the blind that the brouhaha between the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Joshua Dariye, the embattled governor of Plateau State has reached an absurd if not bizarre dimension. Call it blackmail if you like, but the governor has finally shown why, in spite of the damning corruption and money laundering allegations against him, he has maintained a confident mien to the extent that even when the allegations first broke, he casually proclaimed that those who hibernate in glass houses have no business throwing stones! Not a few people, least of all yours truly, took offence or greeted that statement with scorn and derision at the time, but not anymore. There must be something that encouraged the lamb to laugh at the lion in its den, after all!

No matter your take on the entire sordid affair, if you happened to be Joshua Dariye, governor of a state like Plateau with its peculiar ecological problems, it is difficult not to develop the same gung-ho attitude to the activities of federal agents investigating cases of corruption in your backyard, especially if you just happened to have shared more than a billion and a half naira (un-receipted of course) meant to address the same ecological problem with some of the president's closest associates to rig the last presidential elections. Not only that, you would also be at your wits' end in wonder as to what the entire anti-corruption noise from the president was all about, after all. Like all criminal conspiracies hatched against the Nigerian people since independence, mostly in the dead of night when we were snoring innocently in our beds, we may never get to know the whole truth on this one; but one thing is beyond dispute: the Dariye bombshell has blown the lid off the entire anti-corruption façade of the president and his agents who have often laboured in the vain effort to assure us that he means business and is determined to see the fight to its logical conclusion. But Dariye's shocking allegations are sure to have stunned them a little. In the coming days and months also, assuming the matter is not reduced to another PDP family affair, their arrogant demeanour will also be severely dented.

Still, if you watched last Sunday's "Inside Africa" on CNN, which focused on the administration's anti-corruption farce, you would have had few doubts that the entire exercise was selective or politically-motivated to say the least. First, the CNN reporter, Jeff Konainge, amazed me with the ease with which he was allowed to waltz up to the president as he sauntered down a corridor. Can you imagine any Nigerian journalist doing the same with President Bush? Anyway, the impromptu interview - it was not more than that - revealed nothing new, but going by the content of the report in its entirety, you would have thought that allegations of corruption started and ended with Dariye, Atiku Abubakar or Diepreye Alamieyeseigha. Nothing could be further from the truth. We saw exclusive

footage of the VP's mansions in Washington, Abuja and Yola, but nothing on the recent property bought by one of the president's siblings who only just graduated from Law School in the America. Information Minister, John Nweke Jr. laboured to explain how in Nigeria, the law was no respecter of persons or office. Obviously, he must have taken us all for extra-terrestrials; otherwise, he would have explained why Makajuola, the former DG in the Ministry of Defence is not in jail today, or why his trial for the theft of half a billion naira of public funds was officially truncated in the first place.

Also, watching the president express his disgust at graft, you would think the electoral bill fraud was never contemplated, or that the disgraceful attempt to impeach Ghali Na'Abba in his first term as graphically exposed in the National Assembly occurred on a remote planet in the solar system. Regardless, in my opinion, the only good thing that emerged from Konainge's report was his linkage of the anti-corruption exercise to the president's thinly-veiled bid for a third term in office and the inevitable conclusion that the entire drama was about to enter a very dangerous stage.

Back to Dariye and the EFCC: The governor claimed he expended, or rather, wasted, more than a billion naira allocated to the state from the ecological funds on the 2003 presidential elections. Out of the amount, he claimed he gave 10 million naira to Deputy Senate President Ibrahim Mantu (that man again!) Yesterday, one of the governor's close associates and former Director-General, Political Research, Mr Dan Tenshak, upped the ante when he asked the People's Democratic Party (PDP) where it got money to fund the 2003 presidential elections. He also hinted that allocations to the state were inflated so that it could be skimmed for the same purpose. According to him, "The facts of his (Dariye's) statement on the disbursement of the N1.16 billion Ecological Funds still stand as follows: Plateau State Government (salaries) N570 million; Pinnacle Investment Ltd (PRTVC Turn-Around) N250 million; PDP South-West N100 million; PDP North-East N100 million; PDP National Secretariat N66 million; PDP Plateau State (LG Elections at 250,000 per LGA) N4, 250,000 and Senator Ibrahim Mantu N10 million."

Shedding more light on the matter, he added: "What was due for Plateau State, as far as the Ecological Funds for that period were concerned, was N800 million. From the breakdown above, it is evident that the sum meant for the state was judiciously used for the good of the state and we are content. Why the actual figure was increased, who received what amounts from the funds and

whether Governor Dariye has any proofs appear to be questions begging for answers since some people are content to deny the obvious. We wish to assure you all that these questions will not linger for long as the relevant documents will soon be tendered before the House of Assembly Committee investigating the allegations when the governor appears before it."

And how did the EFCC respond to all these? I was mortified when Nuhu Ribadu dismissed Dariye's allegations as mere diversion while also stating: "If he claimed he gave money to the presidential campaign, let him bring the evidence that he issued a cheque to anybody in that organisation." Before he wastes our time any further, we need to ask Ribadu these simple questions: Since when have cheques been the preferred instruments for conducting graft? Did Fabian Osuji - the disgraced former Education Minister - issue cheques to Wabara and his band of lawmakers? Has Ribadu never heard of Ghana-Must-Go [GMGs] and the efficient use to which they were put under the current dispensation?

All the same, without the slightest doubt, the unsavoury attitude and complicity of fat cats in the Presidency, Campaign Organisation and the gentlemen and women in the wasteful chambers that pass for our national legislature, may have led Dariye to conclude at one point in his tenure in office that he could get away with just about anything. The same reason must have led him to steal to his heart's content, but that in itself does not devalue the merit of his allegations or make him a candidate for a mental sanatorium. His accusations therefore cannot be casually waved aside with the same air of impunity with which he allegedly looted public funds.

But more importantly, in my opinion, a thorough investigation of the allegations, particularly as they relate to the last presidential elections, will help to unravel how the worst electoral crime ever visited on Nigerians was concocted and executed in 2003. The EFCC should also as a matter of great urgency beam its searchlight on similar disbursements from the ecological funds to other states in the federation, because the Plateau scandal could not have occurred in isolation. If they fail to do all these and continue with their Gestapo-style of operations, they would ultimately lose credibility and expose the institution to public ridicule. And when that happens, they would not only have Dariye's Canaan-eating brethren to contend with, but Nigerians as a collective. For example, Ribadu and the EFCC need only look back at what became of the defunct NSO and a certain Rafindadi!

"No matter your take on the entire sordid affair, if you happened to be Joshua Dariye, governor of a state like Plateau with its peculiar ecological problems, it is difficult not to develop the same gung-ho attitude to the activities of federal agents investigating cases of corruption in your backyard, especially if you just happened to have shared more than a billion and a half naira (un-receipted of course) meant to address the same ecological problem with some of the president's closest associates to rig the last presidential elections."

Opinion

Remembering Murtala Mohammed

By Ujudud Sharif
(ujushariff@yahoo.com)

Even though he ruled for only six months as Nigeria's head of state, he remains the best and most charismatic leader Nigeria has ever had and is likely to remain so for a very long time to come. Many of us would continue to grieve for the loss of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed for giving Nigeria new sense of direction, vision and mission. His government pursued revolutionary domestic and foreign policies that restored national pride and rekindled the fire of nationalism. In a nutshell, what Murtala gave Nigeria was LEADERSHIP. He gave us an inspiring, purposeful and progressive leadership that the nation was crying for since independence. He also gave Nigeria a no-nonsense leadership by first purging himself of most iniquities before asking others to do the same. He was reported to have returned some of his properties and monies that he believed he got illegitimately to the government on assuming office and before he started his war against corruption.

The period July 29, 1975 to February 1, 1976 when he was brutally assassinated in a foiled military *coup de tat* remains the most glorious in the nation's history. Hitherto, the nation "had been groping in the dark and the situation would inevitably result in chaos and bloodshed unless arrested. After the civil war, the affairs of the state, hitherto a collective responsibility became characterised by lack of consultation, indecision, indiscipline and even neglect. Indeed, the public at large became disillusioned and disappointed by these developments. The trend was clearly incompatible with the philosophy and image of our collective regime" thundered the General in his maiden broadcast on July 29, 1975. He also continued to state thus: "Things got to a stage where the head of the administration became virtually inaccessible even to official advisers and when advice was tendered, it was often ignored. Responsible opinion, including advice by eminent Nigerians was similarly discarded. The leadership, either by design or default, had become too insensitive to the true feelings and yearnings of the people. The nation was thus being plunged inexorably into chaos." This broadcast was to herald an action-packed programme that the nation never saw before. Various probe and investigation panels were constituted to study and advise government on actions to be taken. At the same time, a hurricane was released on the civil services that swept away many dead woods and corrupt officials. The nation was indeed shaken to its roots. Among the panels that were set up at the time was the Justice

Akinola Aguda Panel that advised on the relocation of the federal capital to Abuja from Lagos. The Justice Ayo Irikefe Panel was also constituted to examine the need for the creation of new states. There was also the Constitution Drafting Committee that drafted the 1979 Constitution that gave birth to the Shehu Shagari presidency in 1979.

At the realm of foreign policy and international relations, Murtala instantaneously became the darling of Africa and the black people in Diaspora as a result of his pan-African and progressive policies. His total support and recognition of Angolan government under President Agostinho Neto of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in November 1975 marked the watershed in that country's anti-colonial struggles against Portugal. This singular decision by his administration was to turn the history of Angola as the government gained the much-desired recognition of the OAU. Similarly, his publication of a "circular" to all African leaders by President Nixon of the United States not to support the MPLA readily became one of our symbols of independence. Also, his speech rightly entitled "Africa Has Come of Age" and delivered at the Organisation of African Unity's meeting at Addis Ababa on January 11, 1976 still remains a classic reference for all students of international relations. Following the footsteps of African revolutionary heroes such as Kwame Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral, Murtala declared that no superpower should dictate to Africa. The "fortunes of Africa are to make or mar," remarked the General and therefore Africa would not take instructions from any nation no matter how big or small. The echo of this historic speech reverberated throughout Africa to the admiration and pride of freedom-fighters and patriotic Nigerians.

This is why we will continue to mourn and pray for his departed soul. His death was to unite Nigerians as the nation condemned the coup plotters who were clearly agents of foreign interests and domestic collaborators. One recalls how university students across the country trooped to the streets denouncing the coup even before it was foiled by loyal troops. The leadership given by the General was exemplary and quite nationalistic. When he was dealing with corrupt governors, there was no "esprit de corp" or brother syndrome. He dismissed all those found guilty "with ignominy and immediate effect." When

created new states in the federation, he banned "any provocative demonstration in support or against" the exercise. His action-oriented administration had within barely six months achieved so much what other governments since then have not achieved.

This leadership provided by Murtala was to vibrate across the country as the military governors were competing amongst themselves to achieve results. From Northwest State, Col. Umaru Mohammed was reinvigorating the whole governmental structure; in Northeast State, Muhammadu Buhari was revitalising the state and Col. Ibrahim Taiwo was electrifying Kwara State. A new generation of leaders was created for Nigeria where service to the people was the philosophy and mission of government. The problem now is how come things have deteriorated and even returned beyond the status quo ante? Similarly, the states' military governors were also young and exuberant officers with a sense of history committed to their military assignments. They saw their appointments as opportunity to serve and as a mark of loyalty to their commander-in-chief who could remove them at any time.

Thus, if one were to compare Nigeria under Murtala just thirty years ago, one cannot but lament how things have really deteriorated in almost all departments in life. Leadership has really lost its meaning from being fundamentally about selfless service to the people. From what we have been seeing in the last couple of years, leadership now is about self-aggrandisement. Leadership has lost its focus with little or no vision and mission.

It is therefore with a deep sense of nostalgia that we remember this great son of Nigeria and Africa. The leadership qualities he exhibited would be source of inspirations to many yet unborn. This is why you find a grateful nation naming every important edifice from airport to schools and hospitals after him. This also explains why his name is particularly revered in Kano, the city of his birth that named its library, secretariat, and a major street and turned his gravesite into a big mosque. As we mark the 30th anniversary of his demise, we once again condole with his family, friends, relations and his brethren, the good people of Kano. In particular, we also condole with President Obasanjo for the loss of a mentor and comrade in arms while also reminding him of his date with history: If he cannot surpass Murtala, he should at least attain his level. It is not how long or how many terms he serves that matter, but the success of the tenure.



10th ANNUAL

MURTALA MUHAMMED MEMORIAL LECTURE

President Olusegun Obasanjo

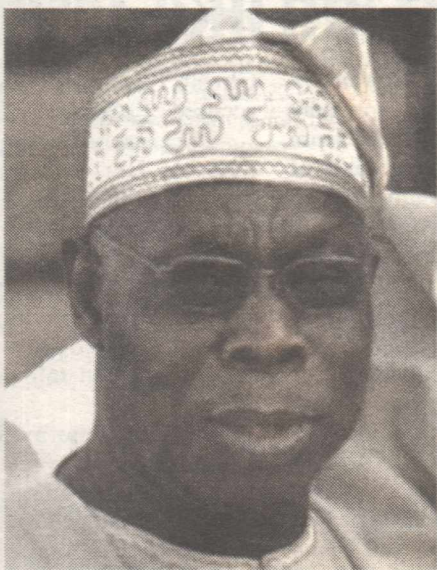
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Murtala Muhammed Foundation (MMF)

Cordially invites the general public to the
10th Annual Murtala Muhammed Memorial Lecture

Theme:

AFRICA: A NEW AGENDA



Keynote Speaker

Right Honourable "Jack" Straw, MP

United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary



Date: Tuesday, 14th of February 2006

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Venue: The Auditorium, Ecowas Secretariat
60 Yakubu Gowon Crescent
Asokoro District, Abuja

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World Reports

Cheney shoots man in hunting accident

US Vice-President Dick Cheney has accidentally shot and injured a man during a quail hunting trip. The victim, named as Harry Whittington, was on the trip with Mr Cheney at a ranch in Texas when the incident took place on Saturday.

Mr Whittington, 78, was taken to hospital in the town of Corpus Christi where an official said he was "stable and doing well".

Mr Cheney spent Sunday afternoon at the hospital, his spokeswoman said.

The men were part of a quail hunting expedition at the Armstrong Ranch in

south Texas.

Ranch owner Katharine Armstrong said Mr Cheney had turned round to shoot at a bird, unaware that Mr Whittington was behind him. He sprayed Mr Whittington with shotgun pellets.

"The covey flushed and the vice-president picked out a bird and was following it and shot. And by God, Harry was in the line of fire and got peppered pretty good," she said.

Mr Whittington was hit in the cheek, neck and chest, but was said to be "alert and doing fine" in hospital.

The vice-president's spokeswoman, Lea Anne

McBride, said Mr Cheney visited Mr Whittington in hospital on Sunday and was pleased to see that he was in good spirits.

This is something that happens from time to time - you know, I've been peppered pretty well myself.

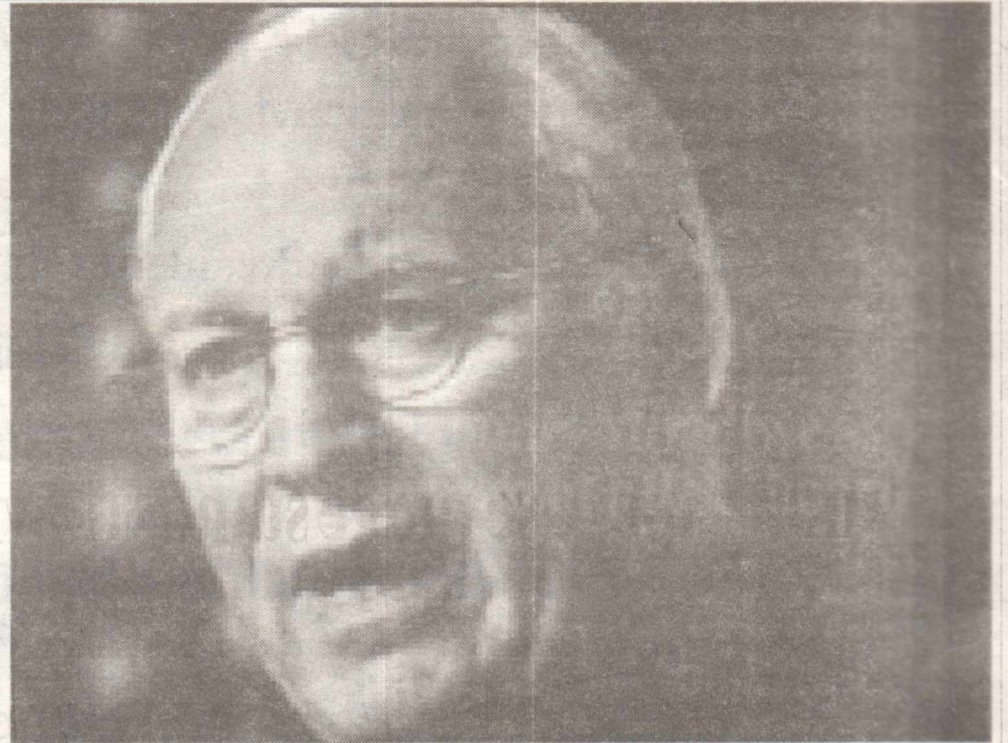
A lawyer from Austin, Texas, Mr Whittington was initially treated at the ranch by medical staff who normally travel with the vice-president.

Mr Whittington's daughter, Sally, told the Dallas Morning News her father was being observed in hospital because of some swelling from the welts in his neck.

"It looks like chicken pox, kind of," she said. "He was very, very lucky that nothing seriously was injured."

Ms Armstrong said that Mr Cheney was a "very safe sportsman".

"This is something that happens from time to time. You know, I've been peppered pretty well myself," she said. Mr Cheney returned to Washington on Sunday evening.



Dick Cheney is an experienced hunting enthusiast.

US government 'failed' on Katrina

All levels of the US government, from President Bush down, were at fault for the poor response to Hurricane Katrina, a leaked Congressional report says.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff is singled out for particular criticism in the document, which is due to be published on Wednesday.

Overall, it says, the government's response was marked by "fecklessness, flailing and organisational paralysis". The report, leaked to the US media, is one of several into the disaster.

Entitled "A Failure of Initiative", the 600-page document suggests something approaching a national disgrace, says the BBC's Justin Webb in Washington.

Produced by a special Republican-dominated House inquiry, it issues 90 separate findings.

"Our investigation revealed that Katrina was a national failure, an abdication of the most solemn obligation to provide for the common welfare," says the report's summary, seen by the Associated Press.

"At every level - individual, corporate, philanthropic and governmental - we failed to meet the challenge that was Katrina."

Michael Chertoff implemented the emergency response systems "late, ineffectively or not at all",

which delayed federal troops and supplies by as much as three days.

White House staff were unable to effectively "substantiate, analyse and act on the information at its disposal", giving President Bush poor and incomplete counsel.

Late decisions to issue mandatory evacuations by New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco led to deaths and prolonged suffering.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) suffered from a lack of trained and experienced personnel.

"If 9/11 was a failure of imagination, then Katrina was a failure of initiative," the report's summary states.

"In this instance, blinding lack of situational awareness and disjointed decision-making needlessly compounded and prolonged Katrina's horror."

The investigators said they "are left scratching our heads at the range of clumsiness and ineptitude that characterised government behaviour before and after this storm."

"If this is what happens when we have advance warning, we shudder to imagine the consequences when we do not."

President Bush, after a relatively strong start to this year, is suddenly faced by an immense political challenge with this report, our correspondent says.

Danish PM talks to Muslim group

The Danish prime minister has met members of a new association called "Democratic Muslims" in a fresh effort to defuse the Muhammad cartoons row.

Protests took place in Turkey over the weekend, while Denmark saw about 25 Muslim graves desecrated in what police called a "backlash" against the uproar. Vandals smashed only Muslim headstones in Esbjerg, west of Copenhagen. The group meeting Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Monday was set up by MP Naser Khader to counter extremism.

The BBC's Thomas Buch Andersen in Copenhagen says the group claims to represent around 80% to 85% of Muslims in Denmark. He says that although that may be a high claim, there is no doubt they represent the majority of the country's 200,000 Muslims.

There has been criticism that Prime Minister Rasmussen is meeting Mr Khader's "Democratic Muslims" network and not

other Muslim groups.

"The objective of the meeting is to start a dialogue with Danes of Muslim faith about, among other things, integration and the current situation," said a statement from the prime minister's office, quoted by the AFP news agency.

Mr Khader set up the network earlier this month in response to the outrage over the 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad which were first published in a Danish newspaper. He said it was time for "dialogue, rather than digging trenches" and called on Muslim countries, Danish imams and the government to enter into talks. "Only by uniting can we change the fundamentalistic picture of Islam that the many extremists have drawn with violence," he said. The international turmoil that has followed the publication of the cartoons and their reproduction in the European press led Denmark to withdraw diplomats from the Indonesian capital Jakarta on Saturday because of threats against them.

Berlusconi says 'I am like Jesus'

The Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has caused a political storm by comparing himself to Jesus Christ. And last week, the prime minister compared himself to Napoleon in describing his achievements during his past five years in office.

His comments came at a dinner for supporters, ahead of elections. Mr Berlusconi is trailing his challenger, Romano Prodi, in opinion polls prior to April's vote.

His Napoleon remark caused some ironic comment and scornful remarks from opposition leaders, some of whom warned him that he might soon meet his Waterloo, the name of the decisive battle in which Napoleon was defeated by the British.

"No, I was just joking," Mr Berlusconi told his supporters at a dinner at Ancona on the Adriatic coast. But then he went on to complain that he feels like what he called "the Jesus Christ of Italian politics".

"I'm a patient victim. I put up with everything. I sacrifice myself for everyone," he said. Opposition politicians called Mr Berlusconi's comparison grotesque, although he was simply using popular speech. In Italian, for example, you can refer to someone as a Povero Christo, or a poor

Christ, without being accused of blasphemy.

Opinion polls suggest that Mr Berlusconi, the owner of a vast media empire, is trailing his challenger, the opposition leader Romano Prodi, by up to five percentage points despite his recent barrage of personal appearances on television and radio.

But the prime minister says he does not believe the main polling organisations. He's commissioned his own poll which shows him slightly in the lead. Huge election posters urging voters to cast their ballots for Mr Berlusconi already adorn the streets of Italian cities.

Some of them in Rome are already covered with ironic graffiti in local dialect. There is a tradition here dating back centuries of writing political satire on walls.

Terror survivors gather in Spain

Hundreds of survivors of terror attacks around the world are among delegates gathering at an International Victims of Terrorism conference in Spain.

People caught up in the Beslan school siege, the Madrid and London train bombings and the 11 September attacks on the US are expected to attend. They will be encouraged to share their experiences and will receive psychological guidance.

Organisers say they want more done at an international level to help victims. EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini is due to talk about terrorism within the European Union at the

Valencia conference, which will be opened by Spain's Crown Prince Felipe and Princess Letizia.

Previous conferences have been held in Madrid and Bogota, Colombia. Maite Pagazaurtundua, from the Spanish Foundation of Terrorism Victims, said: "Spain is a good example when we're talking about protecting people who have suffered the phenomenon of terrorism - and how to face it."

Discussions on Monday will focus on victims of attacks abroad - including Colombia, the US, Ireland, Israel, the UK, Russia and Indonesia - and those injured in Spain's conflict with Basque separatists.

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Africa



Rape allegations have damaged Mr Zuma's political career.

Zuma rape case judge stands down

The judge presiding over the rape trial of South Africa's former Deputy President Jacob Zuma has said he is stepping down to protect the judiciary.

Defence lawyers had argued Bernard Ngoepe might be biased as he issued warrants for a search of Mr Zuma's offices in a corruption case last year.

It is alleged that Mr Zuma raped a family friend - a woman in her 30s - at his home in Johannesburg last November.

Mr Zuma, 63, denied the charges when the trial began in the city on Monday.

He was one of the country's most popular politicians but he was sacked from the government last year. He also faces separate charges of corruption.

Judge Ngoepe announced his decision soon after the trial began.

"For the protection of the credibility of the judiciary... I have decided to step aside," he said.

Judge Ngoepe expressed fears his decision might imply Mr Zuma had the power to choose who was judging him, but believed the need to ensure impartiality was more important.

"I have concluded that protection of the credibility of the judiciary and above all the acceptability of its judgments are factors which should weigh with me heavily."

The new judge will be one of his deputies but has not yet been named.

The BBC's Justin Pearce in Johannesburg says many of Mr Zuma's supporters say he is the victim of a political conspiracy and have accused the judicial system of bias.

Up to 1,000 people had gathered to back the former deputy president outside the city's High Court on Monday.

The immediate area outside the court was cordoned off but some of Mr Zuma's supporters got through.

They were singing, dancing to pro-Zuma pop songs and waving placards. "You are the best JZ," read one.

There was also a separate group of about 50 anti-rape protesters.

"We are sending out a strong message of support and solidarity to survivors of rape and violence," said People Opposing Woman Abuse spokeswoman Carrie Shelver. "This is not a party."

she said, referring to the Zuma supporters. "Rape is not a party."

The alleged victim entered court with a headscarf over her face to shield her from the Zuma supporters.

Mr Zuma is a veteran of the ANC struggle to end apartheid. At one stage he was

championed by trade unionists and those on the political left as a likely presidential candidate to succeed Thabo Mbeki.

Mr Zuma remains deputy leader of the ruling ANC although it has been agreed that he should not perform any executive functions.

Cape Verde poll 'neck-and-neck'

The two main candidates in Cape Verde's presidential election are running neck-and-neck, partial results show.

President Pedro Pires had taken 50.1% of the vote, with rival Carlos Veiga trailing slightly with 49.9%, with the majority of the ballots counted.

Mr Pires beat Mr Veiga by just 17 votes in the 2001 poll. His party won last month's parliamentary elections.

Three other people are also standing. A second round will be called if no candidate gets two-thirds of the votes.

Economic development and the reduction of poverty have dominated the election campaign. Cape Verde has a high unemployment and crime rate, but is also seen as politically stable with an emerging prosperity. Both leading candidates - who would rule for the next five years - have pledged to promote faster economic growth and tackle crime.

Mr Pires' ruling African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) won January's parliamentary elections with 52% of the vote.

Voting in Cidade de Praia, Mr Pires called on all Cape Verdians "to take part in this very important decision".

Mr Veiga, who accused the opposition of fraud in the 2001 election, said earlier: "I trust I will win, and I expect elections to go smoothly and in a transparent way."

The preliminary results were announced after 1,005 of the 1,184 polling stations on the 10 Cape Verde islands had been counted.

The two leading candidates have dominated politics in the tiny West African archipelago since it won independence from Portugal in 1975.

The PAICV first came to power under a one-party system after independence. With Mr Pires, now 71, as Cape Verde's

first prime minister. Mr Veiga's Movement for Democracy (MpD) won the first multi-party elections in 1990. The 56-year-old Mr Veiga served as premier for the next 10

Annan to Bush: Help stop murder and rape in Darfur

Secretary-General Kofi Annan intends to ask President George W. Bush on Monday what the United States can contribute to a mobile UN force to stop the killings, rape and pillaging in Sudan's Darfur region.

The United States has offered military planners for the

Darfur operation, which will arrive on Monday. But it has made no offer of air coverage or other assistance for the venture, expected to be comprised mainly of African and Asian troops, who form the bulk of all UN forces.

At issue is a transfer of command from an

underfunded African Union force of 7,000 monitors and troops in Darfur to UN peacekeepers, a move U.S. Ambassador John Bolton promoted in the Security Council last week by drafting a statement asking the world body to begin contingency planning.

Annan said Darfur's plight, which the United States has characterized as genocide, was too dire for rich nations to pay but not participate in the mission, which will increase the \$5 billion spent on peacekeeping last year.

"It is not going to be easy for the big and powerful countries with armies to delegate to third world countries. They will have to play a part if we are going to stop the carnage that we see in Darfur," Annan told reporters on Thursday.

Asked if Bush would be asked to participate, Annan said, "I will share with him the facts that I have shared with you, the needs that we have, and the countries that I think can supply those needs, and that will include the U.S."

Annan said he envisioned a highly-mobile force with APCs and jeeps and air support that "would be able to be on the ground when there is an SOS - not to arrive after the harm has been done."

More than 2 million people are homeless and living in squalid camps in Darfur, a region about the size of France, partly as a result of targeted Sudanese government attacks in 2003-2004 when a rebellion over resources began. In January, tens of thousands of non-Arab villagers were uprooted again by the Janjaweed militia after the capture of a garrison town by one of the rebel movements.

The government and military deny they armed and gave air cover to the Janjaweed. Peace negotiations among the rebels and the government in Abuja, Nigeria, have not made much headway, with a divided rebel leadership considered weak and the Janjaweed not at the table.

The United Nations has a peacekeeping operation in southern Sudan of about 7,000 troops to help keep the peace after a nearly three-decade old civil war.

That operation is also short of resources, with Russia only last week having approved 200 soldiers and four Mi-8 military transport helicopters, which the chief UN envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk, had said were delayed for a year and greatly hindered the mobility of that mission.

Annan also plans to meet U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a host of issues, his office said.

Egypt releases last of Sudanese migrants

Egyptian officials said Sunday they have released the last of hundreds of Sudanese migrants detained after security forces broke up a protest camp in a Cairo square in December.

More than 2,000 people were violently removed from a square near the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees on Dec. 30, after a three-month sit-in protesting what they saw as U.N. failure to resettle them.

Some 25 Sudanese died in the clashes that ensued, and rights groups accused the po-

lice of unnecessary brutality. Egypt detained hundreds of the migrants and has been gradually releasing them after clarifying their status under refugee and migrant laws.

With the release announced Sunday of 156 migrants, "the Egyptian authorities have set free all the Sudanese who were transported to the detention centers after putting an end to their strike," a Foreign Ministry official said, declining to give his name because he was not authorized to speak to the press. The Foreign Ministry official said those in the group were considered illegal immigrants but would not be deported "for the sake of not scattering the Sudanese families who live in Egypt."

Egypt has long offered Sudanese a haven from the conflicts that have ravaged their country.

U.N. calls on world for aid to Congo

The U.N. humanitarian chief appealed to world donors to help raise at least \$680 million in aid and provide more peacekeepers to stabilize Congo before a special conference Monday.

Jan Egeland, who will co-chair a U.N.- European Union conference on the central African nation said Sunday that the international community had to act now to help boost peace efforts following Congo's 1998-2002 war, which drew in the armies of half a dozen African nations.

"Too few leaders understand that 4 million people have died and many more can die unless we put it right," he told a small group of reporters.

He said a U.N. humanitarian aid appeal last year came up short for Congo, with only \$130 million pledged.

Egeland said the money was needed for immediate needs like shelter, food, security and health care to millions of refugees now returning to Congo from neighboring countries.

"We have too little money, too few people on the ground, and still too little security," he said. The talks beginning Monday aim to launch a new humanitarian effort for Congo, which is to hold elections in April.

The U.N. has already asked the 25-nation EU to provide troops to reinforce the U.N. peacekeeping force in Congo before the elections. German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung said at a NATO defense ministers' meeting last week that the EU has not yet agreed on send-

years until the PAICV regained power in 2001.

About 325,000 Cape Verde citizens were registered to vote. Of these, about 20% live abroad - mostly in Portugal.

ing troops.

The EU sent a mainly French force of 1,850 to Congo in 2003, to pacify the northeast city of Bunia ahead of a larger U.N. force. The EU also has sent a team to Congo to train police.

The U.N.'s 16,000 peacekeepers in Congo have frequently come under fire in the country's restive east.

The U.N. mission there is charged with helping Congo's transitional government, which is still struggling to regain control over the east, a region that was controlled by various rebel factions during the war.

The first presidential elections in 45 years are expected this year, when the Congolese will choose a new government to replace the postwar administration.



The belongings of Sudanese refugees lie on the pavement in Cairo after riot police broke up a demonstration in December 2005. The World Food Programme (WFP) will donate food rations over at least three months for 4,000 Sudanese refugees in Egypt.

Trust International

Middle East

Five dead in Baghdad bank blast

At least five people have been killed and at least 32 injured in a bomb blast in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

The explosion took place outside a bank in the eastern suburb of al-Jadida. Police say a suicide bomber joined a crowd of people queuing outside the bank to get compensation for food rations and detonated the device.

It is the latest incident in a largely Sunni-led campaign of violence which began in Iraq shortly after the US-led invasion in 2003.

Three children were among the injured, police spokesman Lt Ali Abbas told the Associated Press.

Outgoing MPs boost Abbas' power

The outgoing Palestinian parliament has voted to give new presidential powers to Mahmoud Abbas, ahead of the swearing in of a new militant-led legislature.

The Palestinian leader will be able to appoint a constitutional court that can cancel future legislation. Hamas - the militant Islamic movement which won a landslide in January's poll - called the move illegitimate.

The outgoing parliament is dominated by members of the mainstream Fatah faction which is led by Mr Abbas.

MPs voted overwhelmingly to approve Mr Abbas' decree to create the constitutional court, made up of judges appointed by the Palestinian Authority president. This parliament has no mandate and no authority to issue any new legislation.

They also backed a decree which automatically makes members of the incoming parliament members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) parliament in exile, according to reports.

Unlike the Hamas charter, the PLO charter recognises the legitimacy of Israel.

MPs also approved plans to appoint a Fatah deputy, Mahmoud Abul Rob, as head of the Palestinian Authority's main financial watchdog, the AFP news agency reported.

Hamas members say they will work in order to cancel any 11th-hour legislation which they describe as "un-constitutional".

"This parliament has no mandate and no authority to issue any new legislation," said Said Siyam, an incoming Hamas MP from Gaza.

The new parliament, which will have 74 Hamas MPs out of 132, is due to be sworn in by Mr Abbas on Saturday.

Hamas says it has chosen a prime ministerial candidate from within its ranks, but it has not made the name public.



President Ahmadinejad says he will resist attempts to curb Iran's plans.

Iran shelve Russia nuclear talks

Iran has postponed planned talks with Russia on plans to enrich uranium on Russian soil as a way to bypass a crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Thursday's talks have been pushed back indefinitely, Iranian presidential spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said.

They will recommence at a time of "mutual agreement," Mr Elham added.

Iran recently said it was resuming nuclear research, sparking criticism and a referral to the UN Security Council by the UN nuclear agency.

For its part, Russia said talks could still take place this week.

"Our offer for the 16th still stands," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak said in Moscow.

Western powers are concerned that Iran's decision to resume research into uranium enrichment - a process which creates fuel for nuclear reactors and, potentially, for a nuclear bomb - is part of a plan to acquire nuclear weaponry.

Iran says its programme is solely aimed at energy production.

Key nations' stance on Iran As a means to alleviate the standoff, Russia had proposed that it enrich the uranium on its reactors and then ship the fuel to Iran.

But after Tehran was reported to the Security Council on 4 February, Iran announced it would end its voluntary freeze on full-scale uranium enrichment and would stop allowing snap UN inspections of its nuclear sites.

Mr Elham said the negotiations with Russia had been postponed because of the "new situation".

Russia supported the International Atomic Energy Agency's decision to refer Iran to the UN Security Council.

The referral, which could lead to sanctions, has been roundly condemned in Tehran, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is

now threatening to quit the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In a speech marking the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution on Saturday Mr Ahmadinejad said that if the rights of the Iranian people were violated, Iran would "revise its policies".

The NPT, which has 187 signatories, was created to prevent new nuclear states emerging, to promote co-op-

eration in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to work towards nuclear disarmament.

Non-nuclear signatories agree not to seek to develop or acquire such weapons. In return, they are given an undertaking that they will be helped to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

It is believed to be the first time Iran has threatened to pull out of the treaty.



Renee Lawrence (R) had expected a more lenient sentence.

Australians get life sentence for drugs

A Bali court has sentenced two Australians to life in prison for drugs smuggling, despite prosecution calls for clemency for one of them.

Judges ignored arguments that the only woman in the case, Renee Lawrence, should be given a 20-year sentence because she helped investigators.

Seven other people are due to be sentenced this week, in a case dubbed as the "Bali nine" in Australia.

Prosecutors have called for death sentences for two defendants.

Renee Lawrence was the first of the so-called "Bali nine" to be sentenced for trying to traffic more than 8.3kg (18lb) of heroin last April.

Both she and Scott Rush, also sentenced on Monday,

were detained at Bali's airport in April 2005 with heroin strapped to their bodies.

Prosecutors had asked the court in the Balinese capital of Denpasar to show leniency to Lawrence because she was helpful in giving statements during the investigation.

Both she and Rush had claimed they faced death threats if they did not take part in the smuggling ring.

But the judges ignored this request, saying her behaviour while on trial was no different from some other defendants, and there was no evidence that she had been forced to carry the drugs.

Lawrence, 28, stared at the floor and shook her head after the verdict was announced.

Uproar as Saddam returns to court

An angry Saddam Hussein yesterday reappeared in court saying he was being forced to attend after boycotting earlier sessions with his seven co-defendants.

The former Iraqi leader's lawyers had said he would continue the boycott, but he appeared on Monday, shouting "Down with Bush".

The defence team had walked out earlier in protest at new chief judge, Raouf Abdul Rahman, who it says is biased.

The defendants are accused of killing 148 Shia villagers in Dujail in 1982.

They deny all the charges.

Amid threats of a continued boycott, the chief prosecutor had asked the judge to bring Saddam Hussein and his co-defendants to the Baghdad court by force if necessary.

On entering court, Saddam Hussein said: "They

have forcibly brought me here." He told the judge: "Exercise your right to try me in absentia. Are you trying to overcome your own smallness?"

The former leader wore a blue traditional Arab robe and a black jacket in contrast to the suit he had worn previously.

"Down with the traitor, down with traitors, down with Bush. Long live the ummah (Islamic nation)... long live the ummah... long live the ummah," Saddam Hussein shouted.

His half-brother Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti scuffled with guards as he was brought in.

Both then continued to harangue the judge throughout the early proceedings, refusing orders to sit down and be quiet.

"This is not a court, this is not a court, this is a game," Saddam Hussein shouted.

Barzan Ibrahim sat on the floor with his back to the judge.

Judge Rahman said he was implementing laws that Saddam Hussein had put in place.

The judge rejected claims that the defence lawyers had been thrown out, saying they had chosen not to attend.

Evidence from the former head of Saddam Hussein's office, Ahmed Khudayir, and former chief of foreign intelligence, Hassan al-Obeidi, was expected on Monday.

Mr Khudayir headed Saddam Hussein's presidential office from 1995 to the fall of the regime and was known to have attended a military planning session on 9 April 2003, two days before the Americans entered Baghdad.

The new chief judge took over last month after the resignation of chief judge Rizzar Amin and has adopted a more hardline approach to the defendants.

Defence lawyers had stormed out of court and Saddam Hussein and some of his co-defendants failed to show up at the past few sessions.

The BBC's Jon Brain in Baghdad says the prosecution was aware that the spectacle of an empty dock risked further undermining a trial that had repeatedly descended into farce.

But he says if the defendants were brought in by force, defence lawyers would argue it proved their claim that the trial was unfair.

Trust International

Odd World

Stiletto workout: Part of the heeling process

The gym that brought New Yorkers "Cardio Striptease" has dreamed up "Stiletto Strength," a workout to get women in shape to wear the highest of heels.

At a recent lunch-time session at Crunch gym near Times Square, dancer Amber Efe demonstrated how to strut like a cat-walk model, pivoting on six-inch heels that would challenge even the most ardent follower of shoe king Manolo Blahnik.

"Imagine you're at the bar, raise one hand high like you're holding your drink," she told the class, music pounding as she acted the part of a club-goer working through a crowd.

"Don't spill the drink," she told the group, a mix of women who clearly had plenty of experience and others still tottering on shoes that didn't show much wear.

Crunch's class list includes "Circus Sports" and "Cycle Karaoke" and national fitness director

Donna Cyrus said the most popular nontraditional class in recent years was "Cardio Striptease," aerobics with a sexy twist.

"Stiletto Strength" was launched in January in response to client griping about getting back into high heels for winter.

"They're businesswomen and they have to wear heels so they want to understand how to look better in them and feel confident," Cyrus said.

Participants wear running shoes for the first part of the class, which focuses on strengthening lower body and abdominal muscles and improving balance and posture. The heels come out for the last 15 minutes.

"I came at the beginning just because I was curious," said Andrea Kussack, 27, who isn't required to dress up for her job but needs practice wearing "going-out" shoes.

"I recently bought for my boyfriend's Christmas party these really high heels. I made

it through the night but it wasn't the most enjoyable thing and I haven't worn them since," she said.

So what is the secret to walking tall?

"Your abs and don't look down. Look where you're going," said instructor Kafi Pierre.

"And your ankle strength, if you have weak ankles you'll tend to roll inward or outwards."

Cyrus called in a podiatrist to assess the class, which has been launched in New York, Los Angeles and Miami. "He said 'You know, the answer is women shouldn't wear heels,'" Cyrus said.

But she said women will wear them anyway.

"Your feet will probably never recover because it's not a position you're meant to be in all day long," she said. "This class will strengthen your legs and your core, it will make it less painful, but it will never be pain free."



Members of the Japanese Olympic snowboarding team after arriving at the Malpensa Airport in Milan, northern Italy. February 4, 2006.

Olympic team still waiting for lost luggage

The Spanish Winter Olympic team have got off to an unfortunate start to the Games with several members of the 31-strong squad still waiting for their luggage to turn up after arriving in Turin Monday.

Competitors were left without skis, snowboards and cases after their luggage was lost on departure from the newly opened terminal at Madrid's Barajas airport, Spanish media reported on Thursday.

"Things haven't started well for reasons that have nothing to do with the competition," the head of the Spanish Olympic Committee Alejandro Blanco was quoted as saying by sports daily Marca.

"It's sad that we are arguing about something like this before the Games They

are looking for the luggage Jose Rienda, who is competing in the giant slalom event. She is not expected to arrive in Turin until Friday.

Spain's only realistic medal hope is skier Maria

Judge shelves case over Jesus' existence

An Italian atheist lost his legal crusade against the Catholic Church on Thursday when a judge rejected his attempts to sue a priest for saying that Jesus existed 2,000 years ago, the priest's lawyer said.

Luigi Cascioli, 72, had argued his hometown priest and former schoolmate had effectively broken an Italian law meant to protect the public from being conned.

But instead of granting Cascioli his request to bring the case to court, the judge recommended magistrates investigate him for slandering priest Enrico Righi, Righi's lawyer, Bruno Severo said. The 76-year-old priest said he

was delighted by the news. "Thank God it's over," Righi told Reuters. "I'm glad it has ended like this, because imagine if it had gone on and on."

Cascioli, author of a book called "The Fable of Christ," said the court had not yet informed him of the ruling. But he was not surprised, and said he would appeal to Italy's highest court, and then to The Hague. Asked about the possibility he would be tried for slander, Cascioli chuckled, saying that to prove he lied, prosecutors would have to prove that Jesus existed. "They don't have any proof," he said.



President Bush looks at Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Ill, right, at the House Republican Conference, Friday, Feb. 10, 2006 in Cambridge, Md.

Oops! - Bush unaware mikes were still on

The eavesdropping tables were turned on President Bush on Friday. The president apparently believed he was speaking privately when he talked about listening in without a warrant on domestic communications with suspected al-Qaida terrorists overseas. But reporters were the ones doing the listening in this time.

The incident happened at a House Republican retreat. Six minutes of public

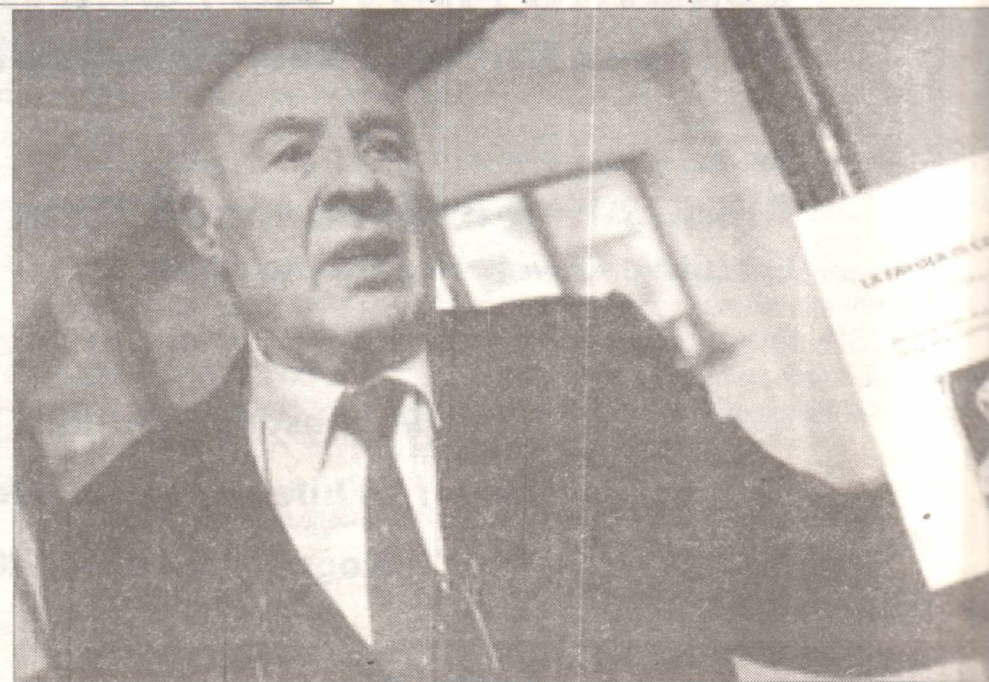
remarks by the president, reporters were ushered out. "I support the free press, let's just get them out of the room," Bush said, intending to speak behind closed doors with fellow Republicans and take lawmakers' questions.

When reporters left, Bush spoke about the National Security Agency program that he authorized four years ago and which has drawn criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike.

However, the microphones stayed on for a

few minutes. That allowed journalists back at the White House to eavesdrop on Bush's defense of the eavesdropping. His private statements were basically no different from what he's said in public.

"I want to share some thoughts with you before I answer your questions," Bush began. "First of all, I expect this conversation we're about to have to stay in the room. I know that's impossible in Washington." He was right.



Luigi Cascioli holds up his book 'La favola di Cristo' (The fable of Christ) as he enters a courthouse in the city of Viterbo, Italy January 27, 2006. Cascioli lost his legal crusade against the Catholic Church on Thursday when a judge rejected his attempts to sue a priest for saying that Jesus existed 2,000 years ago, the priest's lawyer said.



THE Nigerian STOCK EXCHANGE



Announces the Official commissioning of its Kaduna Branch

ELECTRONIC / AUTOMATED TRADING SYSTEM (Electronic On-line / Real-Time Dealings)

by *His Excellency*
Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi
Executive Governor, Kaduna State

Time: Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Venue: C8 Intercity Drive, Broad Bank Building (2nd Floor)
Mogadishu Layout, Kaduna

THE Nigerian
STOCK EXCHANGE ... *committed to wealth creation*

Business Trust

INSIDE

Currencies

West African

Unit of Account

Country	N Equivalent
The Gambia	6.0320
Ghana	0.0143
Guinea	0.0588
Liberia	1.8633
S/Leone	3,563.84
Nigeria	192.48

Parallel Market

	Average	
Dollar	144	145
Pounds	261	262

Minister wants Nigeria's aids channeled to MDGs

Nigeria's development partners have been advised to channel aids intended for Nigeria into areas that would help her meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala made the appeal in Abuja last week at an interactive session with aids donor community.

The minister informed the donors about a presidential directive that henceforth, all aids to Nigeria would be co-ordinated by the Minister of Finance, assisted by the Economic Adviser to the President.

The minister also briefed the international community on the state of the economy, appealing to the few countries yet to endorse the bilateral agreement to seal the USD 18 billion debt relief granted Nigeria by the Paris Club to quickly to do so.

Speaking on the new focus of the economic reform programme, the minister said efforts are being explored to ensure that the citizens feel more impact of the reform even as efforts are being intensified to pass the benefits of debt relief into areas that have direct positive impact on the ordinary citizens.

She announced that efforts would be intensified towards an early passage of some important bills being considered by the National Assembly. They include the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, the Procurement Bill and the Anti-Trust and Competition Bill.

The international community was also implored to help Nigeria in the fight of the dreaded bird flu disease which has been reported in Nigeria.



Group Managing Director, WEMA Bank Plc, Mr. Adebisi Omoyemi, with NICON Insurance CEO, Barrister Ibrahim Jimoh, during a visit by the former in Abuja ...recently.

First Bank, Ecobank to merge Sept

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

First Bank of Nigeria Plc has announced a gross earning of N50.54 billion for the nine months ended December 2005, as against N40.60 billion recorded in the same period in 2004. Even as it says merger with Ecobank will be concluded sept.2006.

According to a release from the bank signed by its Head Image Management Jide ogundeProfit Before Tax for the period increased by 33 percent to N15.15 billion over N11.38 billion posted for the same period last year. Similarly Profit After Tax increased from N8.75 billion to 11.67 billion. This represents a 33.35 per cent growth.

He said with this performance, FirstBank has, again consolidated its leadership position in the industry as Nigeria's most profitable bank, adding that this stellar performance is driven by committed staff and cutting-edge IT infrastructure typified by on-line real-time banking, internet banking which have broadened delivery channels to customers.

With Shareholders' Funds currently at N54 billion and a branch network of about 387, out of which 307 or 92 per cent are on-line real-time, the Bank's recent integration with FBN (Merchant Bankers) Limited and MBC International Bank Plc provides a fresh fillip for business expansion.

According to the Head Image Management the next few months is expected to witness another flurry of activities in the Bank's integration process.

Hard time awaits banks, telecom coys

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

GSN operators, Telecommunication companies and some banks with high masts across the country may soon be on collision course with aviation authorities following a planned increase on the aviation clearance fees being collected on the masts.

The impending increment has to do with the ongoing swerving of responsibility between the nation's regulatory body, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, NCA and the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency, NAMA.

NAMA has recently woken up to challenge the collection of aviation height clearance fees which NCA had all along been collecting.

Ministry revalidates mining licences

Of the 4,000 mining licences issued by the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development since its inception, only 1,537 of them were submitted for revalidation out of which 1,417 were successful.

Special assistant to the minister on media, Diran Onifade told newsmen yesterday in Abuja that 33 were provisionally successful, subject to the provision of further requirements, while 87 were denied revalidation.

The categories of titles for the revalidated licences include entry permits, prospecting rights, exclusive prospecting licences, mining leases, quarrying leases and quarrying licences.

Onifade explained that from the ministry's records, about 4,000 mining leases, licences and permits were issued.

"But when asked to come up with evidence to support their licences, when the revalidation exercise started late last year, only 1,537 submitted their licences for the exercise," he said.

He said the exercise was part of the cleaning up exer-

cise of both the ministry and the title registry in an effort to reposition them to meet service delivery and conform with international standards.

He explained that once the computerisation of the

cadastre unit of the ministry was completed, licences, leases and permits could be done on-line from different parts of the country, which would also ensure transparency.

"Issuance of such titles would also be done on first come first serve basis and would be based only on merit as against the previous practice where it was the exclusive right of the minister to issue licences," he said.

Transport ministry strategises for transformation

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Senior Reporter

Following a presidential directive to the minister of transport, Dr. Abiye S. P Sekibo to evolve a more pragmatic blue-print that would facilitate rapid transformation of the nation's transport sector, the ministry has convened an Inter-Ministerial meeting of stakeholders on the review of master plan on integrated transportation infrastructure and national transport policy in the country.

It would be recalled that presidential Olusegun Obasanjo, at a forum at the villa directed the transport minister to do something fast to transform the transport sector. Since then, *Business Trust* gathered the transport minister has been cracking brain to prove to his boss that he

can change the face of the nation's transport sector for the better.

One of such moves was the inter-ministerial meeting to review the master plan on integrated transportation infrastructure as well as the national transport policy held yesterday in Abuja. The meeting will also dialogue and evolve strategies that would

move the transport sector of the economy forward in an integrated and coordinated manner.

Addressing the meeting, the transport minister pointed out that the sector has over the years suffered from "criminal neglect, due mainly to dwindling government funds in the sectors. Worse still, the sector also suffers from uncoordinated plans and fragmented institutional framework which leads to intermodal imbalance"

Crude oil prices to remain high - Daukoru

The OPEC President and Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr Edmund Daukoru, says the current high cost of crude oil is not likely to nose dive.

"I believe the current high crude prices will not return to the old days when a barrel sold at between 20 dollars and 28 dollars," Daukoru said in a chat with newsmen in Abuja yesterday.

According to him, those days are gone forever given the high demand of oil in countries such as India, China and the Americas.

He said that the high prices were due to worries of high demand of gasoline in the Americas as well as low refining capacity.

"I expect prices by the close of the year to be at between 65 dollars and 67 dollars per barrel.

"We may see some fluctuations here and there but not permanent decline," he said.

He said there must be deliberate efforts to improve refining capacity in consuming nations as a panacea to high cost of refined products.

The OPEC president said that refining capacity had stagnated in the last 29 years.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Dollar	131.86	132.86
Pounds	239.27	241.09
EURO	164.42	165.66
YEN	1.20	1.21
WAUA	193.58	195.04
RIYAL	35.15	35.42
CFA	0.240	0.250
Rand	20.54	21.55
S/Dollar	8.00	9.52
Yuan	16.00	17.00

Business Trust

Management Tips

Becoming an effective manager

An effective manager pays attention to many facets of management, leadership and learning within organizations. So, it's difficult to take the topic of "management success" and say that the following ten items are the most important.

(1) The most important issue in management success is being a person that others want to follow. Every action you take during your career in an organisation helps determine whether people will one day want to follow you.

(2) A successful manager, one whom others want to follow:

(3) Builds effective and responsive interpersonal relationships. Reporting staff members, colleagues and executives respect his or her ability to demonstrate caring,

collaboration, respect, trust and attentiveness.

(4) Communicates effectively in person, print and email.

(5) Listening and two-way feedback characterize his or her interaction with others.

(6) Builds the team and enables other staff to collaborate more effectively with each other. People feel they have become more - more effective, more creative, more productive - in the presence of a team builder.

(7) Understands the financial aspects of the business and sets goals and measures and documents staff progress and success.

(8) Knows how to create an environment in which people experience positive morale and recognition and employees are motivated to work hard for the success of the business.

(9) Leads by example and provides recognition when

others do the same.

(10) Helps people grow

and develop their skills and capabilities through

education and on-the-job learning.



Good work situation often results in success.

Employee motivation and positive morale

Development is more than training: The opportunity for personal development is one of the more important variables in personnel selection and retention today. Training and education, in what the employee is interested in learning, is one of the key factors in retention and motivation. Employers who pay for classes, conferences, and professional associations encourage staff growth and ensure staff motivation. One of my clients, a mid-sized manufacturing company in Romulus, Michigan was committed to becoming a learning organization and to the ongoing professional growth of staff.

They paid for classes employees took, regardless of topic, because they believed they had better employees when employees chose to learn and develop their knowledge. At this same company, a press supervisor and a press operator shared with me that they were having trouble applying the team development skills they were learning from me at work.

Their local Rotary Club and their Little League Baseball team were benefiting, however. As the company gradually changed its culture, the practice they had in team building within the outside organisations

bore fruit within the company. So, cross-fertilization will benefit your organization in the long run.

I don't think many will argue with me about the importance of staff development. The important twist, however, is to allow staff members to determine the areas in which they want education and training. These ideas will help you increase staff motivation by providing opportunities for development.

In conjunction with each staff person and their supervisor, create a Performance Development Plan which is reviewed quarterly.

Offer regular, active assistance to enable employees to carry out their plans. An example is to monitor topics about which many employees seek information and offer classes and learning opportunities in these areas. Ensure that supervisors are sitting down with employees quarterly and that people are making progress on their plan. Use slow months in your business as opportunities for staff development.

Pay for classes, conferences, books, and other learning opportunities for all staff. Ask staff to regularly visit customers to learn more about their needs from your organization.

Read books or see videos

together as a staff. Schedule time to discuss what people are learning from the reading. Use the reading to develop new ideas and approaches. At TechSmith Corporation (the developers of SnagIt and Camtasia software for multimedia screen capture), the marketing staff regularly selects and reads books which will help them develop their marketing skills.

Schedule meetings which span several departments or two layers of management in your organization. Use these meetings as opportunities to teach employees about your business.

Ask various people to represent your department at company meetings. Employees will expand their outlook, feel important and expand their knowledge about the business.

Schedule people into assignments that stretch their skills and cause them to learn.

Provide cross-training opportunities so that staff members learn all of the jobs in their work areas. You'll increase your flexibility and theirs as well.

Use promotions and lateral assignments to further develop staff skills.

Eliminate jobs that are repetitive and that have a deadly sameness day in and day out. Think about what is happening to the minds, the talents, the interest and the flexibility of the people who do them. Your staff deserves

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Government of Niger State wishes to bring to the notice of the general public that Engineer Abdulkadir A. Kure, the Executive Governor of Niger State, has approved the revocation of the Right of Occupancy / Certificate of Occupancy of the underlisted allottees of plot / land(s) for non-development and payment of Annual Ground Rent(s).

LISTS OF REVOCATION

1.	MALLAM IBRAHIM BABA	NGS 8144	PLOT No. 23 MTP 43
2.	MATHIAS NAPOKA DAUDA	NGS 4201	PART OF MTP 20 LAYOUT
3.	EWARD DAUDA	NGS 1118	PLOT No. 55 MTP 20 LAYOUT
4.	MRS. FATIMA MAHMUDI.	NGS 11235	PLOT No. 60 MTP 20 LAYOUT
5.	FRANCIS UABOR	NGS 4135	PLOT No. 159 MTP 25 LAYOUT
6.	MRS. PADA ABU	NGS 4161	PLOT No. 175 MTP 25 LAYOUT
7.		NGS 16983	PART OF MTP 77 LAYOUT
8.			PLOT No. 11 MTP 20 LAYOUT
9.			PLOT No. 24 MTP 20 LAYOUT
10.			PLOT No. 71 MTP 21 LAYOUT
11.	ABUJA INDUSTRIES LTD	NGS 22908	INDUSTRIAL NEW WUSE
12.	PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES LTD	NGS 22909	COMMERCIAL NEW WUSE
13.	ALHAJI ISAH MOHAMMED	NGS 345	COMMERCIAL BIDA
14.	ALL STATES TRAVELS LTD	NGS 28372	SULEJA
15.	MERACO NIGERIA LIMITED	NGS 20345	"
16.	MOHAMMED SANI NASIRU	NGS 28834	"
17.	ALHAJI RABO ABDULLAHI S/PAWA	NGS 28457	"
18.	ALHAJI SULEIMAN S/PAWA	NGS 20230	"
19.	MOI ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGIES LTD.	NGS 9073	MINNA

SIGNED:
PERMANENT SECRETARY

BUSINESS TRUST

Shell denies bribing Ogoni village

The Shell Petroleum development company has denied offering bribe to a village and its chief in Ogoni land describing the allegation as baseless.

In a statement in Port Harcourt, the company said, it only made donations to the ministry of environment in connection with an oil spill, saying the gesture was purely humanitarian.

The statement from the company read in part: "the Shell Petroleum Development Company SPDC has been informed of allegations made by the National Youth Council of Ogoni People that the company paid a bribe of N5 million and also gave food items to the paramount ruler of K-Dere in Ogoni land in an attempt to "undermine resistance" and sway "local resolve," this is not true.

The company handed over relief materials to the Rivers State Ministry of Environment for onward delivery to

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

K-Dere community in respect of an oil spill, which occurred when unknown persons tampered with a wellhead in the area. Officials of the ministry had brokered discussions between SPDC and the community at which it was agreed that SPDC should supply the relief materials to the affected people.

The materials were given purely on humanitarian grounds.

The company has been involved in a running battle with communities in Ogoni land since the crisis that led to the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa.



Former Head of State, Chief Ernest Shonekan, NUJ president, Smart Adeyemi, and DG, ITF, Prof Olu Akerejola, at an award ceremony for Prof. Akerejola in Abuja...recently

Nigerians to access energy services by 2007

The federal government has set 2007 as target for 60% of Nigerians to access energy services.

Presently, only 40 percent of the entire Nigerian population has access to energy services, while half of this figure goes to rural dwellers.

Power and Steel Minister, Senator Liyel Imoke gave the indication yesterday in Abuja at the inauguration of the National Multisectoral Committee on Energy Access (NMCEA) held at the ECOWAS Secretariat.

Imoke stated that apart from constraining economic development, inadequate access to energy especially in the rural areas of Nigeria has also perpetuated the vicious cycle of poverty, noting that this has profound implications for the country's inability to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as well as the laudable goals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

The Multi-sectoral committee which has as its Chairman, Professor Anthony Adegbulugbe, Presidential Adviser on Energy and National Coordinator of NAPEP, Dr. Magnus Kpakol as Vice-chairman has other eleven members drawn from the presidency, power and steel, Energy Commission, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, NNPC, SMEDAN, Ministry of Agriculture, Women Affairs, Cooperation and Integration in Africa, Environment and the Chairman, House of Repre-

sentatives Committee on Power.

The terms of reference of the committee according to Imoke, are: To Identify energy options for rural and peri-urban areas in the six geo-political zones in the country

Austin Odo, Business Editor

and develop strategies to enhance energy access, apart from advising on implementation strategies to increase average energy access from

40 percent to 60 percent by 2007.

Other terms of reference are to coordinate and harmonize energy access initiatives of various government ministries, departments and agencies and also coordinate all

activities related to energy access initiatives especially the Japanese Government funded project, World Bank loan project and ECOWAS-WAEMU initiatives to avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

Professor Adegbulugbe, who is the chairman of NMCEA in his welcome address at the

occasion, said that the overall goal in setting up the committee is to increase access to energy from its present low base in order to guarantee better quality lives for the people of this country.

Virgin Nigeria slammed N.5m fine over safety rules

The nation's aviation regulatory body, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, has slammed a fine of N.5 million on Virgin Nigeria airlines, for violating safety rules.

The airline was sanctioned by the NCAA for failing to carry out an air worthiness directive passed on to it by the ministerial task force on verification of airworthiness of commercial aircraft in the country.

Operational style of the airline also drew the anger of the regulatory body when a plot to fly some Nigerian deportees with a cargo aircraft was uncovered. The

Deportees were to be flown home on the order of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

A release signed by the Media Assistant to the Director General of NCAA, Sam Adurogboye, indicated that the airline flaunt safety directives by continue to operate with an aircraft which had earlier been marked 'not airworthy' by the task force.

Adurogboye said in the release that "the violation arose from unaccomplished air worthiness directive, AD99-10-12 of one of its aircraft, a contravention of the requirement of continuing airworthiness of aircraft as stipulated by Air Navigation Regulation (ANRs) and for which appropriate penalties are stipulated in schedule 15 (1-4) of the ANRs."

The regulatory authority also fined the pilot that flew the aircraft and the ground engineer N50,000.00 each, for allowing themselves to be used.

In a related development, a plan by the airline to airlift Nigerian deportees with a cargo plane has been turned down by the regulatory body. The airline was to airlift the deportees who were ordered home as illegal immigrant on the order of the presidency.

Virgin Nigeria, according to Adurogboye had concluded plans to airlift the deportees, using a cargo plane an Ilyushin, IL-76 before

NCAA got wind of the development and ordered a stop.

In a letter conveying disapproval, Director General of NCAA, Dr Harold Demuren insisted that appropriate passenger aircraft be used for the exercise.

Air transport workers demand autonomy for NCAA

Air Transport Service Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSAN) has asked the federal government to give full autonomy to the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), saying ministerial interference is hampering its performance.

"What we are having today is cosmetic autonomy, NCAA should be treated the way CBN is treated, DG of NCAA should be given the same powers Soludo is given. In other words, the aviation industry should be given the status of specialised government agency like we have in the CBN, SEC among others in the financial sector, the ATSSAN president, Solomon E. Ehiomah said,

According to him, despite the fact that CBN, SEC and

From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

other banking institutions are under the ministry of finance, the minister hardly interfere in their day-to-day operations contrary to what is obtains in the aviation industry.

"Today the DGs, MDs are errand boys at the corridor of Alhaji Shehu Shagari secretariat in Abuja," he said lamenting "they hardly have time to sit down and attend to papers in their offices.

He argued that if the agencies in the banking sector could operate without much interference from the supervisory ministry, there is no reason why the DG of NCAA could not ground any airline that breaches safety regulations without approval from the aviation minister.



Prof. Borishade, Aviation Minister

Freight forwarders form new association

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

Five major freight forwarding associations in Nigeria have resolved to establish a Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations of Nigeria (FFAN).

These associations include the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Association of Nigerian License Customs Agents (ANLCA), Institute of Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (IFFN) the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN).

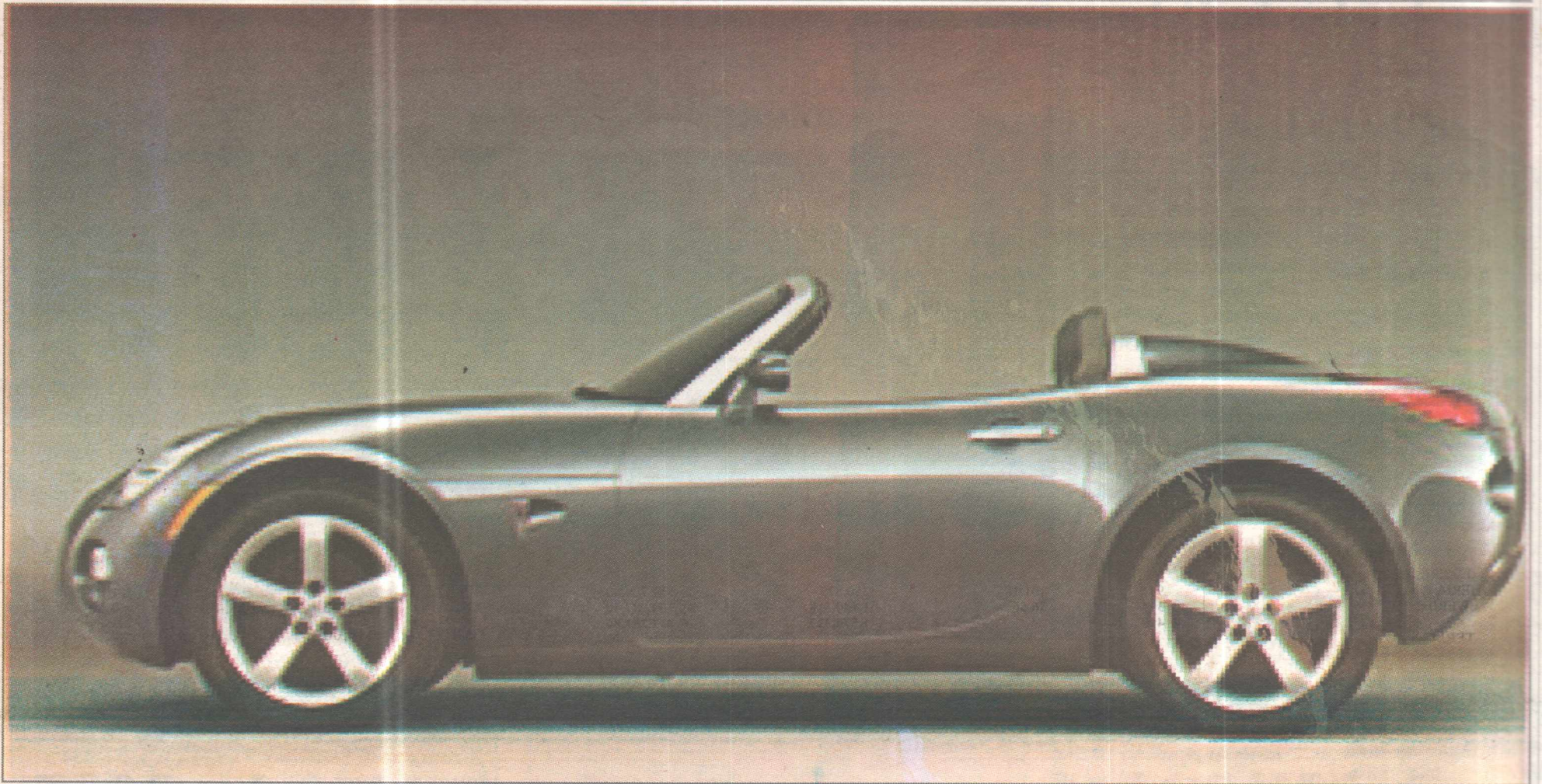
In a statement dated February 6th 2006 signed by Dr. Boniface O. Aniebonam Protem National co-ordinator and logistics manager it was stated that other small group associations, corporate and individual practitioners are to indicate their interest and membership in writing.

While appealing to all legitimate stakeholders to support this great objective for freight forwarders to take their rightful position in the comity of professionals in Nigeria, Dr. Aniebonam said that the FFAN as envisaged is to take over the administration and management of the council of registered freight forwarders when it eventually take off.

A Bill seeking to regulate freight forwarding practices in Nigeria is before the National Assembly.

Business Trust

Motoring



Solstice

Solstice, Pontiac's first sports car

The Solstice is considered to be the Pontiac's first sports car from GM vehicles ranging from sedans to sport-utility vehicles, the company has said.

The Solstice is the first car built on GM's Kappa small-car, rear-wheel-drive platform and has a rigid,

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

mostly hand-welded chassis because Pontiac will annually build only 20,000-30,000 Solstices and such welding saves money.

A nifty sports car proposed by Pontiac was shot down in the 1960s by

GM because it feared the car would eat into Chevrolet Corvette sales.

The main Solstice rival is the iconic Mazda Miata, which arrived in 1989. It's been redone for 2006 and starts at \$20,435. Ironically, Solstice show car designer Franz von Holzhausen from GM's California studio has left GM for Mazda, a Ford Motor affiliate.

Pontiac is able to introduce the Solstice for less than 20 grand because it dipped into GM's vast global parts bin for such things as the engine/transmission, seats, mirrors, switches, controls, fog lights and even back-up lights.

Standard items include power steering, an adjustable

steering column and an AM/FM/CD sound system, but not a heck of a lot else.

Optional items include air conditioning, cruise control, anti-lock brakes, an AM/FM/CD/MP3 player, polished steel wheels, an Onstar and XM satellite radio, remote keyless entry and power windows, locks and mirrors the car has Dual front airbags are standard, but forget side airbags or an anti-skid system because they're not offered. The plusher Saturn Sky two-seater arrives next year and will use the same rigid platform, which doesn't allow convertible rattles and cowl shake.

Powering the new Pontiac is GM's 2.4-liter dual-overhead-camshaft 4-

cylinder engine, tucked under a large hood that opens in clamshell fashion as does the trunk. This aluminum 16-valve engine produces 177 horsepower, which is enough to propel the fairly heavy 2,860-pound Solstice to 60 mph in a fairly quick 7.4 seconds if you rev it hard.

Its gearshift has fairly short, easy throws and works with a decent light clutch that has only a moderately long throw.

But third and fourth gears must be used most of the time because overdrive fifth gear is strictly for highway cruising; floor the accelerator pedal in fifth gear at low speeds and acceleration is virtually nonexistent.

The minimalist interior looks plenty sporty and has good room for two tall occupants, although some budget-grade materials are used. The "motorcycle-inspired" gauges, though are sometimes hard to read quickly because they're too deeply recessed.

The comfortable bucket seats are supportive, but their controls need to provide a larger range of comfort settings. The controls are mostly large and easily reached. There are three cupholders, but little interior room for small items. The glove compartment is tiny, but a small covered storage compartment with a flimsy cover is between the seatbacks.

Auto brief

China becomes net vehicle exporter

China became a net vehicle exporter for the first time last year, an official industry association said on Friday, helped by the sale of cheap models mostly to developing market.

The country exported 172,800 units in 2005, up 120 percent from a year earlier, with imports up a much smaller 8 percent at 161,900 units, a senior executive with the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers told Reuters.

Recent investing newsMySpace Rises As New Online Star Defence pulls holes in first Enron witness Adidas plots Reebok brand Virgin America 'frustrated' by US delays VW seeks longer hours for same pay

Chery Automobile, Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd. and Great Wall Automobile Holdings Co. Ltd. are among a handful of upstart Chinese vehicle makers eager to push exports to diversify beyond their potentially oversupplied home market, industry executives said.

Hybrid cars

Environment-friendly hybrid car is expected to hit the Chinese market at the end of 2006 after four years of development. The cars run on a mixture of electricity and fuel and are made by several Chinese car makers, including the Dongfeng Motor Corporation (DFM), Chang'an Motor Corp, Chery Auto Company and the China FAW Group Corporation.

According to Wan Gang, head of a national team of experts on the hybrid automobile program, scaled production of the vehicles has been listed as a key task in China's 11th Five-Year Program from 2006 to 2010 so many more Chinese families will own the low-emission cars by 2010. The development of hybrid vehicles was listed as a key project in China's "863 program" - a national high-tech plan initiated in March 1986 to enhance the country's overall power - as part of the Tenth Five-Year Plan in the year 2001.

In recent years, Chinese experts have made great progress on the design and development of a series of hybrid buses, including the fuel-cell bus, the hybrid-electric bus and a bus purely run on electricity.



Front view of Solstice

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Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
ADSWITCH PLC.	2	1.41	26,600	36,810.00
CUTIX PLC	2	2.65	19,000	50,350.00
NEWPAK PLC.	1	1.05	400	420.00
Sector Totals	5		46,000	87,580.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
GROMMAC INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	0.38	1,000	380.00
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	2	1.42	22,352	31,739.84
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	2	17.00	300	5,200.00
PRESCO PLC.	10	11.02	171,664	1,870,904.00
Sector Totals	15		195,316	1,908,223.84
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	11	2.65	55,089	141,392.84
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	6	5.56	10,070	55,459.40
Sector Totals	17		65,159	196,852.24
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	174	2.65	7,428,764	20,039,661.04
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	10	9.10	73,374	667,703.40
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	1	1.92	30,000	57,600.00
DIAMOND BANK PLC	1	7.75	2,000	15,500.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	8	5.11	1,940,945	9,918,228.95
FIDELITY BANK PLC	2	2.93	54,800	160,564.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	585	35.10	3,505,934	122,195,651.49
GTBANK PLC.	266	13.80	3,968,713	54,522,633.42
INVESTMENT BANKING	6	4.57	590,238	2,697,387.66
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	166	9.86	6,459,445	63,571,240.06
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	2,002,000	5,605,600.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	88	5.85	2,828,198	16,593,903.24
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	115	11.99	1,243,961	14,968,809.77
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	103	25.48	450,470	11,477,975.60
UNITY BANK PLC	3	2.50	50,100	125,250.00
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	2	0.54	21,300	11,528.00
WEMA BANK PLC.	15	3.74	448,710	1,678,175.40
ZENITH BANK PLC	14	19.64	77,862	1,529,209.68
Sector Totals	1,561		31,176,814	325,836,621.71
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC.	7	2.21	178,986	395,559.06
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	97	101.18	250,823	25,311,705.40
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	314	36.56	1,140,518	41,709,987.40
Sector Totals	418		1,570,327	67,417,251.86
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	94	35.40	716,476	25,188,827.35
BENUCE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	5	6.50	32,650	212,225.00
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	12	7.00	70,050	490,139.50
NIGERIAN ROPES PLC.	1	1.54	5,420	8,346.80
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	92	17.81	432,629	7,751,759.48
Sector Totals	204		1,257,225	33,651,298.13
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	12	4.00	46,594	183,768.74
CAP PLC.	11	8.80	93,080	830,944.36
D. N. MEYER PLC.	11	3.00	153,750	461,250.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	3	4.10	11,305	45,277.20
Sector Totals	37		304,729	1,521,240.30
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	3	1.50	28,472	42,294.35
Sector Totals	3		28,472	42,294.35
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	3	1.14	14,958	17,052.12
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	11	3.42	110,764	378,901.44
JOHN HOLT PLC.	2	1.47	21,000	30,870.00
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	59	16.20	193,044	3,127,312.80
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.97	2,611	2,532.67
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	97	16.12	730,633	11,786,261.87
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	103	20.00	362,156	7,252,873.98
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	6	0.74	65,978	48,608.79
Sector Totals	282		1,501,144	22,644,413.67
CONSTRUCTION				
CAPALBETO	1	13.30	250	3,325.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	5	22.15	9,698	214,810.70
Sector Totals	6		9,948	218,135.70
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	24	27.00	114,559	3,193,467.70
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	119	67.05	441,469	29,582,024.06
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	80	26.92	396,104	10,632,615.70
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	42	64.00	158,025	10,269,124.22
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	10	197.50	63,270	12,520,274.51
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	5	14.45	65,200	942,640.00
Sector Totals	316		1,258,627	70,840,145.99
FOOTWEAR				
LENNARDS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	0.65	100	63.00
Sector Totals	1		100	63.00
HEALTHCARE				
CHRISTLIEB PLC.	1	0.56	233	130.48
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	4	2.40	23,329	55,989.60
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	59	10.20	1,907,520	18,481,175.00
Sector Totals	64		1,931,082	18,537,295.08
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION INDUSTRIES PLC.	3	2.18	2,000	4,260.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC	4	2.70	59,805	159,727.35
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	9	0.73	236,894	172,932.62
VITAFAM NIGERIA PLC.	19	3.88	368,464	1,429,640.32
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	1	1.04	5,000	5,200.00
Sector Totals	36		672,163	1,771,760.29
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	1	0.73	20,000	14,600.00
AICO INSURANCE PLC.	3	2.39	36,000	86,040.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	10	1.40	493,700	695,420.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	2	1.68	4,164	6,822.40
GREAT NIGERIA INSURANCE PLC	2	1.38	2,000	2,740.00
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.00	2,250	2,250.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	26	2.93	635,616	1,805,750.80
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	8	2.52	160,582	397,225.90
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	9	3.00	118,734	334,072.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	2	1.20	16,000	19,200.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	10	1.29	413,252	529,881.24
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	5	3.26	196,601	643,874.44
Sector Totals	79		2,098,899	4,537,876.78
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC	5	1.18	110,000	130,650.00
Sector Totals	5		110,000	130,650.00
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	9	1.81	82,595	151,794.75
Sector Totals	9		82,595	151,794.75
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	1	0.50	1,770	885.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	106	40.05	385,883	15,645,614.19
CONOIL PLC	68	90.82	53,806	4,891,361.12
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	5	2.56	105,110	270,415.90
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	13	161.00	2,280	369,716.50
OANDO PLC	141	92.08	208,928	19,212,865.85
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	37	110.11	73,708	8,127,927.97
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	15	183.15	10,429	1,951,752.62
Sector Totals	386		841,914	50,470,539.15
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	4	1.50	23,900	35,850.00
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	2	3.33	26,050	86,746.50
Sector Totals	6		49,950	122,596.50
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	18	9.17	196,265	1,804,157.91
Sector Totals	18		196,265	1,804,157.91
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	11	2.00	103,888	206,986.00
Sector Totals	11		103,888	206,986.00
Overall Totals	3,479		43,500,617	602,097,777.25

TOP 10 TRADES AS AT YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
NB	1,140,518.00	41,709,987.40	314
UBA	1,243,961.00	14,968,809.77	115
GLAXOSMITH	1,907,520.00	18,481,175.00	59
FCMB	1,940,945.00	9,918,228.95	8
NAL	2,002,000.00	5,605,600.00	2
OCEANIC	2,828,198.00	16,593,903.24	88
FIRSTBANK	3,505,934.00	122,195,651.495	85
GUARANTY	3,968,713.00	54,522,633.42	266
INTERCONT	6,459,445.00	63,571,240.06	166
ACCESS	7,428,764.00	20,039,661.04	174

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	195.00	197.50	+2.50
GUINNESS	100.00	101.18	+1.18
FLOURMILL	26.10	26.92	+0.82
FIRSTBANK	34.30	35.10	+0.80
CONOIL	90.03	90.82	+0.79
PRESCO	10.50	11.02	+0.52
MOBIL	160.50	161.00	+0.50
ASHAKACEM	35.12	35.40	+0.28
GLAXOSMITH	10.00	10.20	+0.20
LONGMAN	3.18	3.33	+0.15

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	190.95	183.15	-7.80
NBC	67.00	64.00	-3.00
AP	41.15	40.05	-1.10
7UP	28.00	27.00	-1.00
NNFM	15.21	14.45	-0.76
UAC-PROP	9.65	9.17	-0.48
UACN	16.40	16.12	-0.28
UBA	12.20	11.99	-0.21
CAP	9.00	8.80	-0.20
CFAO	3.60	3.42	-0.18

Union Bank trains personnel on money laundering

Union Bank of Nig. Plc has trained 452 of its personnel on how to combat money laundering and other economic and financial crimes. The bank said that the staff were trained on the menace at a just concluded seminar organised as part of efforts to ensure the bank's compliance with country's money laundering laws.

The latest edition of "Stallion News", an in-house publication of the bank, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said that the seminar was held at seven locations across the country.

"The primary aim of the seminar was to acquaint staff with current issues on Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2004 and the effect of the law on the Bank's operations," he bank said.

It said that the seminar was also to train participants, which included branch managers and compliance officers, on how to render prompt and accurate accounts so as to avert sanctions from the regulatory authorities.

Exchange rates for leading currencies

Following are the middle exchange rates for leading currencies against the euro:

	CURRENT	HIGH	LOW
US Dollar	1.1897	1.1922	1.1888
Japanese Yen	140.29	140.39	139.78
British Pound	0.6837	0.684	0.6819
Swiss Franc	1.5549	1.556	1.5544
Danish Crown	7.4644	7.467	7.4646
Greek Drachma	-	-	-
Norwegian Crown	8.107	8.1102	8.0841
Swedish Crown	9.3255	9.326	9.2967
Australian Dollar	1.6127	1.6156	1.6119
Canadian Dollar	1.3724	1.3754	1.372
Hong Kong Dollar	9.2358	9.2495	9.226
Russian Rouble	33.597	33.7475	33.5647
Singapore Dollar	1.9383	1.9427	1.9333

Source: (Reuters/NAN)

The agonies of A

They would swarm upon any broken down car or motorcycle, and converge on its occupant or rider, provided he or she looks flashy, or simply neat enough and respectable in their estimation. They behave in the fashion of honey bees warming on a flower to suck its nectar.

With each of them carrying his tools of trade, they could take a step or two and move towards the "Rankaidade," "Oga," "Alhaji," "Chief" or "Madam," and all in unison begin to announce their various types of artisanship. They often ask their short time employer what type of job he or she wants done, as each of them praises his capacity to undertake his own type of job, to persuade the person to choose him for the job he wants done. This is especially if it is the type of artisanship job he regularly undertakes.

They are a convergence of mainly masons, plumbers, painters and carpenters. They line up or cluster beside the road at some strategic locations in the city of Abuja, most notably, the Abushi roundabout, and a place just before Wuye junction, from dawn to dusk. Each of them carrying his tools of artisanship, most of them in a small sack, their tools, or on their shoulders, simply displayed on the ground before them. Whoever has any type of such job to be done for him or her, could drive there to choose the right artisan to do it.

However, as they stand at such locations all day long, they suffer the deep anguish of abject poverty, hunger and uncertainty of whether or not they would get something to do, where they could be, what they would be required to do, and

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Reporter

what could happen to them when their short time employers carry them to only God knows where, to do the jobs for them.

The hunger and uncertainty could be seen on the faces of the artisans, who make an average of N500 per day, depending on the availability of the jobs, as they move around from one side of the road to another, in search of jobs that require using their physical strength and energy. Majority of them are married and in some cases with a large number of dependants, which they feed with the income they make from the jobs. The jobs are their sole means of livelihood, and they pursue them vigorously to enable them make ends meet.

Mohammed Kabiru, a 34 year-old indigene of Tsafe local government area of Zamfara state, has two wives, three children and six dependents, whom he feeds from the proceeds he realises from his work as a mason. According to him, he started the job some months ago, following the demolition of his shop at Utako, by the authorities in the Federal Capital Territory. Kabiru said he is into the job, because he lost over N100,000 as a result of the demolition exercise, and was unable to raise capital to start trading afresh. "I am not used to this kind of job, because I have been a trader for quite a long while, and I derive pleasure in what I was doing. But now the shop is gone, and life is becoming more miserable for



Mohammed Kabiru, who claims to have lost about N100,000 as a result of demolition in the FCT, waiting for customers.

me by the day. Even my children that used to attend the Jabu primary school have stopped, because I don't have the money to pay for their school fees. All I get from this job is money for food, which is not forthcoming everyday," he said.

A plumber at the artisans' location around the Mabushi roundabout, Philip Moses, said that the trauma they went through is simply beyond description. Moses, who came to Abuja from Jos-North local government area of Plateau state, said they sometimes stay all day long without a single job, and that the money they used to get when there is a job is nothing to write home

about. "The beauty of the job is that we are doing a legitimate business. Some of our contemporaries are in different prisons across the country, as a result of one illegal act or the other. As you can see, we are poor people, and we don't need to tell anybody that we are suffering, because it is showing all over us. But we thank God all the same," he said.

Nwachuku Obize, Gabriel Maigari, Yahaya Ali, Zubairu Hassan, Olayinka Olorufemi and Daniel Joshua are a set of plumbers who came to Abuja from different parts of the country. They said that they are facing untold hardships in the FCT, due to the non availability of plumbing

works. The plumbers also said that they are finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet, because there are no alternative jobs to plumbing that they have knowledge of. The plumbers attributed lack of job in their chosen fields to the epileptic water supply in the FCT.

Nasiru Mohammed is a carpenter, who stands around Mabushi roundabout on a daily basis, looking for a job to do. Mohammed, 40, said he has three wives and four children, and that the income he made from carpentry does not take care of his daily family needs. According to him, he left Kazaure in Jigawa state during late General Sani

Abacha's regime, and that things were going well for him until recently, when he hardly earns N700 in a week. According to him, carpentry jobs are not easy to come by, but when there are jobs, he gets up to N1500 or even N2000 a day.

In the same vein, Auwal Ibrahim of Jama'are local government of Bauchi state, a 30 year-old mason who lives in Utako, said that they stay sometimes for about ten days without a single job. Ibrahim, father of two children, said also that it is quite difficult for him to feed his family. His colleagues, Mallam Usman Abubakar and Muhammad Ala from Zamfara state, and Alhaji



Yahaya Ali, a plumber, holding one of his tools



Tanimu Dari and other masons with their tools waiting for customers

Abuja artisans

Ashiru Usman, Tanimu Dari, Yahaya Abdullahi and Ibrahim Mu'azu from Katsina state, share the same view with him.

Lack of regular job opportunities that could fetch the artisans some money, according to Salihu Abdulrahman of Igabi local government area of Kaduna state, was what caused him to lose a girl he liked very much. Abdulrahman said that he left his village for Abuja to change his life pattern and acquire small funds for marriage, but was quite unable to raise money even for the dowry and other things needed for the wedding arrangements. According to him, the girl was eventually married to somebody else, because of his inability to meet up with the demands of the marriage. "I feel tremendous pain that I couldn't raise anything to go home and marry. Sometimes you will stay here, from morning till evening without getting a job, and when there is job, you will end up getting N500 or N700. How can one achieve anything in life with that kind of money? We are determined to face the challenges of life squarely, hoping that one day Allah will answer our prayers," he said.

The artisans are not just worried about the meagre amount of money they make, or the lack of jobs at their doorsteps. They are equally concerned about their safety, as they go about in search of gainful employment opportunities. A large number of them sometimes have reservations as to what the original intention of their short time employers could be, and what could eventually happen to them when they are taken away to another location. For Lanre Adekunle, Danlami Ubale and Shu'aibu Yunus who are into carpentry, as hungry job seekers, artisans are vulnerable to people with criminal intentions, particularly those who hide under the guise of trying to help them secure decent jobs and leave the streets. One of the artisans, a 33 year-old lumber from Kumbotso local government of Kano state, who identified himself as Lawal Murtala, tells a dramatic story: "There was one time a woman invited me to her house to fix a faulty pump in the bathroom. After

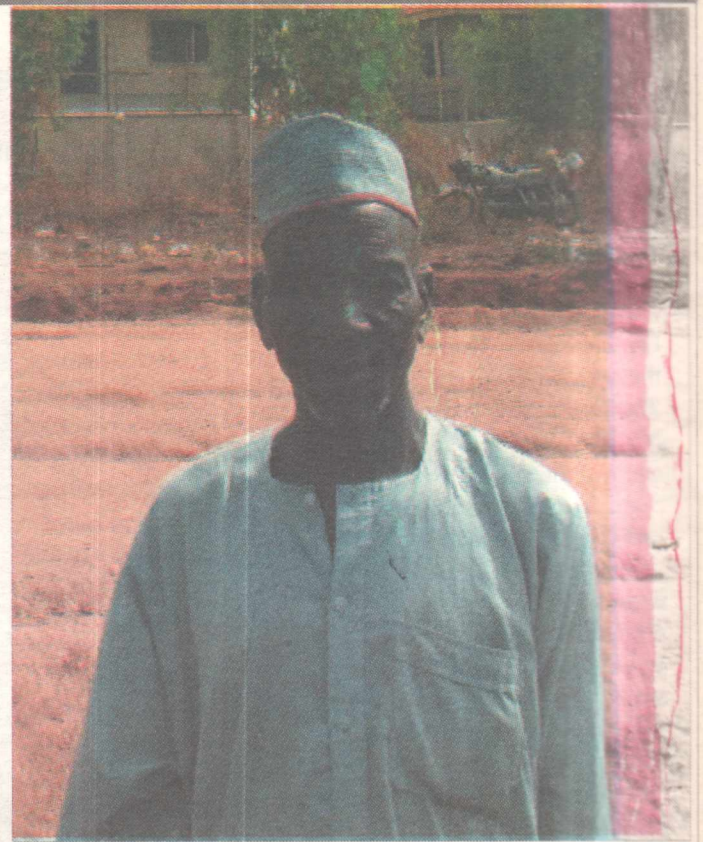
to do she said I should go to a bathroom in one of the bedrooms to take a shower. I told her that I don't take bath until 8:00 pm when I am through with the day's work. But she insisted that I must do what she asked me, because she has her reasons, or she will call the Police. When I heard that I obeyed her instruction. I was in the bathroom when somebody came in with a car. I don't know who the person is, but he met me and was asking why I used the bath there. And the woman said quickly that she brought me to fix some items

in the bathroom, and that I should bath to test whether the repaired items are all right."

The bachelors among the artisans, also spoke on how, as artisans, they think they would find it hard to get a life partner and settle down to raise children. The fear of not being accepted because of their financial inadequacies, were raised by Marcus Tunde, Nafi'u Idi and James Patrick, who jointly argued that girls look down on them and consider them failures in life. For Ahmed Nuhu and Nathaniel Bulus, their present lives as painter and

carpenter respectively, are so distasteful that they don't think of a life partner. Specifically, Bulus said that he is at the moment occupied with how to get something to buy food and cloth to better his life, and not to marry a wife, which he said would compound his problems.

But Dantala Mamuda, a painter, said that he specifically came to Abuja from Birnin-Kebbi in Kebbi state, to go back home to marry and live what he referred to as "a good and decent live with his friends and relatives."



Mohammad Ali, 50, stands around the Mabuchi roundabout on a daily basis to look for jobs.



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KANO TRUST

Libel: Judge angry over absence of *The Sun's* counsel

The presiding judge of a Kano high court, Justice Abdu Aboki, has expressed dismay over the absence of the counsel to *The Sun's* newspaper in a N500 million libel suit filed against the paper by Kano State deputy governor, engineer Magaji Abdullahi.

Justice Abdu Aboki, who expressed anger at the continued absence of the defendants and their counsel at the courts proceedings on the seventh and eighth of this month as earlier stated on the last date of hearing of the case on December, 29th 2005.

The judge who was ruling on the submission of coun-

By Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent, (Kano)
sel to Engr. Magaji Abdullahi, Barrister Felix Jones Osimerha (who held brief for Barrister Kayode Olatunji), observed that the suit has suffered so much adjournment from the side of the defence due to the defendants and counsels non-appearance in court.

Justice Aboki had earlier dismissed an application brought forward by the *Sun* newspapers and the other defendants praying the court to set aside the issuance of the writ of summons and all other processes in the suit by the plaintiff, and the service of all other process by the defend-

ants on the plaintiff, arguing that such processes violated section 1 and section 308 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Describing the application as frivolous and deliberate attempt to slow down the case, the judge held that it was reasonable for the court to entertain, hear and determine the suit as the quoted sections of the constitution do not contemplate a situation where such persons mentioned in section 308 (i) and 308 (3) can institute a civil action for the determination of their civil right and obligation in their private capacity.

Aboki also refused re-

quest by the defendants praying for stay of proceedings in the case pending the determination of appeal at the Federal Court of Appeal, Kaduna on the earlier ruling of the court which refused to set aside the issuance of the writ of summons and all the other processes on the defendants and by the defendants on the plaintiff.

He ruled that in granting an order of stay of proceedings, courts are expected to be guided primarily by the necessity to be fair to both parties while making reference with the case of Okafor V. Nwaife (1989) 4 NWLR pt.

64 page 129 at 137.

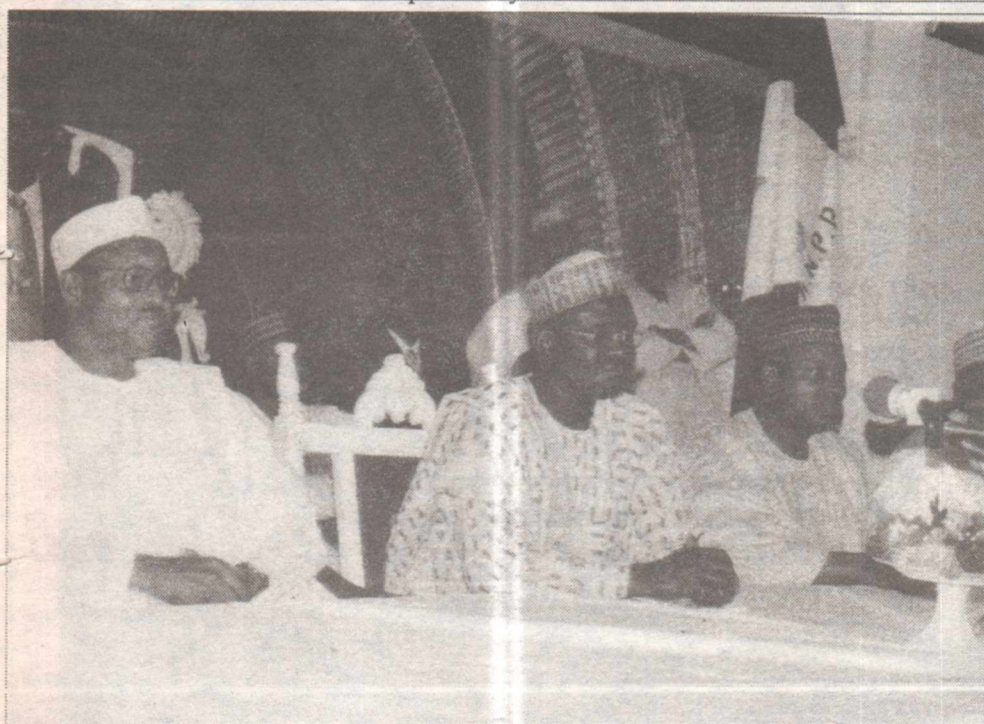
He maintained that any attempt to grant stay of proceedings in the matter pending appeal to the Court of Appeal will be great disadvantage to the plaintiff as well as oppressive as was decided in the case of Akhinwa V Principal Lotteries Officer (1969) 1 AllNLR 426.

He added that neither the *Sun* newspapers nor the defendants have shown any circumstantial evidence to warrant the grant of their application for stay of proceedings neither have they discharge the onus on them to show that in the circumstances of

their case it will be unjust or inequitable to refuse their application.

The court has ordered the defendants to appear before it on April 5th and 6th, 2006 or be represented by their counsel and put in their defence in a N500 million libel suit filed against them.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Governor of Kano state, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, had earlier sued the *Sun Newspaper* and four others for libel which was published in the December 23, edition of the newspaper, claiming N500 million as damages, apology and retraction of the story by the newspaper.



(From left-right): General Muhammadu Buhari, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, his deputy, Engr. Masali Abdullahi and Speaker, Kano State House of Assembly, Alhaji Balarabe Saidu Gani, at a function held at Government House, Kano...recently

Northern govts tasked on women participation in politics

The need for governments in the North to increase the participation of women in democratic process has been emphasised.

The emphasis was made by the Jigawa State commissioner for Women Affairs, Hajiya Fatima Hamza Mai-Borno, during a roundtable discussion on women in leadership, held at the British Council, Kano.

Hajiya Fatima Hamza Mai-Borno expressed concern over the plight of women in the North who are not in position, and pointed out that they often find it difficult to get connected with governance.

The commissioner appealed to women in positions to change their attitudes in order to help enhance women participation in democratic process for them to have a say

By Jamilah Nuhu Musa, Correspondent, (Kano)

Hajiya Fatima Hamza Mai-Borno stated further that the aim of the meeting was to initiate strategies through which women's education can also be enhanced as according to her, participation of Northern women in democratic process would be better enhanced if they are more educated.

She noted that most women in Jigawa did not know how to benefit from the polling unit funds exercise of the Jigawa State government which was initiated to improve the lot of the people in the state.

She stressed that combined efforts of women in governance in the North would greatly enhance status of women in the grassroots level to assist them contribute their quota for develop-

ment.

Earlier, a facilitator of the roundtable, Mrs. Amina Galadima, who is the senior state programme officer of Security, Justice and Growth Programme (SJGP), stated that the roundtable was to fashion out the group's goal as well as its status, relationships, roles and focus with a view to achieving desirable objectives.

In her comment, the director, British Council Library, Sue Mace, said that the British Council was ready to equip women to enhance participation of Northern Women in the democratic process.

She enjoined the roundtable meeting to draw from the experience of women in the United Kingdom in order to help northern women face challenges in political representation and participation.

NAPEP dismayed over lack of assistance to artisans

Kano State coordinator of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) Alhaji Mustapha Suleiman Darazo has expressed concern over the lack of assistance to artisans after finishing their training.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the office of the Media Trust Limited, the publishers of both *Weekly* and *Daily Trust* newspapers, Alhaji Darazo urged the state government to stem support given to NAPEP trainees in order for them to pursue a viable business.

Alhaji Mustapha Suleiman Danazo said the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has since its inception in the state trained over 25,000 youth on various skills acquisition programmes, but expressed dismay that most of these artisans could only boast of certificates issued to them as no loan were given to support them.

The coordinator stressed that the certificates issued to them guaranteed each of them N50,000 loan from the National Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB), while charging stakeholders in the employment generation sector to find means of sponsoring the training and adequately funding artisans to ensure self sustainability.

He also decreed the rampant unemployment among youth in the state which he said is the bedrock to delinquencies in the society despite the government effort to stamp-out the menace.

The NAPEP coordinator said their visit was as a result of demand by NDE to go into partnership with media organizations with a view to

publicizing their activities in the state.

Responding, the Kano Regional Editor of the Trust newspapers, Alhaji Musa Umar Kazaure, commended the directorate for its effort to generate employment for teaming unemployed youth in the state. He however, suggested that NDE need to do more in both sustaining the programme and providing soft loans for grandaunds.

Kazaure also emphasized the need for the directorate to do more on publicity campaign with a view to educating the unemployed youth on the vices of restiveness which will encourage them to accept the programme.

He however assured the team of his readiness to attend all functions, organized by the directorate or press releases for public consumption.

Dala LG distributes relief materials to disaster victims

No fewer than 900 people who were affected by flood and fire disasters in Dala local government have received relief materials to the tune of over N10m.

Distributing the materials to the victims, the council chairman, Alhaji Mahmud Sani Madakin Gini, explained that the gesture was meant to minimize the sufferings of the affected people.

He said multiple flood and fire disasters that engulfed residential houses as well as commercial areas have claimed property worth thousands of naira.

The council boss, who described disasters as one of the factors hampering rapid socio-economic development of a nation, emphasized that all hands should be on deck to come to the rescue of the victims.

He noted that as a proactive devise to quell the re-occurrence of the disasters, the council has put aside effective modalities to enlighten the public on viable fire outbreak prevention and

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Correspondent (Kano)

control. According to the chairman, in view of the fact that flood is being caused by inadequate drainages, the council would soon embark on massive drainage construction and clearance before the commencement of the rainy season.

Also speaking, the council scribe, Alhaji Hamisu Sarki, disclosed that, additional relief materials worth N13m have been donated to the victims by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

He said a member of the National Assembly representing Kano Central, Senator Rufa'i Sani Hanga, has facilitated the release of the materials from NEMA.

Alhaji Sarki, however cautioned the affected community to desist from indiscriminate use of fire and dumping of refuse on the water ways, which he said were among the principal causes of flood and fire disasters.

EKO TRUST



Some Lagos State retired perm. secs. at a ceremony organised for them at Alausa Secretariat...recently

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

BRT project gets luxury bus boost

The Lagos State government has entered into an agreement with a Brazilian automobile firm, Marcopolo, on the shipment of 15 luxury buses from Brasilia to Lagos every week in other to facilitate the smooth take off of its Bus Rapid Transit project.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that the state had been granted the sum of N4billion; \$29million by Afrexim Bank based in Egypt to enable the state kick start its Bus Rapid Transit project.

Packaged for the Tinubu administration through a consortium of Nigerian Banks led by the First Atlantic Bank Plc., the facility was to assist the state government procure of the first batch of 200 high capacity buses.

The long-term agreement is the establishment of a Bus Assembly Plant at a proposed site in Epe, a Lagos suburb, for the local production of at least 300 luxury buses annually by the Marcopolo International Corporation and BHL Investment and Technology (Overseas).

Under the partnership, the Brazilian company would have the largest equity of 60 per cent, while the Lagos State government retain 40 per cent share of the Assembly Plant.

But for "unforeseeable developments and circumstances", the first batch of the 200 buses would have arrived the shores of Nigeria by November 2005.

"Now, as a result of unforeseeable developments and circumstances, the buses are now being expected from February 2006", an update prepared by Project Co-coordinator of the Lagos BRT project read.

The Lagos State government had adopted the BRT system as a strategic intervention in the Lagos transportation business to facilitate affordable mass transportation for the teeming commuters within the Lagos metropolis, phase out the rickety-the out-of fashion "Molue" from Lagos roads and restrict the operations of the mini commercial bus operators to feeder services.

LASG buys boats to monitor census

The federal government has purchased some speed boats to cover the rural riverine areas during the forthcoming national census.

Disclosing this in Lagos, the National Population Commission (NPC) federal commissioner in Lagos, Alhaji Yerima Giade, said arrangements had also been made to mobilise the speed boats belonging to the Immigration, Customs, Police and other security agencies for the exercise.

He said that preparations for the national population exercise were in top gear and materials for the exercise had been received. "We are getting ready for the exercise. We

For the pilot phase of the BRT scheme, the Agege-Marina route has been identified with the high capacity buses taking off at Obajunja near Pen Cinema, a Lagos suburb, and terminus at the CMS, on Lagos Island, while Oworonsoki has been proposed as a sub-terminal along the Third Mainland Bridge.

The dedicated lane for the scheme would run through Pen Cinema, Agege-Ijaiye Road, Ogba-Isheri Road, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, old Toll Gate, Oworonsoki, Tafawa Balewa Square and CMS-Inner Marina.

At least 25 bus shelters and five laybys are to be built along the pilot route at strategic locations to give commuters the desired comfort.

Giade said that necessary recommendations had been made to the federal government to this effect. He, however, noted that in view of the various activities that were expected to come up under the current political dispensation leading to the 2007 elections, the commission was in favour of partial restriction, saying: "democracy connotes freedom of movement."

He appealed to the media to support the census campaign, stressing that there were no hidden agenda except for developmental purposes. The commissioner also appealed to Lagos residents to cooperate with the enumerators.

On the need for partial or total restriction of movements during the five-day exercise,

A loading bay about 220 metres away from the Agege-Ogba road behind the AP Filling Station along the Sakamori Mechanic Village has been developed for the take-off point, while the Marina terminal is located opposite the General Hospital's Doctors' Quarters on Inner Marina, Lagos Island.

In this year's Appropriation Bill, a princely vote of N500 million each had been earmarked for the BRT and Assembly Plant projects. Of the BRT allocations, N300 million would be expended on the provision of dedicated bus lanes and road terminal infrastructure, while N200 million would be disbursed on recurrent expenditure.

Traders stop ACDA from removing market leadership

The presence of anti-riot policemen noticed around on Friday at the popular Mile 12 Foodstuff Market, Ketu in the Ikosi-Isheri of Local Government Development Area of Lagos State to forestall any breakdown law and order.

Tempers, according to sources, were rising among traders at the Perishable Unit of the market to resist the Arewa Community Development Association from sacking the market leadership and imposing new officials to run the affairs of the traders.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that the battle-ready police officials were deployed to the area by the Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations, Haruna John on invitation by the market owners and the Ikosi-Isheri local government council.

The local government had threatened to close down the international foodstuff market to forestall the breakdown of law and order.

According to the council boss, Kunle Soname, everything would be done to avert the reoccurrence of the October 1999 inter-ethnic mayhem which claimed several lives and property worth billions of naira.

Eko Trust learnt that the association with its headquarters on 23, Adegoke Street, Off Masha Road, Surulere demanded for police security at the proposed change of baton.

In a letter signed by its Secretary, Alhaji Garuba Chede, the association had

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

requested for about 30 policemen to supervise the change of the markets caretaker committee.

But rising to his responsibility as the council's chief security officer, Soname warned the association against introducing tribal and ethnic dimension into the foodstuff market, reminding that the Hausa community belongs to the local government.

Besides, Soname pointed out that traders from all parts of the country earn their daily meal at the market, saying undue interference from any tribal organization in the affairs of traders will amount to an affront on constituted authorities.

His words: "We are very concerned and disturbed with the involvement of Alhaji Seidu Keita who we gathered was one of the principal actors in the Mile 12 Market mayhem of 1999 where over 2000 people lost their lives and property worth millions of naira.

In view of this, the intervention of the Arewa Community Development Association from Surulere is obviously to disrupt the peace of the market and the Local Government Development Area.

If there would be election at the ware point, it is the responsibility of the council to supervise it and not that of the Hausa community. The council would not fold its arms and watch outsiders usurp its statutory functions"

PHCN completes 11kv feeder for Lagos suburb

The Power Holdings Company of Nigeria (PHCN), Oshodi District in Lagos, has announced the completion and commissioning of a new 11kv feeder and two relief distribution substations in the area.

Engr. Bukky Ojurongbe, the Business manager of the district, who disclosed this in Lagos, also said two faulty distribution substation have been replaced.

Several other projects, according to her are in the pipeline and would be completed. She explained that the new feeder at Fasheun 11kv which runs from Ago-Okota 1x15mva injection substation at Amuwo bye pass road to Okota road is meant to provide relieve to the canal and Ago 11kv feeders which are overloaded.

Mrs. Ojurongbe stated that the new distribution substation include block 496 500kva installed to relieve block 100 (500kva) at Jakande low cost housing estate, Oke-Afa and Ezekiel (300kva) to

From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

relieve Ogunbameru (500kva) at Ajaro.

The business managers also stated that the distribution transformers are brown (500kva) at Oshodi and Block 9 (500kva) at Amuwo-Odofin low cost housing estate. She further expressed that there have been great improvement in the quality of power supply in her district. She therefore implored customers to pay the bills promptly with a view to reciprocating the good work of PHCN in the districts.

According to her, the district has opened new cash offices in Ejogbe and Mafoluke areas of the district with a view to bringing services to the door steps of the customers.

She further said the third cash office would soon be completed while reiterating the resolve of the PHCN of Oshodi district to introduce customer's friendly initiatives.

Inside Politics

PDP gets N140m monthly, where is that from?

Chairman of the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD), Alhaji Gambo Jimeta is a blunt person, especially when the issues border on state of the nation. In this interview, he took on the ruling PDP, asking it to make public its source of fund. He said that Governor Dariye's disclosure should be looked into by a high powered panel and that culprits should be accordingly penalized. He spoke to Political Editor, Emmanuel Bello.

Excerpt.
How do you view the recent declaration by the South African President, Mr. Mbeki who said he would not change the constitution to perpetuate himself in power?

Well, it is a warning and lesson to the rest of African leaders. President Obasanjo, being the AU chairman, should take particular note of that and make the necessary move of a statesman. What Mr. Thambo Mbeki did will go down in history as the act of a civilized and decent African and not a despot.

What we in MRDD have been asking our own president is to come out, irrespective of these gimmicks, and say what he intends to do.

What is he afraid of? Can't he come out and say I want to amend the constitution to extend the tenure for the next government and not for myself. It is simple. Because it is immoral for anybody to amend such sacred document like the constitution simply to enhance his own personal agenda.

The public hearings will soon hold. Some people said they are already rigged or stage managed. What's your thought on the hearings?

The whole thing is wrong. The methodology of choosing six zones is unacceptable. I mean why should it be one particular spot in a zone? What happens to the people in the rest of the states and wards. You see, what is the hurry? Let us have a wide span of time to consult people and take proper opinion. How do you really organize conducting public hearing on zonal basis? You mean, like the North-East, everybody from Taraba, Yola, Gombe, Bauchi will move to Maiduguri?

It will be an elite exercise and many people will be excluded. Not that I'm

surprised because the PDP as a party thrives in excluding people. They operate an excluding policy. They love excluding people from their programmes. It is as if it an agenda for them and they are the masters of the game of exclusion.

The public hearings should go to every state and each local government. It is a very important exercise that should include every living Nigerian. Normally, one would have said that the consultation should start from local government council. Information, dialogue and consultations from the state and council levels, using chairmen of local government, councilors and state assemblies and right up to the National Assembly. It is not something you do any how.

What you now have is as if PDP selected certain friendly zones where they would hire crowd and stamp the third term in the name of consulting people. It is illegal. It is improper.

But there won't be enough time for the kind of sweeping consultation you are talking about?

But must the exercise start or finish in this dispensation of Obasanjo? It is unreasonable. The constitution can only be amended by the people and there are procedures for it. Not all these gimmicks we are seeing now.

Recently, the Governors' Forum insisted that the constitutional amendment will continue as scheduled. What is your view on this?

Well, I believe no honourable governor will support such a dastardly act and endorse third term or any immoral review of the constitution. Besides, the governors don't have that constitutional role to change the constitution. It is up to state houses of Assembly. So whether they meet to discuss the constitution, it makes no sense.

Very few months to the presidential election your

party has not been registered. Is there a problem?

There is no problem. If you had watched the channels television yesterday

shall do.

So what is delaying the registration?

I've told you to watch us and see what we would do.

There are speculations that MRDD has connection with the ACD and that you're emerging as the leader.

There is nothing farther from the truth. What we have done with ACD is what we are doing with all other parties. We are in dialogue with the possibility of working and cooperating in ar-



Gambo Jimeta

when the INEC chairman was interviewed, you would heard him saying that all political groups will be registered. Because he can't do otherwise. It is a constitutional matter and we're sure that we would be registered. We have our plans and very soon you will see what we

do. We are not committing ourselves to any such mergers and talks.

It is said that your party is funded by the Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. You have denied this in the past. But you can't deny that the MRDD has some sympathy

"The PDP is heavily funded. Where do they get the money from? What businesses do they get? And who is contributing to that fund? It should be transparent. They are duty bound to make public their statements of accounts at the end of each year. They have to show where the money is coming from and for what. We are told they collect N140 million monthly. Where does such money come from? The public of this country wants to know how the PDP runs such a huge machinery of party. Is their money coming from the contribution of governors, businessmen and the presidency. If it is from the governor, where did they get it from? If it is from the presidency, where did it get it from if not from the public funds? We want to know."

- Gambo Jimeta

for the vice president.

Yes, the MRDD has no connection with the vice president. But we sympathise, I personally sympathise with the VP for the injustice that has been meted to him, simply because he said he wants to be the president of this country. It is unacceptable that somebody will unleash such programmes of dehumanising him, disgracing him simply because he is asking to be what the president once asked to be. So it is a case of us standing for justice.

Dariye has opened a can worm by exposing how he shared the fund meant for ecological work. How do you think his expose should be handled?

I support what some people said in the West. Between the federal government the EFCC, Dariye and the PDP, we are yet to know who is telling the truth. I am suggesting that a high powered judicial inquiry be established under a judge of the Supreme Court where the EFCC, Dariye himself, PDP, and the presidency will come and give evidence. The panel will examine and then apportion blame. Where they feel that the EFCC should proceed with the prosecution of Dariye or other people that might be involved because of the inquiry, they should do so. They should hold a preliminary inquiry into the whole thing, outside what is happening now and non-partisan and neutral person like a judge of the Supreme Court should undertake a judicial inquiry. His terms of reference should include not only that this money released before the last election by the federal govern-

ment, to ensure that these ecological funds were not diverted to fund PDP elections. And also to ensure that similar payments made in the past were actually not diverted for use to bribe PDP party faithfuls, and election expenses.

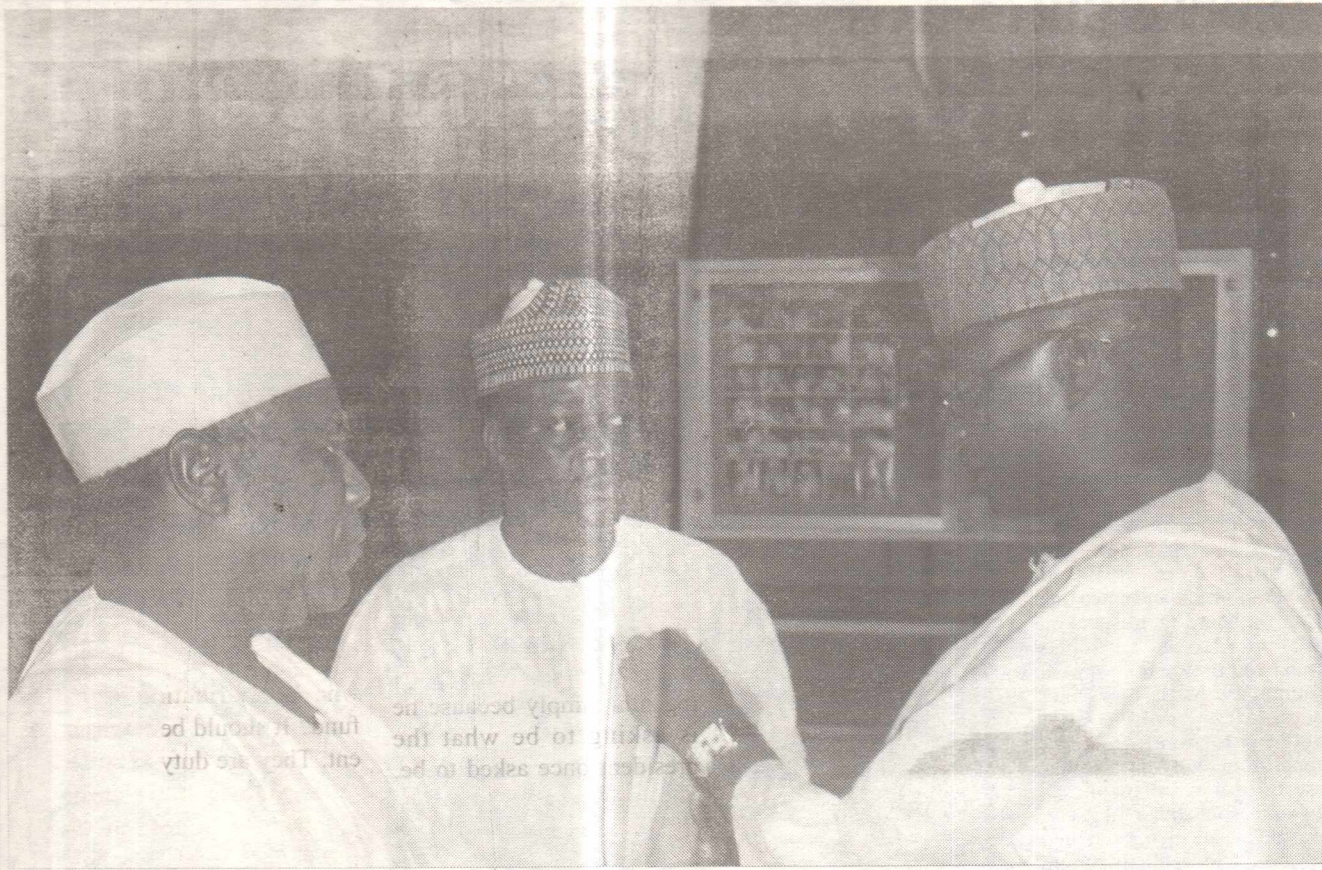
The PDP is heavily funded. Where do they get the money from? What businesses do they get? And who is contributing to that fund? It should be transparent. They are duty bound to make public their statements of accounts at the end of each year. They have to show where the money is coming from and for what. We are told they collect N140 million monthly. Where does such money come from? The public of this country wants to know how the PDP runs such a huge machinery of party. Is their money coming from the contribution of governors, businessmen and the presidency. If it is from the governor, where did they get it from? If it is from the presidency, where did it get it from if not from the public funds? We want to know.

What happened in Plateau and the Dariye revelation is happening in all the states. It is the duty of the judicial inquiry to unravel all these.

What will you say are the options opened to the vice president given the fact that he has almost been edged out of the PDP, especially in Adamawa State, his home state where it is reported he no longer controls the party's machinery?

The options are very clear, but the vice still belongs to the PDP. He is the Vice President and runs his duty and I don't think he is involved in what happens in Adamawa State. But the state itself have options. There are two groups in the state. Those who feel marginalized from power and those who feel they have now got the upper hand. Most of the first group will find a way of accommodating their interest. PDP is not the only party in the country. If I were they (PDP) I will not be fool hardy to exclude members.

Inside Politics



From left: Senator Mahmud Kanti Bello, Hon. Ishaq Idris Kurfi and Hon. Usman Balkore discussion on the alleged third term agenda of President Obasanjo at the National Assembly, Abuja... recently. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

ADC seeks INEC's registration

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Assistant Political Editor

A new political group, the Alliance for Democratic Change (ADC) has written to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) asking to be registered as a political party.

ADC recently wrote two letters to INEC, copies of which were made available to *Daily Trust*.

In the second communication, dated February 8, ADC protested the non-provision of application forms by INEC despite an earlier request.

"We refer to our letter on the registration of our political group, ADC, as a political party dated 23rd January, 2006, copy attached.

"Up till this moment, we have not received any communication from your office about this; and in your latest press release, where you mentioned the

new parties and the parties awaiting your approval, you did not include ADC.

"Therefore, we would like to submit to you that our association wishes to be registered as a political party in Nigeria. We would request that you make available the registration forms, materials and requirements to us to enable us formalise all the processes," ADC's national chairman, Chief Ralph Nwosu said in the letter.

INEC recently announced registering those new parties, namely Action Congress of Democrats (ACD), Action Alliance (AA) and Action Peoples Congress (APC).

The commission also acknowledged receipt of several applications for registration from political groups.

Jigawa Assembly moves to dissolve LG councils

The Jigawa State House of Assembly has amended the state's Local Government Law No. 5 of 2004 to empower the House and the state government to dissolve local government councils at any time.

Provisions of the new law empower the governor or the assembly sack local government chairmen either indicted for corruption, misconduct or ineptitude.

Section 13(1) states that "notwithstanding the provision of section 12 of this law every council shall stand dissolved at any given time by the resolution of two-thirds majority of the House of Assembly."

The law also provides that the governor may dissolve any council or its members on the ground of corruption, incompetence or misconduct with the approval of simple majority of the House.

Section 14(2) of the new law is also amended to provide for a four months' grace for either the governor or the assembly to appoint a caretaker committee for the local government council after they were dissolved.

Accordingly, the law provides for the establishment of 40-member unit consultative assembly advisory body to oversee the activities of the local unit assemblies.

The new law stated also

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

that a body will also be established to be known as polling unit advisory committee to be appointed by the governor.

Daily Trust reports that the new law is believed to be preparatory to the dissolution of the 27 councils of the state ahead of the

planned April local government elections in the state.

Local councils in Jigawa State under the old law are to vacate office by the end of February 2006.

The newly amended law provides that the 40-member advisory body will advise and recommend to the polling unit consultative assembly in executing the developmental activities in the

Bayelsa lawmaker faces recall

A delegation of the people of constituency II of Ekeremor local government area of Bayelsa State led by Comrade Nomi Gede has sent a petition to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) asking for the recall of Hon. Boyelayefa Debekeme from the State House of Assembly.

A statement signed by INEC's director of public affairs, Segun Adeogun quoted the commission's chairman, Prof. Maurice Iwu as saying that the commission would act on the petition within the stipulated 90 days.

Iwu explained that it was the constitutional right of the people to recall their representatives when necessary and that it was the constitutional right of the petitioner to defend himself.

Earlier, spokesman of the delegation, Mr. Kenneth Ekperi noted that the people of the constituency had lost confidence in Debekeme because he had failed to repre-

sent the constituency adequately in the State House of Assembly.

Gede, who led the delegation, appealed that the commission should expedite action on the petition.

Other members of delegation included chief Simeon Epebifiya, Donald Ego and Joseph Deinduomo.



Prof. Iwu, INEC Chairman



NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE

PRESENTS

4TH FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE

THEME

"PRODUCTIVITY CHALLENGES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) TO THE WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION"

GUEST SPEAKER

DR. MUHAMMAD IBN CHAMBAS
(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, ECOWAS)

DISCUSSANT

HAJIA AMINA IBRAHIM
(SENIOR SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs))

CHIEF HOST

DR. MUHAMMAD HASSAN LAWAL
(HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AND PRODUCTIVITY)

CHAIRMAN

SENATOR BASSEY EWA-HENSHAW
CHAIRMAN SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOUR AND PRODUCTIVITY

VENUE

IBRO HOTEL, MICHAEL OKPARA STREET,
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DATE

TUESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2006 @ 10.00A.M.

THE LECTURE IS FREE. YOU ARE ALL CORDIALLY INVITED.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL: 08059461860, 08033499200

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MANAGEMENT

Inside Politics

OBJ is using the South to blackmail the North – Afenifere

Afenifere, the Yoruba social political organization, National Publicity Secretary, Yinka Odumakin spoke to Daily Trust, Samson Ojo and Adelanwa Bamgboye on the South-west governors approval of President Olusegun Obasanjo for a third term. He also revealed that last year's December Southern Leaders Forum convened by the Enugu State Governor, Chimaroke Nnamani was not a Southern Leaders forum but a third term forum.

Excerpt:

At the Enugu meeting attended by all the southern state governors, the Afenifere, Ohaneze and the south-South leaders, it was agreed that the South-South or the South-East should produce the president come 2007. But contrary to that agreement, the South-West governors last week endorsed President Obasanjo for a third term, during their meeting with him at Ota Ogun State. What is your comments?

May be we should first of all get the Enugu meeting right. From the information that has come out so far, the Enugu meeting was a presidency agenda. It has been discovered that the meeting was packaged by the presidency and sponsored by N150 million, and the mandate given to Nnamani who hosted it was to ensure that the presidency should stay in the South after 2007. Nnamani now went and do something else, by getting the conference to say that the presidency should go to the south-south, or South-East, that really angered the presidency and the EFCC was despatched to Enugu to start investigation. To get the EFCC off his back, Nnamani has now declared for third term. Remember that Nnamani opposed third term agenda at Enugu, and that is why we, in Afenifere resolved not to participate in the Enugu meeting because we knew that it was a third term forum not Southern leaders forum. It was Southern Third term forum and when you saw the ubiquitous presence of Anenih, Femi Fani-Kayode and others, it was cleared who actually sponsored the meeting. The whole things was a planned work. The only person that spoke against third term agenda at the meeting was Chief Olu Falae and you could see the silence that pervaded the hall, when he said there should be no third term. Even let's look at the composition of the leaderships of the southern forum. The Secretary of Southern forum today is Dejo Raimo and he was the first person in Yoruba land to campaign, openly and widely for third term, in YCE as far back as July last year. Afenifere took a position in Ijebu-Igbo that there should be nothing like third term, Dejo Raimo opposed us and was so furious in his attack against Afenifere that Obasanjo should go for third term and today he is the secretary of the southern forum. So, it is only those who cannot read correctly between the line, that will say that there is any conclusion, there is no conclusion. The people are consistent in what they are doing, it is an aberration but it is consistent. So that Abeokuta declaration by the PDP governors to the fact that Obasanjo should go for third



Yinka Odumakin, Afenifere, National Publicity Secretary

term is in tandem or in agreement with what they have been planning all along. We can only say that these people are playing with fire and for those PDP, South-West governor who are proposing that Obasanjo should go for the third term, will also meet their own Waterloo come 2007 because the Yoruba people will not support anything that is not constitutional. They will not support changing the goal post, when a goal has already been scored, that Obasanjo should remain president come 2007 those governors have declared their own exit with Obasanjo, there is no way that any of them will return back in Yoruba land in a free and fair election come 2007.

To be precise which of the governors?

Gbenga Daniel, Oyinlola, Fayose, they cannot be elected for second term. Of course we don't recognize the one in Ibadan as a governor, so we don't mention him, that one is not a governor, he is a product of falsehood in Oyo State, we don't count him as a govern or.

How would you react to some senators declaration that the president has done so well and that if its takes the amendment of the constitution, that they are ready to do it for President Obasanjo to continue after 2007?

Well, that will not be a surprise, if you will remember, a member of House of Representative from Osun State, Honourable Saroye Laoye had told this nation, that he was at a meeting where each of House of Representative members were promised money if they are ready to support third term agenda. Also if you look at Dariye confession last week that was reported in today's paper, to the effect that N1.6 billion ecological fund in Plateau State was diverted to finance 2003 election, you can then imagine what has been going on, the

amount of money that has been raised into the system to buy people, voters card. But we have seen it before under Abacha, but it did not succeed that time, so also it will not succeed this time around.

At the Enugu meeting a faction of Afenifere was present at the forum. Does it mean that Afenifere has been factionalised?

Yes, when we parted way with these people. One of the reason we cited was that they are romancing Obasanjo and for those of us who have learnt our lesson with Obasanjo we are not ready to go that way and they said we were blackmailing them. But look at their action since then, they were at Enugu Southern Forum, and since then have you heard them speaking third term. Oyo State incidence happened, they even went to congratulate Akala they could not condemn the unconstitutionality that happened in Oyo State because they do not want to oppose Obasanjo, some other things has happened since then, even there are certain individuals among them like Adebajo. Have you heard speaking against Obasanjo misrule, or on Oyo State or third term issues, something is wrong. When Obasanjo came to Ogun State last week most of them were there at the banquet dinner with him, so all that has happened since we parted way with them have also confirmed our allegations against them that they are on the paid list of Obasanjo and that they were romancing him for his third term agenda, that is why we cannot co-habit with them.

Going by what you have said President Obasanjo has influenced the southern leaders forum by planting his men, could it be said that Obasanjo is behind the seeming polarization between the North and the south over who produce the president in 2007. In order to pave way for himself?

The president is a military man, he is a strategist, he know the act of Machiavellian, Obasanjo is a great Machiavellian than Babangida. He is using the act of deception to get what he want and of course, if he is not promoting this thing and using the strategy, three years to the next election. In South Africa, President Thabo Mbeki has come out to declare that he is not interested in the third term, we are going to have presidential election next year the president has not spoken, but all the body language have shown that he wants to stay, when those governors in Abeokuta said they want him for third term why he did not say that it is unconstitutional, he is promoting this agenda and every person that has come against him, has been haunted and blackmail. The problem Atiku is having with him and the PDP today is not because of any other thing but because of his ambition to become president in 2007, if Atiku drop the ambition today they will re-absorb him. See Marwa, Oji Uzor Kalu, you all know what has happened to them Orji Uzor Kalu airline was grounded. It is so clear that the president want to stay, that is why 10 months to the next general elections we have not seen any presidential candidate because the easiest way to liquidate yourself today is to say you want Obasanjo job. Obasanjo does not have the interest of the south at heart all he is doing is to use the South to blackmail the North. He is the one behind this North-South dichotomy.



Africa Leadership Forum

CALLING ALL NYSC MERIT AWARD WINNERS IN NIGERIA

Democratic Leadership Training Workshop (DLTW)

Since May 1998, the Africa Leadership Forum has organized 18 editions of the Democratic Leadership Training Workshops (DLTW) across the regions of Africa. The workshops were held in Dakar, Accra, Nairobi, and Windhoek respectively. In addition, two sets of six workshops were held in Nigeria. The impact of the training on past participants has been transformatory.

The Africa Leadership Forum will be organizing in 2006, a series of training workshops for Nigerians in both private and public sectors, youth organizations, media, labour organizations, NGOs as well as community leaders. As in the past, the primary objectives of these workshops among others are to:

- Provide opportunity for inter-political networks and linkages towards positive collaboration at both lateral and vertical levels
- Enhance and to sharpen participant's leadership skills in participatory democracy and governance

Method of Application

A two-page resume giving full description of yourself, place of residence, profession, your local government, and state. Also, applicant should state previous leadership position(s) and experience(s) with a statement of his/her understanding of leadership and what he/she intends to gain from during the workshop. Please indicate the fastest means of communication. (e. g. e-mail, surface mail, or courier)

Condition for Participation

Participants selected for the workshop are expected to pay a token commitment fee of N2, 000 upon arrival and also bear the cost of their travel expenses to & from the venue of the workshop. The Africa Leadership Forum will be responsible for participant's accommodation and feeding only. Women are especially encouraged to apply. Past alumni of the DLTW need not reapply for these workshops.

Workshop Group: NYSC Merit Award Winners

Workshop Date: 12th -17th March, 2006.

Application Deadline: 24th February, 2006.

Venue:

Conference Hall, Africa Leadership Forum, #1, Bells Drive, Km 9 Idiroko Road, Ota, Ogun State

Further Enquires:

Contact, Workshop Coordinator, Tel: 08023073253-or

039 722730-3, FAX: 039 722751,

EMAIL: (democraticleadership@africaleadership.org).

Please, visit our website for more details at

www.africaleadership.org



THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, MUBI (OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR)

VACANCY FOR THE POST OF RECTOR

(INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT)

Applications are invited from suitable qualified candidates for the post of the Rector, Federal Polytechnic, Mubi.

(a) DUTIES OF THE RECTOR

The Rector is the Chief Academic and Administrative Officer of the Polytechnic and is required to provide the requisite academic, administrative and professional leadership for the Polytechnic, in executing the policies formulated by the Governing Council. He/she is expected to foster good rapport with the Federal Ministry of Education, National Board for Technical Education and other relevant professional bodies for the achievement of the objectives for which the institution was established. The Rector must therefore, possess a very high sense of dedication to duty, drive and resourcefulness. Above all, he/she must be a person of high integrity.

(b) QUALIFICATION

- (i) Applicants should hold at least a Master's Degree or Ph.D from a recognized University in any of the fields of Science Technology and Engineering.
- (ii) Applicants with Master Degree or Ph.D must have at least fifteen (15) years or twelve (12) years post qualification cognate experience in teaching, research or administrative post in an institution of higher learning respectively. He/she must not be below the rank of Chief Lecturer in a Polytechnic or in a comparable establishment.
- (iii) Suitable applicants are expected to be knowledgeable about the operation of the Polytechnic system and competence to the executive action on matters of planning, research and management in realization of the cardinal objectives of the Polytechnic.
- (iv) Applicant should be computer literate.

(c) PERSONAL QUALITIES

Applicants should have good track records of leadership qualities, drive, innovation and achievements in result oriented researches.

(d) TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- (i) The appointment is for a period of four (4) years, in the first instance and shall be eligible for re-appointment for another four (4) years and no more.
- (ii) The salary of the Rector is consolidated.
- (iii) Other fringe benefit attached to the office are:
 - (a) Chauffeur driven car.
 - (b) A furnished accommodation.
 - (c) Security guards and domestic staff.

(e) METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested applicants should forward their applications together with fifteen (15) copies of detailed Curriculum Vitae stating among other qualifications, work experience, present employment, Rank, Local Government, State of origin, marital status, extra-curricular activities and name of three (3) referees.

Candidates will be requested to produce the original of their certificates and other credentials during interview. Photocopies of certificates will not be accepted. All applications, which should be in sealed envelopes labeled "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF RECTOR, FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, MUBI", are to be forwarded.

The Registrar,
Federal Polytechnic,
P.M.B. 35, Mubi,
Adamawa State.

The application should reach the Registrar within six weeks from the date of this advertisement. Candidates are required to request their referees to send confidential reports on them to the Registrar before the closing date

Signed
ALH. B. UBA BELLO
REGISTRAR



INVITATION FOR BIDS

Country: Nigeria

Name of Project: Adamawa State Health Systems Development II

Brief Description of Works: Renovation of Primary Health Care Centres, Renovation of Life Saving Skills Training Centre and Expansion of Primary Health Care Centre

Contract Identification No: ADSDP/NCBW/001

World Bank Credit No: 3653 UN1

1. This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business, issue No. 608 of 16th June 2003.

2. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received a Credit from the International Development Association towards the cost of Adamawa State Health Systems Development Project II and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for Renovation of Primary Health Care Centres, Renovation of Life Saving Skills Training Centre and Expansion of Primary Health Care Centre, identification number ADSDP/NCBW/001.

Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.

3. The Adamawa State Health Systems Development Project II now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the:

Lot	Description	Bid Security	Location	Duration
1	i. Renovation of existing Clinic	At least 3%	Pakka	8 Weeks
	ii. Renovation of intermediate staff quarters			
	iii. Construction of incinerator			
	iv. Construction of VIP Toilets			
2	i. Renovation of existing Clinic	At least 3%	Toungo	8 Weeks
	ii. Renovation of intermediate staff quarters			
	iii. Construction of incinerator			
	iv. Construction of VIP Toilets			
3	i. Construction of clinic	At least 3%	Kodomun	8 Weeks
	ii. Construction of intermediate staff quarters			
	iii. Construction of incinerator			
	iv. Construction of VIP Toilets			
4	Renovation of Life Saving Skills Training Centre	At least 3%	Yola	8 Weeks

Note: The civil works sites are scattered with distances ranging from 100 to 250kms between them. Bidders may bid for one or more lots and discounts offered for the award of combined lots will be considered in bid evaluation.

4. Bidding documents may be purchased at the Adamawa State Health Systems Development Project II Office, No. 35A Sir Kashim Ibrahim way Yola for a nonrefundable fee of ten thousand Naira or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency for the first set and five thousand Naira or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency for any additional sets. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.

5. Bids shall be valid for a period of 90 days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of at least 3% of bid price or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency, and shall be delivered to Adamawa State Health Systems Development Project II Office, No. 35A Sir Kashim Ibrahim way Yola on or before 12:00 Noon Monday 13th March, 2006, at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who wish to attend.

6. Evaluation will be on lot by lot basis. Award shall also be on lot by lot basis.

Mr. P. J. Ngamwa
Project Manager
Tel: 075-627634


THE WEST AFRICAN MONETARY INSTITUTE

Accra Ghana

DIRECTOR GENERAL

Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-01

The West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), established by the Governments of The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, commenced operations in Accra, Ghana on March 1, 2001 with the mandate to facilitate the processes leading to the establishment of the West African Central Bank (WACB) and the introduction of a common currency for the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) in 2009.

On the basis of a new action plan prepared for implementation from January 2006, the institution is now starting a competitive recruitment process to attract the best candidate to fill the position of Director General at its **headquarters in Accra, Ghana.**

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the direction of the Governing Board of the WAMI, the Director-General is responsible for the day to day management of all the activities of the Institute, in order to attain its objective: the creation of the West African Central Bank in the required timeframe. His leadership should ensure effective operational coordination of the work of the various departments (Research, Operations, Finance & Administration, Communications & Information Technology). He represents WAMI within WAMZ and outside.

Selection Criteria:

- Advanced university degree in finance, economics management or public administration
- Demonstrated leadership, management and people-management skills through work experience in leading positions in a multinational or public organization, a Central Bank or a Regional Economic Organization
- Demonstrated ability to build consensus and achieve results in highly complex situations
- Ability to build credibility and work effectively with multilateral institutions, such as World Bank, IMF, ECB etc.
- Excellent communication skills both written and oral
- Fluent in one of WAMI two official languages (English and French), a working knowledge of the other is an advantage.

A competitive consolidated (all inclusive) salary is offered Initial 2 years appointment with possibility of extension up to a maximum of 2 years

Open exclusively to: Citizens of one of the 5 member countries

Other Information:

WAMI is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from men and women.

All applications should include a complete c.v. and be limited to a maximum of 6 pages.

Only those applicants who have been retained for further consideration will receive a reply. Short-listed candidates will be invited in Accra, Ghana, for the evaluation process that will take place [mid March].

All applications must be received by email at: wami@tecsult.com or by fax at: (233-21) 668 932 before February 24, 2006.


THE WEST AFRICAN MONETARY INSTITUTE

Accra Ghana

SIX DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENT

The West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), established by the Governments of The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, commenced operations in Accra, Ghana on March 1, 2001 with the mandate to facilitate the processes leading to the establishment of the West African Central Bank (WACB) and the introduction of a common currency for the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) in 2009.

On the basis of a new action plan prepared for implementation from January 2006, the institute is now recruiting the best candidates to **fill 6 Directors positions at its headquarters in Accra, Ghana.**

- DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-02
- DIRECTOR, LEGAL AFFAIRS
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-03
- DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-04
- DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-05
- DIRECTOR, INTERNAL AUDIT
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-06
- DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Ref: 2006-WAMI/IMAO-07

A competitive consolidated (all inclusive) remuneration is offered Initial 2 years appointment with possibility of extension up to a maximum of 2 years

WAMI is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from men and women.

All applications should include a complete c. v. and 3 professional references, including name, address, phone number and e-mail address. (Maximum 6 pages)

Only those applicants retained will receive a reply. Short-listed candidates will be invited in Accra, Ghana to continue the evaluation process scheduled for [mid-March 2006].

Open exclusively to: Citizens of one of the 5 member countries

A detailed description of responsibilities and the required competencies for each position is available at: www.WAMI-IMAO.org OR www.tecsult.com/wami.htm

All applications must be received by email at: wami@tecsult.com or by fax at: (233-21) 668 932 before February 24, 2006.

NEWS

Northern AD factions united behind Akinfenhinwa

The factions in the Arewa caucus of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) has resolved their differences, determining to unite behind the national leadership of Senator Mojisola Akinfenhinwa ending the in-

**From Sani Babadoko,
Bureau Chief Kaduna**

tra-party crisis that has ravaged the caucus in the past two years.

In a communiqué after the northern caucus meeting at

the Lucia Hotel, Kaduna, the caucus called on all those who are yet to declare their support for the Senator in the national leadership tussle between him and Chief Bisi Akande to do so now in the interest of the party.

The caucus meeting which was attended by all the 19 state chairmen in the northern states which were divided in the past, resolved to dissociate itself from the Akande/Tinubu faction which they alleged has tried to kill the party.

It also resolved that the identity of the party is paramount and cannot be negotiated and called on those who defected to other parties or to form new parties to be expelled.

The party is also to set up a harmonization committee to resolve the crisis of two parallel state executives as a result of the intra party crisis.

In a speech, the leader of the erstwhile Akande faction in the north, Comrade Faruk Umar, said the crisis has not only retarded the progress of the party but also gave rival parties an advantage over AD.

"We are also advising those who are yet to come on board, that the AD has the room to accommodate everybody."

He said, "our unity will give Nigerians the confidence that we, as a party, can be trusted with the leadership of the nation."

"Today, is historic. It is a day of re-union of the members and leaders of the party.

With me here are my fellow national officers and state executives of the former Akande faction. Today we have come together to put the intra-party crisis that has ravaged the party for the past two years behind us," Comrade Faruk declared.

At the meeting, the AD national secretary, Dr. Manzo Abubakar, the national publicity secretary, Mr. Rafiu Salau, deputy national treasurer, Alhaji Mahmud Sani, national youth leader, Alhaji Sultan Hassan and Chairmen from Sokoto, Taraba, Kano, Niger, Kogi, Adamawa, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Katsina and the FCT.



A cross section of Nigeria Police officers coming out of a meeting held with President Obasanjo at the State House Abuja...yesterday
Pix: Joe Oroye

Two students killed as cult groups clash

Resumed clash between two rival secret cult groups at the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, has claimed two students, while seven others were wounded.

University sources told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), that the clash between the Vikings and the Black Axe groups started on Saturday.

The clash was over the snatching of a mobile phone from a member of one group by the other.

After the snatching of his Sagem camera handset, the student reported to his sect which regrouped and went to recover the set, the sources said.

It was during the recovery mission that trouble started between the two groups.

The sources said that after the initial squabble, members of both groups fled to Abakaliki town from their Ishieke campus.

They said an accounting education student identified as Paul Ogburueoro and another known as "Dagger" were shot death on Convent road and Kpiripiri areas of Abakaliki on Sunday.

The Ebonyi state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Godwin Wekwa, confirmed the killings, saying Ogburueoro had been on the police list of wanted persons. "When we got the informa-

tion about the killings, we thought it was due to armed robbery but later discovered that it was as a result of a cult clash," he told NAN.

The spokesman said the police equally recovered two vehicles, a Mitsubishi Lancer and Honda car, snatched from their owners during the clash.

"Although no arrests have been made so far, I want to appeal to members of the public with useful information to send same to the police," Wekwa pleaded.

He warned those wishing to harbour the culprits to desist "because anybody found to be harbouring any of them will be treated according to the law".

Abortion claims 55,000 women yearly - Rep

House of Representatives member, Hon. Saudatu Sani, says about 55,000 Nigerian women die yearly from abortion, miscarriages and other maternal complications.

Hon Sani revealed this to newsmen Thursday at a dinner organized by a non governmental organization, Packard Foundation in Abuja.

She said public hearings will begin today on a Bill before the National Assembly on the National Representative Health Institute, which will regulate the practice of safe reproductive health in the country.

She added that the bill also seeks to empower communities in the country on how to reduce high mortality rates in the country while em-

**By Benjamin Auta,
Reporter**

powering them to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Also speaking, the Country Director of IPAs, Dr. Ejike Oji, decried the absence of an abortion law in the country.

He said the law still used in the country made in 1861 by the colonial masters, is obsolete and cannot meet the demands of Nigerians.

Dr. Oji, added that; "unless we make active laws, Nigerian women will continue to suffer from rape, meets, pedophilia without the perpetrators being punished while our women keep dying.

Speaking earlier in a welcome address, the head of population, Packard founda-

tion, Ms Sarah Clark, said that \$35 million is to be spent in Nigeria for the period of five years.

She said the foundation has adopted an advocacy based on service delivery, adding that the advocacy in Nigeria will be more intensive this year so that the foundation can achieve its goals of fighting maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and mobility.

Also speaking the Senior Country Adviser to the foundation, Mrs. Mairo Mawara, said that, the nation has a high rate of abortion due to the high level of pregnancy.

She said that with a better population control, Nigerians should be able to make informed decisions on birth control.

2007 elections will be successful - INEC

INEC said it is determined to win the confidence of Nigerians during the 2007 elections. The Resident Electoral Commissioner in Kaduna State, Mr Aliyu Marafa, said this during the inauguration of the Stakeholders' Election Forum, Jema'a local government chapter in Kafanchan at the weekend.

Marafa said the commission is doing everything possible in the state to pave way for the optimum success during the conduct of the elections.

He explained that the forum was formed to work hand-in-hand with the commission through discussion on matters relating to elections in ad-

dition to advising the commission accordingly.

This according to him, will minimise to the barest minimum, cases of election malpractices thereby ensuring a free and fair elections.

The council chairman, Mr Abraham Jatau, on the occasion said, "formation of such fora is commendable as it will to a greater extent, reduce cases of petitions after elections apart from giving credibility to INEC".

Earlier, the Emir of Jema'a, Alhaji Muhammadu Isa, who spoke on behalf of other traditional rulers in the area, had advised members of the forum to take the responsibility seriously.



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The European Union Partnership to Reinforce Immunization Efficiency (EU-PRIME) has purchased equipment worth N62 million for distribution to six states in Nigeria.

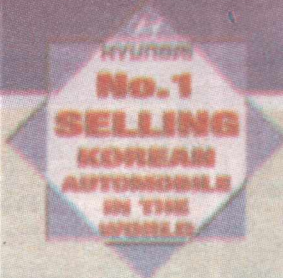
The equipment includes generators, motorcycles and computers- which are meant to improve the efficient delivery of immunization services in the beneficiary states. The states which will benefit from this system development project are Abia, Cross River, Gombe, Kebbi, Osun and Plateau.

Under the same project, the National Planning Commission and the European Commission Delegation in Nigeria have signed another contract worth N909,422,000.00 (Nine Hundred and Nine Million, Four Hundred and Twenty Two thousand Naira only) with Car Link Limited for the supply of 126 Four Wheel Drive vehicles one each for all local government areas in the six focal states, 14 Four Wheel drive hard top vehicles for project monitoring and evaluation. The vehicles will be distributed in April 2006.

The European Union Partnership to Reinforce Immunization efficiency (EU-PRIME) is a 5 year project from September 2002-September, 2007. EU-PRIME aims to reduce child mortality from vaccine preventable diseases in Nigeria. It supports polio eradication throughout Nigeria and it strengthens routine immunization in six focal states across the country. The states are Abia, Cross River, Gombe, Kebbi, Osun and Plateau. The purpose of the project is ensuring that safe and efficient vaccination services are 77,400,000 or 12 billion Naira over the project period.

Courtesy, State Prime Team, EU-PRIME project, Gombe

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NEWS



From right, ANPP House Leader, Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, ANPP House Whip Hon. Almajir Geidam and Hon. Kurfi Ishaq Idris briefing journalists on their decision to boycott NEC meeting of ANPP at the National Assembly...weekend. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

FG sets up committee on National Hospital

President Olusegun Obasanjo has set up an interim management committee to carry out analytic appraisal of the Abuja National Hospital and recommend measures that would enhance its effectiveness and make it a centre of excellence.

The seven-man committee is headed by Professor Nimi Briggs. Other members of the committee are Director-General of Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE), Mrs. Irene N. Chigbue, Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, Dr. A. E. Ike, and Director (PRS) of the Ministry of Justice, Chief F. B. I. Egolom.

Others include Alhaji I. Bello Sali of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, acting Chief Medical Director of National Hospital, Dr. Z. O. Ajuwon and a representative

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Reporter

of the Ministry of Finance. Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette, who inaugurated the committee on behalf of the President, said that the National Hospital was established to provide qualitative tertiary healthcare delivery in the country, and to reverse the trend of public officers seeking treatment abroad. He said that the federal

government would make the hospital to be of international standard and efficient with sustainable management. He therefore urged members of the committee to work as a team and abide by public service rules.

In his remarks, the chairman of the committee, Professor Briggs, said that they would work to the best of their ability and ensure that the hospital becomes second to none in the country.

...appoints Mbadiwe as chairman of FRSC board

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the appointment of Ambassador Greg Mbadiwe as the chairman of the board of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

Ambassador Mbadiwe

replaced Alhaji Adamu Maina Waziri, who is now the executive secretary of the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF).

The new FRSC board chairman had served as the Ambassador of Nigeria to the Republic of Congo.

BATN commences exports, targets N3bn investment

The British American Tobacco Nigeria has commenced export operations to West & Central Africa with a potential of delivering N10 billion in export proceeds and 22 million dollars additional capital investment by the company come 2008.

A statement made available to *Daily Trust*, signed by the BAT Corporate Communications Manager, Aliyu Ma'aji said the event which was held at the Zaria Factory on Thursday, February 09, 2006, witnessed the Minister of Industry, Amb.

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

Fidelis Tappun who unveiled a plaque to signal the kick-off of the programme.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Zaria, the Minister of Industry said "BAT Nigeria's Initiatives illustrates a company that has strong corporate focus for maximising its investment in a business line with a lot of potentials for the future", adding that the "Government views this export programme as a welcome development in the light of the current administration's economic reforms programme, part of which includes economic diversification and less emphasis on oil as the nation's economic mainstay." The Minister further affirmed government's commitment to continue to provide an enabling environment to make the manufacturing sector competitive within and outside the Nigerian market.

On his part, the Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Dr. Shehu Idris said the event is ample testimony of BAT commitment to Zaria.

"We are indeed pleased that you chose to flag off your export programme from here. Since your merger with the former Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) on November 6, 2000, and your signing of an MOU with the Federal Government on 24 September 2001, leading to the formal commencement of your operations, the people of Zazzau Emirate have had an enduring mutually beneficial relationship with you."

According to him "the progress we are witnessing here today is a product of the responsible corporate behaviour you have demonstrated over the years and your unwavering commitment to your Zaria operations and indeed Nigeria; a development we hold dear to our hearts".

In his reaction, Richard Hodgson, Managing Director, BAT Nigeria, noted that the export programme will start with cigarette exports to Cameroon and Togo. "The Federal Government policy identifies exports as a key strategic element of economic policy and in 2004, at the business leaders meeting on Exports Mr President asked what is BAT Nigeria doing. At that time, we were still finishing the Ibadan factory, so delivering on our stakeholders' expectations for exports was not possible.

He added that over 10 billion Naira is expected in export proceeds by 2008 and a further \$22 million in additional capital expenditure expected within the next 2 years.

The first batch of BAT Nigeria exports was shipped from Zaria factory on December 15, 2005, to Cameroon totalling 18 million sticks, comprising of Red Club Filter and Gold Tobacco brands. Confirming receipt of the

WASU opposes third term bid

The West African Students Union (WASU) has advised President Olusegun Obasanjo to relinquish power in 2007.

President of the Union Mr. Daniel Onjeh who gave the advice in a statement released in Abuja, said President Obasanjo should emulate President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, who has vowed to step down after two terms in office.

By Henry Omu

"We urge President Obasanjo to thread the path of President Mbeki and make history by declaring that he would not cling on to power beyond 2007.

"Millions of Nigerians are eagerly waiting for him to make that assertion, in order to douse the rising tension generated by the controversy of his alleged third term

ambition," Mr. Onjeh said.

Moreover, the sub-regional students body implored proponents of Obasanjo's third term to refrain from attempting a further rape of the nation's blossoming democracy.

Mr. Onjeh said rather than hiding under the cover of constitutional amendment to perpetrate their selfish plans, political office-holders should concentrate on bringing democracy dividends to Nigerians.

"All those who are urging Obasanjo to stay-on after 2007 in order to concretise his economic policies are displaying the depth of their ideological bankruptcy.

"WASU does not dispute the fact that Obasanjo's policies have been auspicious for the nation, but the claim that only he can sustain and stabilise these economic policies are either very myopic or highly treacherous.

"Finally, we urge Obasanjo not to be deceived by the adulation singers, as they have always existed in every successive government. He has done a lot to redeem the nation's dented image. His greatest sacrifice to the nation is to ensure a smooth civilian to civilian transition come 2007," the WASU added.

Court adjourns Kanam emirship tussle till Feb 28

High Court in Jos has adjourned till February 28, the case over the Kanam emirship tussle brought before it by one of the contenders to the throne, Alhaji Al-Hassan Shuaibu, against the installation of Mohammed Mu'azu Babangida as the emir.

At the continued hearing of the case, chairman of the King makers Malam Garba Zaranda who testified as a witness, told the court that the selection process was marred by irregularities as the three traditional observers were edged out of the selection process against the custom and tradition of the emirate in selecting an emir.

Zaranda narrated how the selection process took place during which he said the four King makers unanimously selected Alhaji Alhassan Shaibu, and not Alhaji Mohammad Mu'azu, the incumbent emir declared by the state government as winner in the selection exercise.

According to him, they protested the outcome of the selection process before the *Galadiman* Karam when the announcement of the new emir was made.

The witness added that the *Galadiman* Kanam later took them to the council chairman, Alhaji Idris Gambo, who assured them that he will con-

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Jos

isfied with the assurance of the chairman and decided to go to the state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, through one of their sons in Jos, Mr. Salihu Garba Dumswak.

Mr. Dumswak, he added, however told them that it was difficult to see the governor without an appointment, and instead advised them to address a press conference.

In his cross-examination, counsel to the first defendant Mr. Garba Pwoi objected to the text of the press conference earlier tendered as exhibit, stressing that the document was not written by the witness nor was it interpreted by him.

According to Pwoi, the document is not admissible, adding that even if it were original from the evidence of the witness, it was prepared for the purpose of this suit.

But counsel to the plaintiff Seeni Akunloye said that the objection was misconceived.

He added that the document is primary evidence that the witness possessed, adding that it is not only the person who signs a document that can tender it.

The counsel stated that the document is not an opinion, but statement of facts of history which is essentially within the knowledge of the

Katsina fights bush burning

In an effort to check the cases of fire outbreaks occasioned by bush burning and other related activities particularly in the rural areas, the Katsina state government has set up a prevention committee to tour all communities and local government to enlighten people on the use of fire appliances in the state.

The committee headed by the state Commissioner of Information, Culture and Home Affairs, Alh. Abdu Hard Mashi, first visited Batagarawa local government where it held a public sensitisation forum on preventive measures and solutions to fire outbreaks.

The commissioner represented by the Director, Home Affairs of the ministry, Alh. Salisu Waziri, urged people in the area to be cautious while using fire and electric appliances, and challenged local governments to form similar committees in their areas.

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

should have representatives from the district head offices, Local Government Education and Social Services Departments as well as representatives from the community and religious leaders.

The local government chairman of Batagarawa, Alh. Tukur Iliyasu Shagamba, commended the foresight of the state government in establishing the committee, while pointing out the dangers of bush burning to soil fertility, urged people to stop further act.

MISSING PASSPORT

I, MR TONI ELIAS ZAKHEN, Lebanese. National declare that I have lost my passport which number is 1980804 issued in Beyrouth on 15th Sept., 2001 in the city of Dedde Kaura. I would be very grateful to any one who find this passport to call me on my phone No. 08057987735 or to hand it to my home address c/o Mr. Chikhani George Zakhem Construction Nig. Ltd. Maje Dikko Road, Suleja. P.O. box 1060 or to the Embassy of Lebanon on the following address Embassy of Lebanon, Plot 762 Lake Chad Crescent, Maitama-Abuja.

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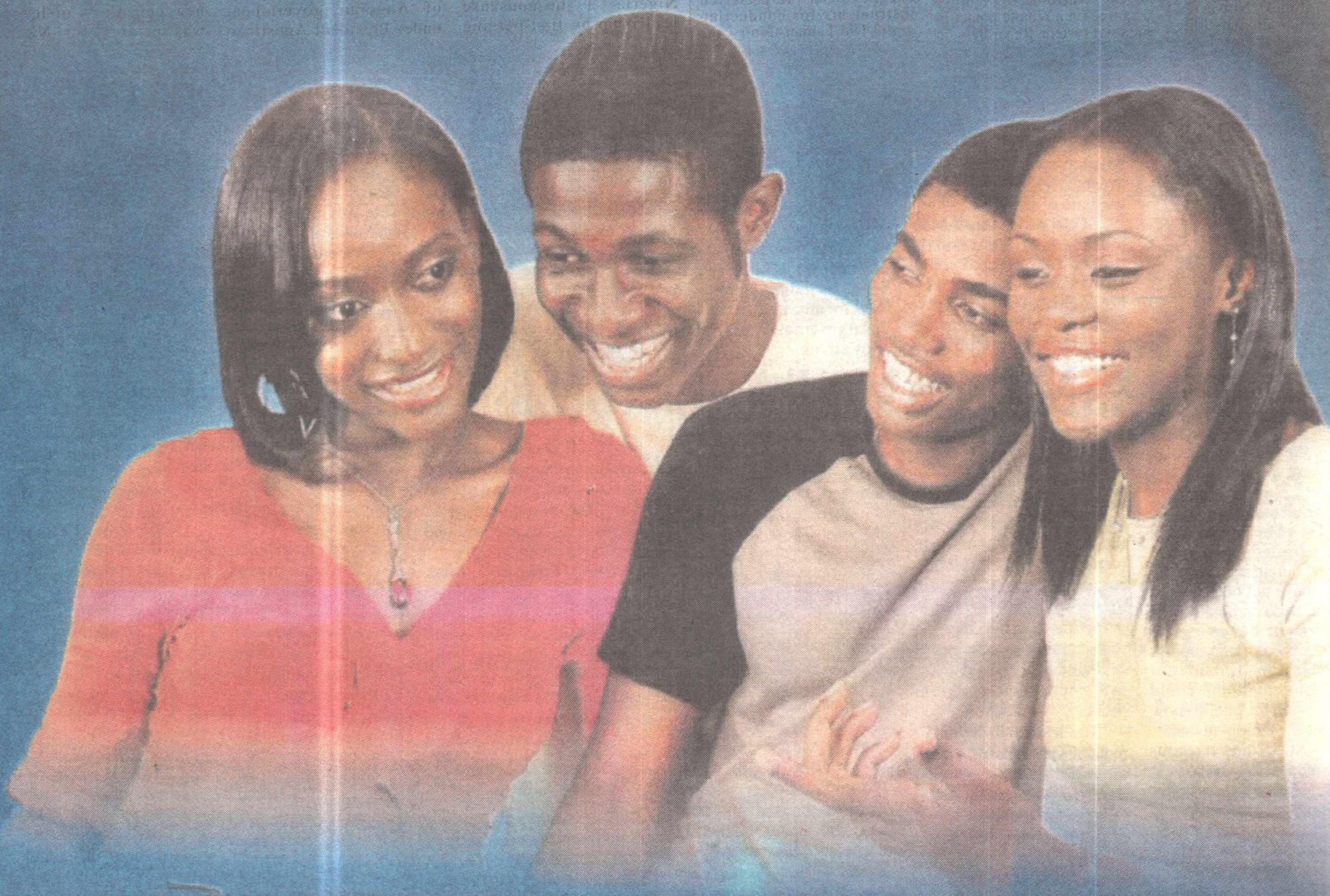
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**Prof. Bahatunde Osofimehin
Chairman, NACA**

News

Group raises alarm over plot to kidnap Dariye

A group, the Plateau Patriot, has raised alarm over an alleged plot to abduct Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

Addressing journalists in Jos, the Plateau Patriots, in a statement signed by Mr. Dan Tenshak, added that the alleged plans also included the imposition of 'a strange arrangement on the people of the state'.

Mr. Tenshak, who recalled that the EFCC principal counsel, Mr. Rotimi Jacob,

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

had in a report at the weekend in one of the national dailies, commented that EFCC would nail Dariye this week, said though they were no strangers to such threats, but what 'we find strange is their desperation and the rumours that plans have been concluded to kidnap Governor Dariye this month'.

He said the group was constrained to raising the alarm because certain ugly events in the state started as

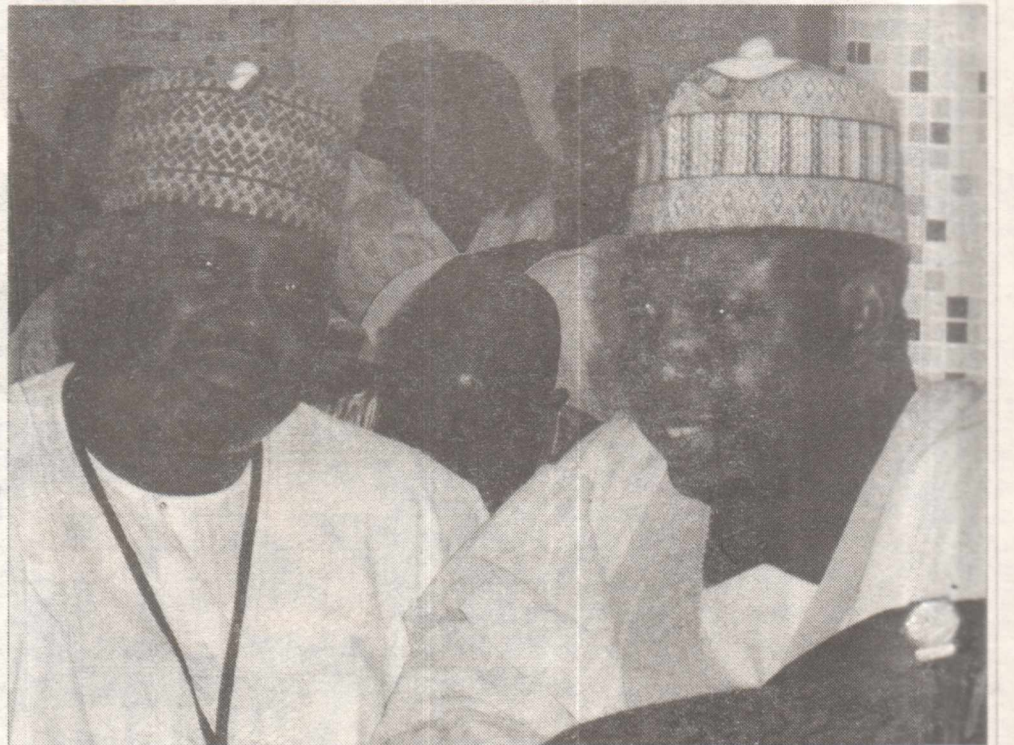
mere rumours and were eventually attempted.

"It was rumoured that some government officials would be physically attacked, it happened; it was rumoured that certain officials will be arrested and detained, it is happening. It was rumoured that some members of the House of Assembly will be arrested and forced to sign for the governor's impeachment, it was attempted..."

The Plateau Patriot said though EFCC had been saddled with the noble task of fighting corruption, "but it must refrain from becoming a willing hunting dog in the nation's political mines filed. It must redress obvious lapses in its operations that have depicted it as selective in its tasks."

The group called for the release of those from the state who are still being detained by the EFCC, noting that they were only called for questioning and had since been under detention without charging to court.

About thirteen state's officials are still been detained, including commissioners for information, finance, local government and chieftaincy affairs.



Members House of Representatives, Hon. Dahiru Boruma (left) and Hon. Babagana Tijani Bankki, during the ANPP NEC meeting in Abuja ...recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Sharia council wants Danish cartoonist dead

The Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) has said it is committed to the execution of the Danish cartoonist who blasphemed Prophet Mohammad (SAW) whenever it lays its hand on him.

The SCSN president, Dr. Ibrahim Datti Ahmed, told newsmen in Kaduna after a meeting of Muslim organizations under the auspices of the SCSN at the Al-Madinah Hotel, Kaduna to deliberate and take a position on topical issues that, 'the punishment for blaspheming the prophets is death and we are committed to executing the cartoonist'.

"There are no two ways about it. The only punishment is death, even if the culprit is a Muslim. All these demonstrations across the Muslim countries are because we have not been able to lay our hands on him."

Dr. Datti however said that SCSN was not in support of public demonstration for fear that 'hoodlums' could take over such a public show of anger for their own ends'.

The SCSN however called on the federal government to recall Nigeria's ambassador to Denmark and lodge a formal diplomatic complaint expressing anger of Nigerian Muslims.

It also called on Muslims to wage economic war against Denmark and Norway to protest the insensitivity of their governments.

The SCSN also described the alleged third term bid as 'undemocratic and unconstitutional', and cautioned emirs and chiefs in the North to resist attempts to use them to achieve this dastardly act through financial inducement for they stood the risk of being discredited.

The SCSN also condemned attempts by the federal government to legalise abortion and attempts to abolish the institution of *Hisbah* in Kano State as well as the Child Rights Act and the law seeking the abolition of *Hudud*, describing them as antithetical to the teachings of Islam.

It condemned the double

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

standard by the West in respect of the massive victory by Hamas in Palestine, and called for negotiations rather than the arm-twisting tactics to compel Hamas to recognize the state of Israel.

SCSN called on all Muslims not to be left out in the forthcoming national population census, urging them to be steadfast and alert to expose all efforts to manipulate the census results.

...Nigerian Muslims want publishers prosecuted

More than one hundred thousand Muslims under the umbrella of Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) have called on the international community to pressurize the governments of Denmark and Norway to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of the blasphemous publication on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the interest of international peace.

The leader of the movement in Kano, Malam Mahmud Turi, made the call while addressing the Muslim community who embarked on a peaceful demonstration over the cartoon.

Malam Turi observed that the blasphemous cartoon to which Muslims all over the globe responded with condemnatory demonstrations would warrant both the boycott of Danish and Norwegian products as well as cutting off diplomatic ties with those countries.

He expressed disgust that those behind the satanic and barbaric publication tried to convince the world that they were not guilty as, according to them, the act was just a freedom of expression.

The scholar maintained that all nations, irrespective of their beliefs, should intervene in the issue and ensure that Denmark and Norway arrest the publishers of the newspapers and handed them over to appropriate prosecu-

From Aliyu Saleh Machika, Correspondent (Kano)

ting agencies.

He therefore cautioned the West to understand that the life of every Muslim is totally based on belief in Allah and His messenger(s), and will never ever tolerate or accept any act of defamation against His person.

The protest, which began immediately after the *Juma'at* prayer at Fagge Juma'at Mosque in Kano, comprised men, women and children who marched through Ibrahim Taiwo road to the Emir's Palace, with many of the protesters carrying placards and chanting anti-Denmark and anti-Norwegian slogans.

Some of the inscriptions on the placard include: 'War against Denmark, Norway', 'Death to Denmark', 'Wrath of Allah on the perpetrators', 'We do not accept the insult', among others. Also, the symbolic flags of the countries were drawn on the group as an insult, while the effigies of the leaders of those countries were also drawn on the ground.

In his remarks after the demonstration, Sheikh Ibrahim Zazzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, described the evil act as a deliberate provocation and rejected their pretext excuse as baseless.

He then called on all Muslims to get more united, ignore

Traditional leaders seek constitutional role

The chairman of the Imo State Council of Chiefs, Dr. Cletus Ilomuanya, has advocated for a constitutional role to traditional rulers in the country.

Dr. Cletus Ilomuanya, who was in Sokoto to condole Sultan Muhammadu Maccido over the death of his two wives, said that he was strongly in support of any constit-

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Senior Reporter (Sokoto)

utional amendment that would give roles to the traditional institution.

He contended that if traditional rulers have specific roles in the constitution, the peace and unity of this country would be strengthened more.

He however said the amendment should be subject to the wish of the generality of the people of this country.

On the issue of power shift, the monarch said though he was not ready to answer political questions, he however cautioned that politics should not be a do-or-die affair. He added that, "all I can say is that Nigeria is one nation; we are all one nation and whoever is ordained by God to lead should lead Nigeria."

Dr. Ilomuanya described inter-state visits by traditional rulers as a means of fostering unity among all sections of the country and therefore urged his fellow traditional rulers to be paying such visits to cement the relationship among different ethnic groups.

Commenting on the current anti-corruption crusade, Dr. Ilomuanya said he was in support of the federal government's fight against corruption.

trivial differences and stand firmly on the actual Islamic cause as did Imam Hussain (A.S) for the protection of Islam and emancipation of the Muslim invaded lands

On the other hand, Muslims also mourned the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), along with companions in the Karbala Desert at southern Iraq by Yazid led army.

Sheikh Zazzaky added

that the tragedy has however revealed the fallacy of the despotic ruler of any allegiance to the prophet(s) or eligibility for leadership.

He also maintained that it taught the believers the greatest audacity, brevity and sacrifice demonstrated by the imam and his devoted followers to the real cause which remains an everlasting lesson for the dislodgment of all oppressive regimes and establishment of justice on earth.

...urge govt to break ties with Denmark

The federal government has been urged to break diplomatic ties with Denmark until authorities in that country apologise fully to Muslims for the publication of offensive cartoons on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in one of the country's newspapers.

The leader of members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria in Potiskum, Yobe State, Mallam Mustapha Lawan Nasidi, made the call as thousands of Muslims marched through the town at the weekend to protest the blasphemy.

Nasidi explained that publishers of the offensive cartoons did not do them because of their so-called freedom of expression, but only to malign Muslims and Islam deliberately, adding that even in Europe the freedom of speech is not considered unlim-

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (North East)

ited.

The Islamic movement leader recalled that when Salman Rushdie blasphemed the Prophet some years ago, even the Queen of England described the publication of his satanic book as inappropriate and hurting to Muslims, wondering why the current blasphemy would not be similarly condemned by Europe.

"Denmark must apologise fully to the world Muslims for what the newspaper did. We urge the government to break ties with Denmark until it apologises. Meanwhile, Muslims have already broken off economic ties with Denmark by boycotting their products and those of other European countries, which supported the publications. Mus-

lims would continue not to patronize products from these countries," he said.

Nasidi added that enemies of Islam are on course to continue to provoke Muslims, but said that their treacheries and machinations would ultimately come to nothing.

The protest demonstration also coincided with the annual *Ashura* mourning to commemorate the killing of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, by opponents of Islam in Karbala.

Mustapha Nasidi described the killing of the Prophet's grandson as a tragedy on the Muslim *Ummah*, but one that continues to inspire Muslims all over the world to remain steadfast on their religion, despite trials and tribulations.

NEWS



Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State, discussing with Dr. Adenike A. Adeyemi left, at the one day stakeholders meeting on improvement of maternal health and reduction of maternal mortality and consensus building on implementation of Rotary International VVF Preventive and Curative project in Kano and Kaduna States, held in Kaduna ...recently. Pix: Shehu K. Goro.

Alamieyeseigha challenges court over freezing of account

Former governor of Bayelsa state, Chief Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, has challenged the decision of Justice Tijani Abubakar on December 23, 2005 in a federal high court in Lagos to grant the *ex-parte* order sought by EFCC to freeze the accounts of three of his companies, Solomon and Peters Limited, Santolina Investment Corporation, and Pesal Nigeria Limited. EFCC alleged that the three companies were used to launder public funds.

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

by the crimes commission was filed before the court without joining as parties his clients whose properties and assets were to be seized, forfeited, or frozen.

He said in the affidavit that beside the court's *ex-parte* order, which was based on the EFCC's *ex-parte* application, EFCC has never filed any other application for interlocutory or final order.

But in a motion on notice filed by his counsel, Mike Ozekhome, the former governor prayed the court to discharge the order pursuant to an *ex-parte* application made by the chairman of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC).

According to the 11 paragraph affidavit in support of the motion, the governor argued that the court lacked jurisdiction to entertain the application and grant the *ex-parte* orders.

The *ex-parte* order, he further contended, is a nullity and constitutes a blatant violation of all known rules of natural justice and the fundamental rights of the applicants as enshrined in sections 36 and 44 of the constitution and Articles 7 and 14 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. He further argued that the *ex-parte* order presumed that he was guilty of the money laundering offences even before trial.

Ozekhome contended that the *ex-parte* application

More die in C/River communal clashes

From Bassay Ita, Calabar

Fresh hostilities have erupted between Biakpan and Etono II communities in Blade local government area of Cross River state.

The two communities have defied government directives to put an end to the communal conflict or face severe sanctions.

Daily Trust gathered that communal violence between Biakpan and Etono has claimed more than 70 casualties since hostilities began more than a month ago.

Police authorities in the state admit that they find it difficult to contain the situation, given the difficulty of the terrain. The police public relations officer in Cross River state, Mr. Thomas Adama Okpene, confirmed that the difficult terrain makes it difficult for the police to stop the violence.

Kwara to review minimum wage

The Kwara state government has promised to pay the minimum wage of N7,500 demanded by the state labour leaders.

Speaking at Government House, Ilorin during a visit by the NLC leadership, Governor Bukola Saraki commended the NLC leaders for resolving to dialogue with government, describing it as "the best way of resolving disagreement."

He appealed to workers and their union leaders to

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

cooperate with government to ensure peace and sound industrial harmony.

Governor Saraki explained that the issues raised by the NLC leadership would be looked into, including the payment of pensions and gratuity, as well as payment of January 2006 salary to teachers and local council workers.

Commenting on the suspended chairman of the Kwara State Polytechnic chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, Comrade Adelfa, Governor Saraki promised to look into the matter since the lecturer appeared to have shown remorse. He promised not to interfere with the policies of the institution.

Speaking earlier, the Kwara state chairman of NLC, Comrade Emmanuel Ayeoribe, commended the governor for his magnanimity in paying the January salaries of civil servants despite the delay in the release of the state's allocation by the federal government.

He urged the governor to emulate states such as Oyo, Osun, and Ekiti which have implemented the N7,500 minimum wage. He commended the governor for creating more jobs for the unemployed.

Comrade Ayeoribe said that NLC is conscious of the burden which the governor inherited from his predecessor, Governor Mohammed Lawal.

He asked the governor to assist the NNPC depot at Aka-Oyi with a generator to ensure regular supply of power and prevent fluctuations in the pumping of fuel products from the Ibadan depot.

Comrade Ayeoribe declared that Governor Saraki's impressive performance had convinced the NLC leadership that the series of awards

he has so far received, including the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation's award in South Africa, were based on merit.

ETF doles out N369.4 to Danfodio varsity

The Education Trust Fund (ETF) has disbursed N360.4 million for the execution of various programmes and projects at the Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto. This was recently disclosed by the executive secretary of ETF, Mallam Mustapha Jaji, during an inspection tour of ETF projects at the university.

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, Correspondent (Sokoto)

secretary to the university, the vice chancellor of the Usman Danfodio University, Professor Tijjani Bande, commended the cordial relationship existing between ETF and the university.

Bande assured the executive secretary that the university will strive to maintain its reputation as one of the best universities in the execution of ETF and other federal government projects.

He called on ETF to continue to reward the university for its performance.

890 UBE classroom projects uncompleted

In its quarterly newsletter, "UBEC-In-News," made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) disclosed that 890 of the classroom projects awarded in 2001 are yet to be completed. They were part of 2,913 classroom projects awarded under phases one and two of its accelerated classroom development programme. A survey conducted by the commission showed that 1,000 of the 2,023 classroom projects already completed have been furnished and made available to schools in the country.

It will be recalled that the Minister of Education, Mrs. Chinwe Obaji, had urged the UBE board when they called on her in August last year to take stock of all abandoned UBE projects in the country. "Your board," stressed the minister, "is to take this as a priority and ensure the speedy completion of all abandoned projects to make more classrooms available to the schools. We cannot allow the present situation of acute shortage of classrooms to continue."

The minister had stressed the urgency of providing pupils nationwide with a conducive learning environment.

Speaking to newsmen after the inspection tour, the executive secretary said that he was there to assess the various projects executed by the university with ETF funding from 1999 to date. He was satisfied with the performance of the university, and was not at all surprised that the institution came tops in the recent accreditation exercise conducted by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

He congratulated the management and board, the vice chancellor and the administrative staff of the university, pointing out that none of the projects was ever abandoned in spite of their high number.

While welcoming the ETF



Mrs. Chinwe Obaji, Minister of Education

News

Gbon Gwom Jos tasks Chiefs on human trafficking

The Gbon Gwom Jos, Dr. Victor Pam, has charged cabinet chiefs in his kingdom to erect anti-human trafficking roadblocks in their different communities to combat the growing incidence of human trafficking in Plateau State.

According to a press statement issued yesterday by the head of press and public relations, Orakwue Ainze, the Gbon Gwom Jos gave the charge in his palace during the handing over of twenty child victims of human trafficking from his kingdom to the chairperson of Riyom local government area.

He condemned human trafficking and charged parents to be vigilant and wary of any person who promises their children jobs and prosperity.

Dr. Pam said he had commenced a campaign tour of clans and the local government areas in his domain to sensitise them of the evil of trade in persons, and warned that both conniving parents and the traffickers from his domain would be dealt with.

The Gbon Gwom said he considered human trafficking inimical to the development of his kingdom, adding that he had summoned all his

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter

chiefs and local government chairpersons to discuss ways of combating it.

Also speaking, the coordinator of the return and rehabilitation programme of the twenty children and member of the House of Representatives from Riyom-Barkinladi Constituency, Dr. Gyan Dantong, said he had placed his constituency on high alert by erecting mechanisms to police the children and watch over them permanently.

Gyan Dantong added that he would adopt the no-child-left-behind policy by distributing books to schools in his constituency to help indigent parents.

He called on parents to key into the federal government's Universal Basic Education Scheme, which ensures children's educational rights as the best alternative to domestic labour.

Receiving the children, the chairperson of Riyom local government area, Mrs. Mary Dang, said the local government council had passed the Child Rights Bill to ensure the safety of the children from traffickers.

Earlier, the executive secretary of NAPTIP, Mrs. Carol

Ndaguba, told the Gbon Gwom that the law of the land frowns at the parents who withdraw their children from schools to be distributed to homes for child labour activities, adding that the agency would prosecute parents who indulge in such acts.



Governor Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa State discussing with the Senior Special Assistant to President Obasanjo on Media and Publicity Mrs. Remi Oyo during his visit to the State House Abuja...recently. Pix: Joe Oroye.

The Benue State government and public workers in the state are at daggers' drawn because of the delay in the payment of January salaries.

The state's chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) said workers in the state were dissatisfied and wanted their salaries paid immediately.

But the state's Commissioner for Finance, Dr.

Tension as Benue is yet to pay salaries

By Hir Joseph, Correspondent, Makurdi

Christopher Obute, in a telephone interview with Daily Trust, insisted that the state is not the only state that had its federal allocations withheld.

"Benue State will get its January allocation alongside the rest of the states anytime the problem in Abuja is resolved.

"What is my concern with third term? All I know is that no state has gotten funds yet, not only Benue," he said.

Also speaking on the issue, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor George Akume, Mr. Tyodzua Atim, distanced the governor from the complications that led to state's allocations being withheld.

"The president, being God-fearing, would not decide to deliberately starve states of funds because of the speculated third term bid which is private to him," he added.

But the NLC, through the state's secretary, Comrade Kwamande Kwamande, said since the problem was national, the state government ought to have briefed the NLC on why salaries were being withheld.

"Workers are not comfortable with the silence the state government has continued to keep while the people are suffering," said Kwamande.

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20th - 23th Feb. 2006

Human Resource strategy now needs to be a key component of a company's business strategy. It needs to address how to make optimum use of the (intangible Asset) people within the organization and to ensure that they can plan for the future with confidence. This means line and HR executives must be able to work together to mould and continuously improve organizational capability.

Programme objectives

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- * How to harness the power of cutting-edge ICT for greater HRM Impact
- * How to align management style with high performing teams
- * How to use a competency based approach in formulating HR policy covering such areas as: recruitment, assessment, employee development, training need analysis, team development, career development, succession planning and performance management.
- * How to build behavioral objectives into a performance management system.

Who should attend?

- * Human resource professionals
- * HR Planning and Development staff
- * Staff with an interest in HR planning and development.
- * Staff wishing to see company wide efficiency through people performance

Course Fee

N50, 000.00: To cover tuition, course materials, tea and lunch during programme hours

OWNER MANAGER (MINI - WORKSHOP)

28th Feb. - 1st Mar 2006

The Owner Manager (Entrepreneurship) Programme is a 2-day intensive course aimed at transferring requisite multifaceted managerial skills to owner-run firms. Taking the driver's seat of a firm requires sufficient managerial competencies to ensure that vision, mission, objectives and goals of the organization are attained.

Programme objectives

- * To increase propensity to start an entrepreneurial venture and impart skills to run it successfully
- * To expose different capabilities, experiences, motivation and determination of successful entrepreneurs

Programme Outline

- * The entrepreneurial process and revolution
- * Design and structural issues in entrepreneurial organization
- * Contact networking and customer relationship marketing
- * Entrepreneurial finance

Who Should Attend?

- * Owner Managed Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs)
- * Fresh Unemployed Graduates
- * Public Servants and Members of the Armed Forces, Bankers who want to start a retirement venture programme.
- * People in Business who lack managerial skills
- * Practicing Entrepreneurs who want to strengthen their entrepreneurial capacities

Course Fee

N10, 000.00 to cover tuition, course materials and light refreshments (Snacks only)

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

6th - 9th Mar 2006

Are leaders' larger-than-life figures? Are they born or made? Is there any conflict between expedient and idealistic leadership? Is Leadership a science or an art? Does just being a pioneer or occupying the top chair mean leadership? Or is it just the case of winning elections? Is your company/organization/constituency facing any leadership crisis?

The KBS- Executive Leadership Programme is based on a solid foundation of best practice leadership concepts, tools and techniques. The programme's focus is how to bond the human welfare needs and leadership to enrich and improve upon the lives of the followers and the leader; in tandem

Programme objectives

- At the end of the course, participants would:
- * Have acquired useful team leadership and conflict resolution skills
- * Know the methods for empowering people and helping them perform at their best
- * Display an improvement in the ability to recognise and take up leadership roles
- * Be able to help team members develop their own leadership potential.

Programme outline

- * Introduction to leadership thinking and practice from around the world, and leadership issues from within Nigeria.
- * The concept of drafting a personal leadership development plan.
- * Leadership crises in Africa and the way forward.

Who should Attend

Directors, Corporate Planners, Group Heads, Managers, Heads of Government Departments and Parastatals, Entrepreneurs and People in leadership positions who desire to make a difference.

Course Fee

N50, 000.00: To cover tuition, course materials, tea and lunch during programme hours

Venue: Kaduna Business School, 13h Ohikere Street, off Inuwa Wada Road, Ungwan Rimi, G.R.A., Kaduna

Hotline: 062 376 856, Kenya: 0802 363 0631; Bukky: 0803 615 8236; Mape: 0199 750 000

Tel/Fax - 062 246 535; website: www.kbs.edu.ng; marketing@kbs.edu.ng

News

CRC, CNPP condole Beko's family

The Civil Society Congress has mourned the death of the frontline human rights activist, Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, who died last Friday at the age of sixty-six after a brief illness.

In a press statement signed by its president, Comrade Shehu Sani, and the secretary general, Malam Nasir Abba in Kaduna, the sad death came at a time when the nation's political evolution needed Beko's invaluable experiences.

"Although trained as a medical doctor, Beko found an indescribable satisfaction and higher calling as a human rights defender where he assiduously struggled to establish his name and reputation as an indefatigable defender of human rights and the rule of law.

"He also by engagement took activism to an inspirational highlight for Africans and for humanity, earning recognition and commendation in the process."

CRC said while alive, Dr Beko contributed immensely to the evolution of a true democratic culture in Nigeria and beyond, particularly through his proactive campaign against military dictatorship and tyranny.

It also recalled that Dr Beko's contributions towards the entrenchment of a virile and viable healthcare system in Nigeria remains indelible, adding that his initiation of strikes and sit-ins to press home for better working conditions for medical personnel and upgrading of national healthcare facilities were legendary.

"While some pro-democratic activists were losing their voices in the face of sustained military tyranny, particularly during the Abacha regime, he along with a few but courageous activists resorted to confronting headlong the military dictatorship, damning the consequences.

"He was also selfless and fearless and he was modest and unusually humble. He was a real nationalist and fine patriot who through his life

By Sani Babadoko, in Kaduna

engagement shaped the lives of many Africans.

"As a mark of respect, we call on the federal government to immortalize this great son of Africa by naming a monument or an institution in his memory," the CRC statement said.

Similarly, CNPP has condoled the immediate family, human rights and civil society organisations on the death of Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti.

"CNPP remembers with nostalgia the courageous, articulate and visionary roles, the passionate crusader played in the struggle to free Nigerians from the bondage of anti-democratic regimes and the robust agenda he championed for the convocation of the Sovereign National Conference and the restructuring of the federation," the statement said.

It added that "the death of

Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, the last icon of the three Ransome-Kuti brothers, a shining star, veteran and selfless activist, is a huge blow to the advancement of the social conditions, positive change of the status quo and enthronement of true federalism in Nigeria."

The party regrets that Dr Ransome-Kuti died when the final resolution of 'our sordid democratic transition is at lowest ebb, a battle he wedged devotedly, consequent upon the unpatriotic ambition of forces of darkness who slide our democracy into fascist dictatorship'.

"CNPP recalls the last meeting with PRONACO in which Dr Kuti proffered radical and pragmatic engagement strategies, nor can we forget easily Kuti's postulation that all patriotic and progressive democrats must brace up for the battle against 3rd term, which he predicted will be gruesome," it said.

Minister rejects request for review of contract rates

Works Minister Adeseye Ogunlewe has rejected the request for the review of the contract rates for the dualisation of the Mile 3 Diobu - Port Harcourt International Airport road. The road has a spur to the Eagle Island in Port Harcourt.

A statement issued by the



Works Minister Adeseye

ministry in Abuja said Ogunlewe turned down the request while reviewing the 42 kilometre long project which was awarded to Messrs Jolimair Nigeria Limited in 1999.

The statement said the total cost of the project which had an initial completion period of 20 months was N1.861bn.

The statement said the minister was not happy with the pace of work even when the contractor had collected over N1bn.

"The minister was dismayed over the seeming incompetence and unseriousness of the contractor," the statement added.

It said that the federal government had now decided to accede to the request of the Rivers State government to take over the remaining 10km stretch of the road.

The statement said Ogunlewe promised that the government would re-imburse the state government after it might have completed the project.

According to it, the companies that turned up for the project review are Messrs Nigercat Construction Nigeria Limited, which is handling the Sakpoba - Oghrefe (Phase I) road in Delta State, and Messrs Goldlight Limited, handling the Bida - Saachi - Nupeko road in Niger State.

The statement further said that the minister advised Nigercat to prepare its final accounts for payment on its completed projects.

It said that the minister was not happy with Gold Light Nigeria Ltd for attending the review session without its chief engineer.

"Ogunlewe said the Obasanjo administration would not want to hear any more excuses for non-performance by contractors," the statement said.

Army launches savings scheme for soldiers abroad

The Nigerian Army has introduced a savings scheme for its officers and soldiers on peace-keeping operations across the world.

Col. Ayo Olaniyan, an Assistant Director of Army Public Relations, said in Kaduna at the weekend that the scheme was designed to make the personnel derive greater benefits from such operations.

In a statement, Olaniyan quoted the General Officer Commanding I Division of the Army, Major Gen. Owoye Azani, as making

this known on behalf of the Chief of Army Staff.

Azani said the Army recently came up with a compulsory savings scheme for officers and soldiers who, on account of being on foreign operations, earned extra income.

He explained that the scheme would enable them to save money and embark on long-term investments.

"If you use the money wisely, you will forever remember that you went for a peacekeeping operation while in the Army," Azani was quoted as saying.



THE PRESIDENCY

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHITE PAPER ON THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE ALIENATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY
Federal Secretariat Complex, Phase I, Shehu Shagari Way, Central Business Area, Abuja. Tel: 09-6724664

FINAL NOTICE ON 2ND TRANCHE PAYMENT FOR IKOYI PROPERTIES

1. The Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Development and Chairman, Implementation Committee on the Alienation of Federal Government Landed Property, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, wishes to notify successful bidders and legal sitting tenants of the Federal Government Landed Property in Ikoyi, Lagos, who have paid the initial 10% bid deposit that the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has graciously approved that the deadline for the payment of the next 15% of the property value and 5% transaction cost be extended by one month i.e. from 24th January, 2006, to Friday, 24th February, 2006, for those whose letters of offer were dated 24th October, 2005.
2. In this regard, anyone who fails to pay on or before Friday, 24th February, 2006, shall, in accordance with the approved guidelines, forfeit the initial 10% bid deposit to the Federal Government.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, there will be no further extension and this announcement serves as the final notice to all concerned, please.

SIGNED:

B. B. AWOJIDE

SECRETARY

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Advertorial

Jigawa ANPP: Shehu Mustapha Babura's ridiculous claims against Governor Turaki

It is obvious that some funny characters have taken over the publicity machinery of the All Nigeria Peoples Party in Jigawa state and are using it to make the party a laughing stock. How else can one describe the endless fairy tales that the Jigawa state governor, Alhaji Saminu Turaki, has registered as a card-carrying member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in its last registration exercise?

One obscure Shehu Mustapha Babura sought to pull the wool over our eyes with a forged PDP membership register and a paid advertorial published in the February 10, 2006 edition of the *Daily Trust*, Volume 13 number 20. Clearly, all the claims made against Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki are false, baseless and conflicts with logical thinking. If Shehu Mustapha Babura had made such a declaration in the month of April, it would have been easy to say it was an "April Fool."

For the avoidance of doubt, we will take a critical look at all the empty rhetorics of Shehu Mustapha Babura and his co-travellers. First, the unknown quantity, who has never attended an ANPP meeting, said that there is no going-back on the so-called suspension of Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki from the party and that members of the party were happy that the national secretariat of the ANPP has constituted a verification committee to probe the governor's so-called anti-party activities. For the record, the verification committee was set up to probe the activities of some Jigawa ANPP members who are creating bad blood between Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki and other party members. Indeed, we are eagerly waiting for the verification committee to see what punishment it would mete out on the characters that are working tirelessly to cause confusion in the Jigawa ANPP.

Secondly, the forged Peoples Democratic Party membership registration that accompanied Shehu Mustapha Babura's advertorial pretended that one "Turaki I. S," a "farmer" was the present Jigawa state governor. Even a foreigner knows that Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki has been a businessman, an investor of no mean repute, before joining politics. For Shehu Mustapha Babura to tell us that the governor was some kind of village farmer amounts to standing truth on its head. In fact, it would be amazing if nobody could realize this cheap lie of an "interim chairman" whose party members have never seen eye-to-eye.

No sensible person will take "Turaki I. S" as contained in the PDP register for Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki. The abbreviation "I. S," which was obviously forged to score cheap political goals could mean a thousand names. For instance, I. S. could mean Isma'ila Suleiman, Isa Sanusi, Isyaku Sani, Ibrahim Sale, Idris Salihu or Iliya Saminu and so on and so forth. There are over one thousand names that are abbreviated as I. S. in this country and we wonder what blinded Shehu Mustapha Babura and his co-travellers in the Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki blackmail from ignoring this reality about Northern names. The name of Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be associated with that of a village farmer. How are we sure that the Turaki I.S. was registered in the PDP list by Shehu Mustapha Babura and his

co-conspirators to portray Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki in bad light?

The talk of wild allegations and lies by Shehu Mustapha Babura was also funny because he mistakenly showed the party members what his group have been doing in the last few months on the pages of newspapers. It was indeed mind-boggling, that Shehu Mustapha Babura and his co-travellers in the Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki de-campaigners would discard an authentic document because of something as trivial as small or capital letters, ignoring the central message that all the names were authentic and correctly spelt.

A second look at the membership register which Shehu Mustapha Babura published on page 44 of the *Daily Trust* edition, was forged to read October 4, 2005 because a clear perusal indicates that it was done on October 1, 2005 but was altered to read October 4, 2005. It is easy though, to alter figure 1 to look like 4.

This broad daylight propaganda will not mislead the good people of Jigawa state in particular and members of the ANPP in general. We still maintain that if Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki has decamped to the PDP, the party would have organized a special ceremony in honour of a man that has worked tirelessly for the ANPP. In case Shehu Mustapha Babura and his cohorts do not know, they cannot give contributions to the ANPP like Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, who donated his house as the venue for drafting the party's constitution even before he knew he would have cause to contest in 1999.

Thirdly, it was rather unfortunate that Shehu Mustapha Babura would describe me, an ANPP national officer, as "a faceless candido of no fixed address." No indiscipline can be equated to this kind of reckless description of a national officer of a party. It is the height of lack of concern for our party for an "interim chairman" to describe a national officer the way Shehu Mustapha Babura did. It also questions the genuineness of his ANPP membership because we only know Muhammadu Daguro as chairman of the party in the state. I am a well known member of the ANPP and big time political associate of Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, consequently, I need not to put my address.

For now, we advise Shehu Mustapha Babura and his cohorts in the pull-him-down campaign, to bear in mind that the victory of falsehood is temporary. We urge our loyal party members to condemn this new trend of divisive tendencies for which the likes of Shehu Mustapha Babura are ready to be used by some forces outside our great party, to cause confusion. The silence of our loyal party members is a source of worry because as Martin Luther King Jr, would say, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

For this imaginary ANPP "interim chairman," we say be wary of the day the truth would be laid bare, when you will have cause to bury your face in shame and for Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki to have the last laugh!

I want to inform you that if you and your group are doing this campaign of calumny against the governor so that you can be called for negotiation, I assure you there is nothing for you. We are waiting for the next lie or propaganda.

Signed:

Alhaji Muhammadu Murtala

Sports

C'wealth Games: Why we drop Oriala - AFN

The Athletics Federation of Nigeria has explained that the insistence of the Australian government not to permit Chinedu Oriala entry into Australia is the reason for dropping the third placed 100m runner from the list of athletes for the Commonwealth Games. Oriala had placed third

By Patrick Andrew, Asst. Head, Sports Desk
 ahead of Deji Aliu in the final of the 100m on Saturday but when the list of athletes invited to camp for the Games was published yesterday it was observed that his name was conspicuously missing. Vice chairman of the

federation, Elias Gora, said they were at pains dropping the athlete since he made the required entry standard, adding that the stance of the Australian government could not be faulted since they said it bordered on morals. It was learnt that the athlete had allegedly acted in a manner that impinged on

morals when he was in Sydney, an act that was said to have forced the Australian government to impose a no entry ban on the sprinter. The vice chairman said following the posture of the host, the AFN decided to oblige them their request by dropping the athletes from the final list compiled at the

end of the Mobil Track and Field Championship that was used to select the country's banner bearers for Melbourne, Australia next month. The AFN Technical Director, Sunday Bada, had in a release, stated that 31 athletes have made the basic standard for invitation to camp ahead of the fiesta. It

was, however, not indicated whether there will be further pruning down at the end of the camping exercise that has been scheduled to begin in earnest. Among the athletes was Vivian Chukwuemeka, who could not participate in the championship due to the refusal of her school to release her. The school declined entreaties for her leave of absence because she is said to be writing her examinations.

Gora explained that the federation decided to grant her wild card entry in spite of its earlier stance because "as an international athlete and defending champion even if AFN did not invite her, the international federation would, so that she could defend her title. We decided to invite her so that we would not be beaten to it by the international federation."

Others are 100m winner, Olusoji Fasuba, who posted 10.13seconds which is the best time this year to beat Uche Emedolu, whose 10.14 seconds was better than Oriala's and Aliu, who had 10.33seconds. Mercy Nku's conqueror, Gloria Kemasuode won the women 100m in the time of 11.33seconds, while Nku had 11.40 seconds and Endurance Ojokolo 11.57seconds.

Hockey coach dreams of medal

The Nigeria team is very positive about winning its first Commonwealth Games medal next month in Melbourne, Australia. Chief of the team that has

been in camp for two months now, Charles Ukusanren said the squad is capable of winning a medal of whatever shape for the country because of the form of the

players and the exposure they have acquired so far. The coach said though Nigeria is ranked 18th in the world, the team is however sure of winning a medal

noting that experiences so far have shown that the country stand the chance of winning something at the Games. "I have 20 players in the camp at the moment. They are

all very good players who are capable of playing the best any where in the world. We would however have to drop two of them later this week in the final pruning exercise before we begin the last phase of the preparation programme."

The coach applauded the Sports Ministry for granting them the opportunities to embark on the training exercises in preparation for the Games in Melbourne, Australia, next month.

Though he said that the commonwealth bloc dominates in hockey in the world, he was optimistic that Nigeria would compete favourably with the rest for the available medal noting that the team now has the zest and character to achieve result.

Mikel continues court battle

Nigeria international John Mikel Obi is appealing against a Norwegian court's decision not to consider his contract dispute with Lyn. Helge Morten Svarva, Obi's lawyer, said his 18-year-client will appeal against a decision by the Oslo district court that such matters come under the jurisdiction of

sports organizations rather than the judicial system. Obi, who wants to join Chelsea, is claiming Lyn officials pressured him into signing a contract with Manchester United in April 2005. Mikel and his attorneys claim his contract with Lyn was forged, rendering all other agreements invalid.

Svarva, who said they would be taking the matter to the Oslo appeals court, hopes they will overturn the district court's order that Mikel pay Lyn US\$22,400 in legal costs. "The ruling is wrong, in our opinion," Svarva told NRK, the Norwegian state radio network. "There is also the

question of costs for Mikel. We want to have it tested again."

No date was immediately set for the new hearing. Obi left Norway in May 2005 but returned three months later, after FIFA ruled that his Lyn contract was valid.

But after suing Lyn in November, Obi left the club again in December and has not played club football since.

Pillars, Gombe, 3 others yet to pick forms

Barely five days to the deadline for Premier League registration, Kano Pillars, Gombe United and Dolphins are the big teams which are yet to collect registration forms from the Nigeria Football League. Trustsports scooped from the NFL Secretariat that only five clubs are yet to formally begin the process for registration for the season scheduled to kick start on February 25.

revealed that though 15 clubs have collected forms none has yet completed the registration formalities by returning the form to the secretariat for subsequent verification. Most clubs which are sponsored by the government are said to have difficulties carrying out basic programmes relating to funds because the budgets of their respective states are yet to be signed into law. Besides, most of the

clubs are indebted to the NFL, players and match officials due to incidences of assault, balance of sign-on fees, salaries and other entitlements owed to them. The NFL had made payment of all debts as the precondition for the registration for the next season as well as demonstration of by evidence that they have paid all insurance fees on their players and other relevant financial commitment demanded of them.

These included the three mentioned above and Premier League debutant, Ocean Boys and Kwara United coached by Kadiri Ikhana. Further investigations

revealed that though 15 clubs have collected forms none has yet completed the registration formalities by returning the form to the secretariat for subsequent verification. Most clubs which are sponsored by the government are said to have difficulties carrying out basic programmes relating to funds because the budgets of their respective states are yet to be signed into law. Besides, most of the

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El-Kanemi N5m coach resumes work

Justin Tenger, the newly contracted Technical Adviser of El-Kanemi Warriors of Maiduguri has penned a N5m contract with the Northern outfit thus ending weeks of speculations and contract talks between the two parties. Tenger handled Gombe United last season and following the exit of Kelechi Emetole, who guided the Warriors last season, the Benue born tactician was called up as replacement.

any club wishing to get my service should be able to pay me no less than N5m. And this is exactly what I bargained for with El-Kanemi. "The fact that I have signed the contract papers means that I am happy with the details of the contract", Tenger said.

The league is fixed to begin in two weeks time. The NFL Executive Secretary, Mallam Salihu Abubakar has consistently insisted on the kick off date, stressing that even if less than the 20 teams in the Premier League meet the standard requirement, the season would begin. Enyimba of Aba are the defending champions while Rangers, Dolphins are all continental campaigners following their successes last season.

Tenger was also forthcoming with details of his one-season contract with the Warriors. "I have always said it that

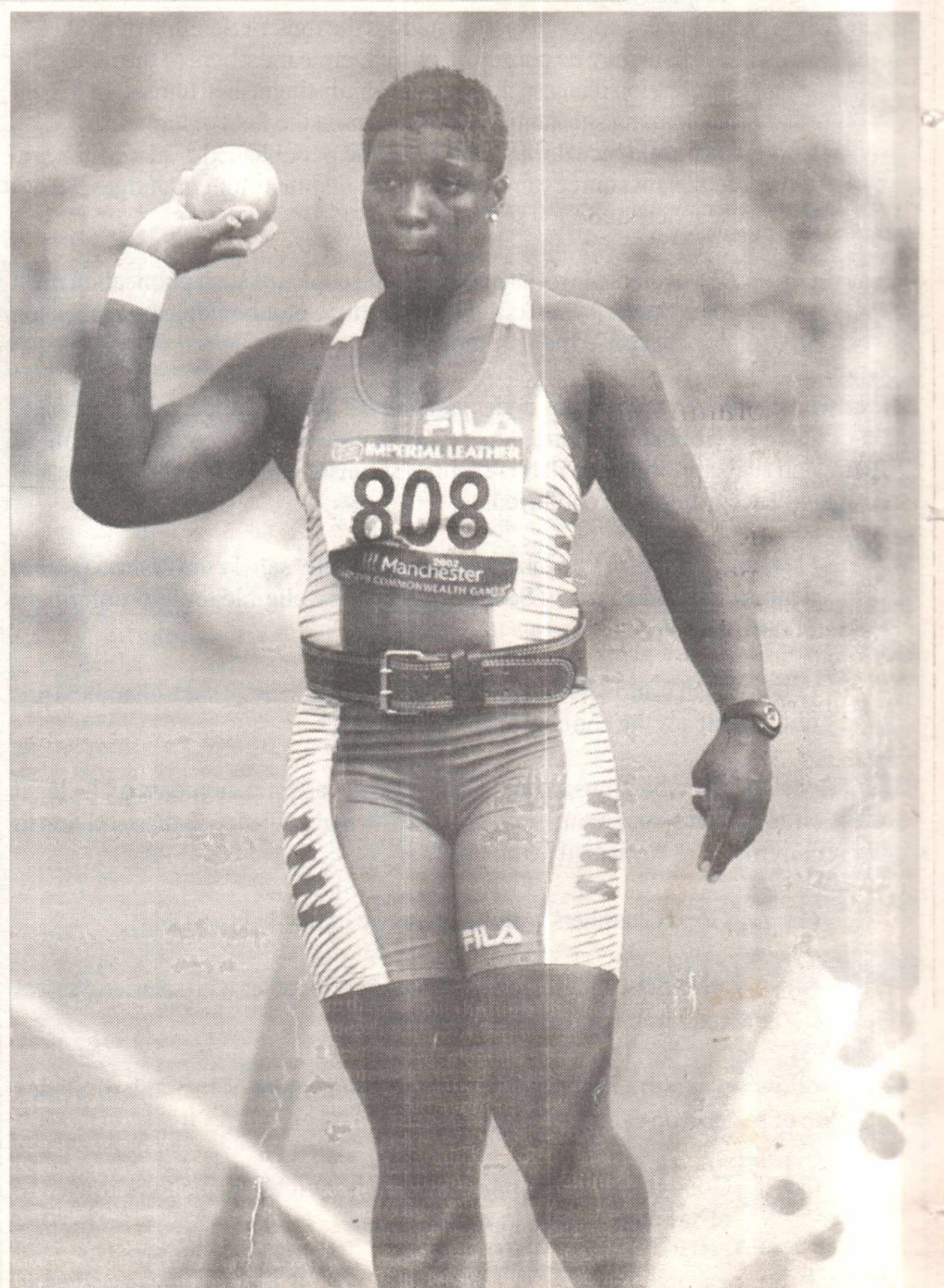
any club wishing to get my service should be able to pay me no less than N5m. And this is exactly what I bargained for with El-Kanemi. "The fact that I have signed the contract papers means that I am happy with the details of the contract", Tenger said.

Enyimba of Aba are the defending champions while Rangers, Dolphins are all continental campaigners following their successes last season.

Yobo wants Oliseh's replacement

Super Eagles stand-in captain for most matches of the past 2006 Nations Cup, Joseph Yobo has stated that one of the biggest problems the team faced in Egypt was the absence of a creative and robust central midfielder in the mould of Sunday Ogorchukwu Oliseh. Taking a look back at the Eagles third-place finish in the championship, Yobo said it's high time the country

found another Oliseh. "To be honest with you, there is a wide gulf between Oliseh and the defensive midfielders we have in the team right now and I think it will be good if the coaches could search for more talents good for that role," Yobo stressed. "Ayila is good in his own right, just like Sani Kaita is coming up too, but the coaches must do more to cover the position Oliseh vacated."



Vivian Chukwuemeka received a wild card entry into Nigeria Commonwealth Games contingent.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT, CAP. 207

GUIDELINES FOR CONFERMENT OF THE RANK

OF

SENIOR ADVOCATE OF NIGERIA

COMMENCEMENT: 13TH AUGUST, 2004

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee which has been established under section 5 subsection (3) of the Legal Practitioners Act, Cap. 207, as amended, will henceforth and for the time being take into consideration the criteria listed below in its deliberations on applications received for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria.

1) The basic criteria prescribed by section 5 subsection (2) of the Legal Practitioners Act, Cap. 207 which provides that a candidate for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria must have been qualified to practice as a Legal Practitioner in Nigeria for not less than ten years and has achieved distinction in the legal profession in such manner as the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee:") may from time to time determine.

2) Any application for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria shall contain the following information:≤

- i) Particulars of at least six contested cases in which the applicant had appeared before the Supreme Court of Nigeria within the immediate three years preceding the date of the application; or
- ii) Particulars of at least two contested cases in the Supreme Court of Nigeria and at least four contested cases in the Court of Appeal in all of which the applicant has appeared within the immediate three years preceding the date of the application; or
- iii) Particulars of at least one contested case in the Supreme Court of Nigeria and at least four contested cases in the Court of Appeal and at least six contested cases in any High Court or High Courts of the Federation or States or Federal Capital Territory in all of which the applicant has appeared within the immediate three years preceding the date of the application, before the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Court of Appeal and the High Court or High Courts respectively.
- iv) (1) In exceptional circumstances the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria may be conferred on academic members of the legal profession if any such applicant has distinguished himself or herself by making substantial contributions in the field of law and jurisprudence through teaching and or published works which are constant source of reference by legal practitioners, Judges, Law teachers and Law students.
- (2) Particulars of works published and copies of such publication must be supplied to the Committee at the time of submitting the application for the conferment of the rank.

3) Notwithstanding the conditions under paragraph 2 above a holder of the erstwhile title of Queen's Counsel is entitled to apply for the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria and such application will be favourably considered by the Committee and the rank will accordingly be conferred.

- 4) (1) Only partners in Chambers who individually satisfy the criteria for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate are eligible for the conferment of the rank.
- (2) Associates and salaried junior legal practitioners in such chambers are not eligible for the conferment of the rank.

5) In respect of all applications, other than those by academic members of the legal profession as stated in paragraph 3 above, the following evidence shall in addition to other requirements be furnished to the Committee.

- (1) Good Chambers with adequately equipped library; and
- (2) At least two junior legal practitioners together with salaried clerical staff employed in the Chambers.

6) The following qualities are essential for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria on candidates that apply for the rank.

- (3) Good character and reputation, honesty, integrity, sound knowledge of law and ability.

- (4) Successful practice at the Bar, satisfactory presentation of cases in Courts and generally high standard in the legal profession.

- (5) Loyalty to the Legal profession and observance of the Code of Conduct and Etiquette at the Bar.

7) In determining the qualities and suitability of applicants for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, the Committee may consult with the:

1. Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria
2. Justice of the Court of Appeal; and
3. Chief Judge of any State or High Court who will in turn consult with the Judges of the Judicial Division or Divisions of the High Court or High Courts where the applicants are practicing or had practiced.

8) Any applicant for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria with any of the following disposition shall be considered unsuitable and disqualified and will not be conferred with the rank.

- (1) Bad behaviour whether in or out of Court; for example showing naked temper and propensity to assault people or cause them harm
- (2) Indulgence in drug abuse or alcoholic addiction,
- (3) Showing of evidence of gross moral depravity or other socially unacceptable behaviour.
- (4) Involvement in abuse of legal trust such as embezzlement and mismanagement of client's funds.
- (5) Indulgence in advertisement, such as blatant, common and self-seeking praises or songs by musicians or records or tapes which are deliberately sponsored by the applicant and are openly played in public or over electronic-media.
- (6) Resorting to touting for briefs or cases or engaging in any form of canvassing.

9) The number of applicants for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria in any given year shall not exceed fifteen.

10) All applications for the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria must be submitted in a prescribed form to be obtained from and returned not later than 31st March of the year of application to the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

Made by the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee,

At Abuja, this 13th day of August, 2004.

**MUHAMMADU LAWAL UWAI, GCON,
CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA.**

The Legal Practitioners and Privileges Committee has set up a Sub-Committee to review the above existing guidelines for the appointment of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, S.A.N. In view of the foregoing therefore, memorandum are hereby invited from the General Public particularly members of the Legal Profession to submit a written memorandum to the Sub-Committee on Review of the guidelines on or before the 27th February, 2006. The memorandum must be in A4 papers and should NOT be more than five (5) pages.

The memorandum be addressed to:≤
The Secretary,
Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee,
c/o Chief Registrar's Office,
Supreme Court of Nigeria,
Abuja.

SIGNED:
DANLAMI Z. SENCHI, ESQ.,
SECRETARY,
LEGAL PRACTITIONERS PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE.

Sports

Inzaghi still hoping for World Cup call-up

AC Milan striker Filippo Inzaghi said he still had hopes of securing a place in Italy's World Cup squad after he scored a hat-trick in a 4-1 win over Reggina at the weekend.

The 32-year-old has scored 21 goals in 48 international appearances but won his last cap in October 2003 when he scored two in a 4-0 Euro 2004 qualifier against Azerbaijan.

Since then a series of knee and ankle injuries have disrupted his career and he has not been involved in the national team under current coach Marcello Lippi, who took over in August 2004.

"The Milan shirt is already mine. Now I'm

dreaming about another one," Inzaghi was quoted as saying in *La Gazzetta dello Sport* on Monday.

"I'm really hoping it happens - especially as Lippi knows me well and knows what I can do. But in Italy there are so many good strikers."

Inzaghi has a chance to make another mark for his club when Milan resume their Champions League campaign against Bayern Munich on Feb. 21.

Inzaghi scored both Milan goals in a 2-1 away win over Bayern in the first group stage of the 2002-03 Champions League.

"Obviously I'd like to play against Bayern but it will be up to the coach to

decide," he said.

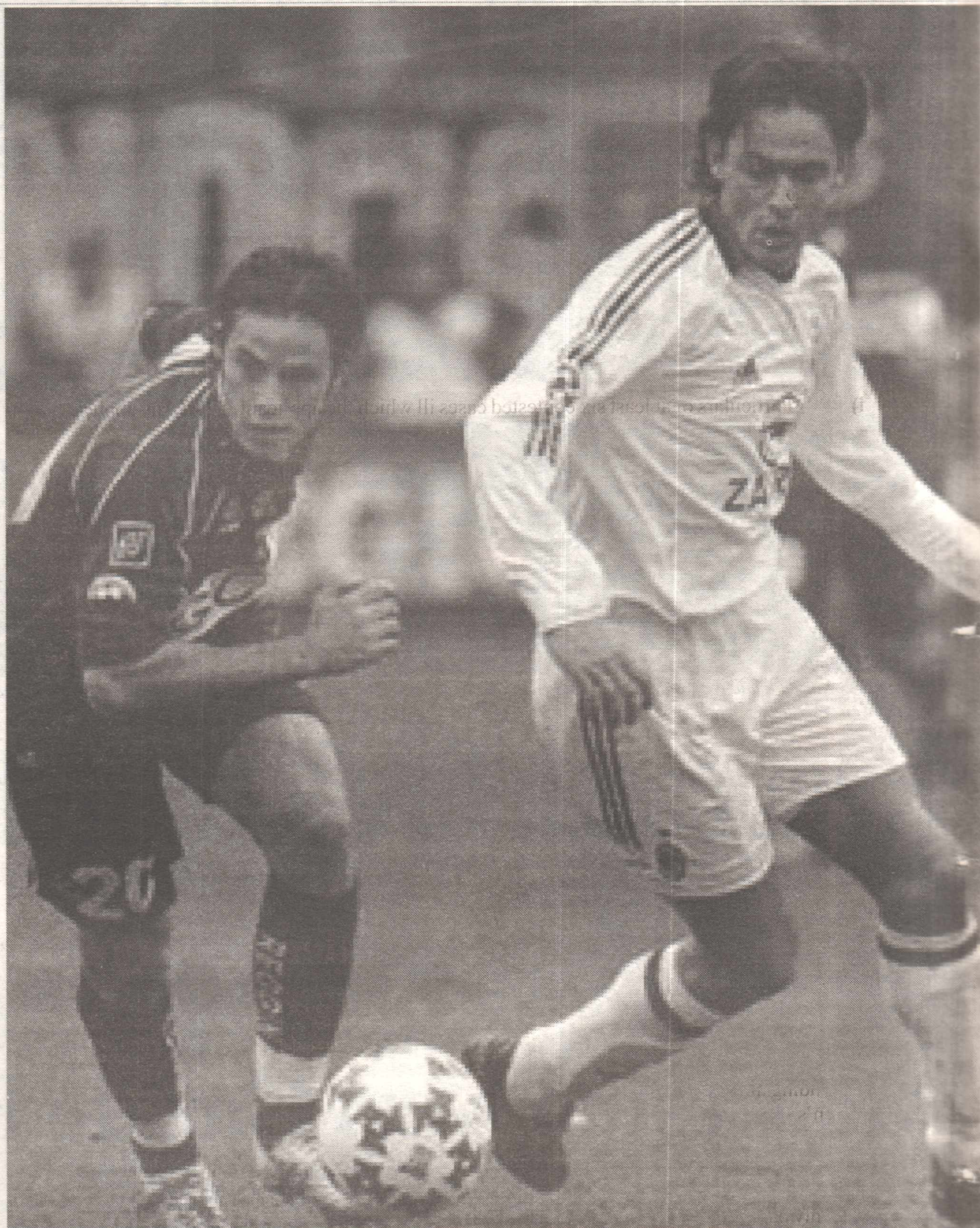
"All I have to do is keeping playing the way I am

now. If I think back six months (to when I was injured), no one believed I could come

back.

"There were times when even I didn't think I'd been a

good footballer again. Instead, here I am - it seems like a fairytale."



AC Milan's Filippo Inzaghi, right, and Reggina's Giandomenico Mesto tussle for the ball during their Italian Serie A match at the Granillo Stadium in Reggio Calabria in Italy on Sunday. Inzaghi, who scored a hat-trick in Milan's 4-1 victory, is still hoping of securing a place in Italy's World Cup squad.

Del Piero eyes triple trophy haul

Juventus striker Alessandro Del Piero has set his sights on a treble of Serie A, Champions League and World Cup titles after scoring the winner in a 2-1 victory over Inter Milan at the weekend.

The 31-year-old Italy international curled in a free kick in the 85th-minute of the game at the San Siro stadium to give his side 66 points from 25 matches, 12 points more than their nearest challengers, AC Milan and Inter.

"They are all achievable objectives," he was quoted as saying in *La Gazzetta dello Sport* on Monday.

"I'm really delighted at how I've been playing in the autumn of my career — as someone defined it."

Del Piero spent long periods on the bench during the early part of the season as Juve coach Fabio Capello fielded a strike pairing of David Trezeguet and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Gradually, however, he has reclaimed a regular starting place. Last month he became Juve's most prolific striker of all time, surpassing Giampiero

Boniperti's record of 182 goals.

The goal against Inter took his tally to 190.

Sunday's match was the third occasion in four weeks that Del Piero had proved decisive following goals in 1-0 victories against Udinese and Reggina.

With 13 matches left to play, the chances of either Inter or Milan prising the title away from Juve are growing increasingly remote.

"I don't know if the goal against Inter was the one that will decide the title. We have still got quite a few matches ahead of us," Del Piero said.

"But without doubt it is a great advantage. From now on all we've got to do the thing we do best: keep our foot on the pedal."

Villa pities Barca keeper after howler gifts Valencia win

Valencia striker David Villa had words of support for Victor Valdes after the Barcelona goalkeeper committed a howler to gift Valencia victory in their top-of-the-table clash on Sunday.

Under no pressure Valdes

carelessly underhit a pass to defender Carles Puyol in the 44th minute in the Mestalla, allowing Villa to nip in and lob the only goal of the game.

The result saw Valencia narrow the gap on the leaders, which stood at 12 points two weeks ago, to six.

"It is a shame Valdes made such a mistake and in all honesty I feel really sorry for him," Villa told reporters after the game.

"He made a similar error in the game between us in the Nou Camp earlier this season, but I am sure he will get over it because he is a great keeper."

Valdes was inconsolable: "It was a terrible mistake on my part. I am solely responsible for the defeat," he said.

"Although there is still a long way to go in the league it is clear our advantage now looks a lot smaller.

With third-placed Real Madrid beating Athletic

Bilbao 2-0 away on Saturday the title race has turned into a three horse race after Barca's consecutive defeats to Valencia and Atletico Madrid.

The champions have 52 points from 23 games, Valencia 46 and Real 45.

Valencia boss Quique Sanchez Flores said: "The league looks a lot better than it did two weeks ago which is good for us and for the fans.

"But it is important we keep everything in perspective as Barca are still leaders.

"Next week we have a tough game away to Real Sociedad and maybe then

we'll see if we can aspire to more than just the Champions League places."

Valencia are now unbeaten in 12 outings and in Spain striker Villa have found a reliable goalscorer, who has netted 15 times this season.

But still Sanchez Flores was forced to defend his team's defensively rugged performance.

"The Valencia side who won the league two years ago played in a similar style and were applauded by everyone," he added.

"We don't play this way all the time but this was the best way for us to beat a rival like Barcelona."

Roma one win away from Serie A record

As Roma are one win away from equalling the all-time record of 10 Serie A victories in a row following their 2-0 defeat of Siena.

If they beat relegation-threatened Empoli at home on

record held by the Juventus team of the 1931-32 season, the 1950-51 AC Milan side and the Bologna team of 1963-64.

Having made an erratic start to the season, Roma lie fifth on 48 points from 25 matches, two points behind

occupy the final Champions League berth.

Roma needed a little luck to notch their ninth consecutive win. Siena twice hit the post and missed a first-half penalty before late goals by Daniele De Rossi and Brazilian winger Mancini

Sports



Dwyane Wade was the lethal weapon as the Miami Heat finally showed they can beat the elite. He scored the game winner in a 100-98 victory over Detroit Pistons on Sunday in the NBA Eastern Conference.

Heat catch fire late to shock Pistons

Dwyane Wade led the comeback and then the celebration, skipping along the sideline and high-fiving jubilant fans. The Miami Heat finally showed they can beat the elite, especially when they have Wade as a weapon. He scored the Heat's last 17 points, including the game-

winner on a 16-footer with 2.3 seconds left, and they edged the Detroit Pistons 100-98 on Sunday.

Touted before the season as title contenders, the Heat improved to 1-7 against the NBA's four top teams. But they needed a frantic rally to do it.

Miami trailed 90-83 with 4

1/2 minutes left when Wade took over. His 17 consecutive points were a franchise record, and he finished with 37.

"It was a lot of fun," he said. "It was time for me. I had to come through and help this team win. I put it on my shoulders at the end to make some plays."

Wade sank his final seven shots and scored 28 points in the second half.

"Dwyane took the game over," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said. "He got a lot of shots up, and we couldn't get any help over."

Shaquille O'Neal kept the Heat in the game early and finished with a season-high

31 points.

"It was a big win," O'Neal said. "We could have let it slip away, but we kept on fighting. Now we have to develop some type of consistency."

Anybody can win one game. We have to do that night in and night out."

Chauncey Billups had 29

points and 10 assists for the Pistons. They've lost three of their past five games but still have the NBA's best record at 41-9.

"The Heat might look at this as being bigger than it really is,"

Billups said. "It's just another win. But they have struggled against teams with better records, so beating the team with the No. 1 record is a big win for them."

After Wade's basket with 55 seconds left made the score 98-all, Detroit missed twice, and the Heat regained possession with 25 seconds to go.

Wade walked the ball up court, letting the clock run down. He then darted to the left against Tayshaun Prince, pulled up and hit a jumper.

The Pistons' inbounds play following a timeout went awry, and Prince launched a 3-point try after the buzzer that missed. Detroit went 5-for-15 in the fourth quarter, scoring only 14 points.

"We just missed shots, and the young boy hit his shots — that's all," Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace said. "It was a good game. It was what the people wanted, and we supplied it."

The Heat overcame an 84-71 deficit at the start of the fourth quarter, making the comeback their largest this season. Making the win even sweeter: Detroit beat Miami in seven games a year ago in the Eastern Conference finals.

Mauresmo wins Gaz de France

Australian Open champion Amelie Mauresmo won her second consecutive title of 2006, defeating Mary Pierce 6-1, 7-6 (2) Sunday in an all-French final at the Gaz de France.

The top-seeded Mauresmo, ranked No. 2, was coming off a victory at the year's first major two weeks ago. She also beat Pierce in the final of the WTA Tour Championships in November.

Mauresmo overcome poor play early on to extend her winning streak to 11 matches. She leads Pierce 6-4 in head-to-head matches.

"Somehow, I won the

right to make errors," Mauresmo said. "It's an extraordinary luxury. I now have more lucidity about opportunities and key moments."

At 2-1 in the tiebreak, Pierce felt pain in her right leg.

"After that point, I couldn't run anymore," she said.

She said the injury is an inflamed tendon, hampering her service returns. Pierce will

see her doctor Monday to determine if she can play this week in Antwerp, Belgium.

"The pain started two days before the start of the Australian Open. I took some anti-inflammatory medicine," she said. "But I felt the pain again just before this tournament."

Pierce, seeded second, dictated the early baseline exchanges with powerful for-

ehands. But she committed too many unforced errors and Mauresmo hit clutch shots for three breaks in the first set. Mauresmo broke in the third game with a lob to lead 2-1 and won the next four games to close the set.

"I defended most of the time, trying to seize the few opportunities I had," Mauresmo said.

Down 3-0 in the second

set, Pierce broke in the fifth game and held serve to make it 3-3. But Mauresmo gained a mini-break in the tiebreaker on a smash and converted her first match point.

"I committed many errors at the beginning of the match," Pierce said.

"I played a bit better in the second set. I made fewer mistakes and the match became tighter."

Garcia to skip first World Golf Championship

Sergio Garcia will skip the Match Play Championship in two

weeks, the fourth straight year that the tournament will be missing a top-ranked

player.

Garcia said at the Buick Invitational that he might not play in the first World Golf Championship of the year, citing a travel schedule that took him from Hawaii to Abu Dhabi to San Diego in the first four weeks of the season.

Clarke Jones, his agent at IMG, cited scheduling Tuesday as the reason for Garcia not playing. He said the 26-year-old Spaniard would play the following

week at Doral.

Garcia is No. 6 in the world. Ernie Els did not go to La Costa for the Accenture Match Play Championship the last two years, while Vijay Singh missed in 2003 because of a rib injury.

The 64-man field will be determined Monday by the world ranking. With Garcia not playing, the final spot will go to whomever is ranked No. 65.

Isinbayeva sets new indoor record

Yelena Isinbayeva got her 2006 season off to a record-breaking start as she broke her world indoor pole vault mark.

The Russian Olympic and world champion rose the bar

to 4.91m in her first competition of the season in Donetsk, to better her previous mark of 4.90m.

The Russian also holds the outdoor record of 5.01m set at last year's World Cham-

pionships in Helsinki.

Isinbayeva will tune up for the defence of her World Indoor title at the Birmingham Grand Prix on 18 February.

The Russian's feat in the Ukraine was the 19th world mark set by the 23-year-old.

Sports

Sunday Oliseh: A fan's tribute

Nigeria is a country blessed with football talents. If footballers were counted among a country's natural resource, we would no doubt be among the leading countries in the world.

As it is we churn out more professionals than any other country in Africa and we have given a new brand of football to the world. Football is more than a sport in Nigeria, it is a way of life, and it is the one thing that unites us as a people.

Nigerian football has evolved over the years, undoubtedly though our Golden Years in football came in the nineties when we qualified for the world cup for the first time, won the Olympic gold medal, the African cup of nations and claimed a pride of place in world football, rising to number 5 in the Fifa world rankings. All these were achieved under the tutelage of the Dutchmen Clemens Westerhof and his erstwhile assistant and successor Bonfrere Jo. They achieved these feats with a fine crop of very talented footballers; some the best ever to have come out of this country. The likes of Rashidi Yekini, George Finidi, Daniel Amokachi, Austin Okocha, Uche Okechukwu and company bestrode the football scene like colossuses, playing for some of the biggest clubs in Europe and blazing the trail for Nigerian footballers in Europe.

A key player and a cornerstone of that generation of footballers is

Sunday Oliseh. From the day he made his debut for the Super Eagles as a teenager in the World Cup qualifying campaign in 1993, to the day he played what turned out to be his last match in the Third place playoff at the nations cup at Mali 2002, Oliseh gave his all to the national team. He rose to the position of team captain in a glittering 9-year career in the Super Eagles.

Oliseh was arguably the most consistent Nigerian footballer in Europe. He left Julius Berger in the Nigerian Pro League to Belgium to play for Liege where he started his professional career. He later signed for Reggiana, where he made history as the first Nigerian to play in the Serie A.

From the Serie A, he proceeded to the German Bundesliga where he played for Cologne FC and became a darling of the city of Cologne. He made the big move to Ajax and played some of his best football at the Amsterdam Arena, helping them to the Dutch double and playing in the Champions league for the first time. Oliseh caught the eye and Juventus wasted no time in snapping him up and bringing him back to the Serie A. The move didn't work despite a bright start because of Sunday's injuries and national team commitments. He moved

By Abdulmalik S. Mahdi
Football Analyst

back to Germany where he had many admirers, to the city of Dortmund this time round. He played for Bochum on loan and moved back to Belgium to be closer to his family and play for Genk.

Oliseh's career in the Super eagles always consistent and he always gave his all in the Green and White. He was a key player in all the golden moments of Nigerian football, until he was unfortunately forced out of the national team by inept and incompetent administrators who told all sort of lies against him to set the fans against their captain. His crime always simply fighting for his team's entitlements during the nations cup. He always dropped from the team going to the world cup along with several of the team that won the ticket for Nigeria and stripped of his captaincy. All the selectors subsequently shunned him since then.

Until the arrival of Yusuf Ayila came on board we never quite replaced him. When other countries like Cameroon are celebrating the 100th cap of Oliseh's contemporary Rigobert Song, we have no doubt been robbed of Oliseh's experience and presence. It

says a lot for our consistency if a country of our footballing pedigree cannot boast of a player with a 100 caps.

Oliseh is not the first footballer to be treated shabbily by this country after giving his all to the National Team. They always never a testimonial for Keshi who played for the

Siasia and Peter Rufa'i. No wonder players like Yakubu Aiyegbeni are putting their club careers ahead of the national team. We really need to change our attitudes and start honouring our retired heroes.

For some of us who have hoped to one day see Oliseh again in the Green and White of the Super Eagles, his recent

For me personally, his goal against Spain at France 98, his performance against Maradona at USA 94 and the way he cried after we lost the final of the nations cup against Cameroon in Lagos will always be etched in my memory. I wish Oliseh all the best in his life after retirement. Sunday, be rest assured that even if football



Former Super Eagles captain, Sunday Oliseh, hanged his boots recently.

national team for over 12 years and always captain for almost a decade. There was never one for Rashidi Yekini, Eguavoen, Finidi,

retirement at the relatively young age of 31 has finally put paid to our faint hopes. He has left us with an enduring legacy and a lot of good memories.

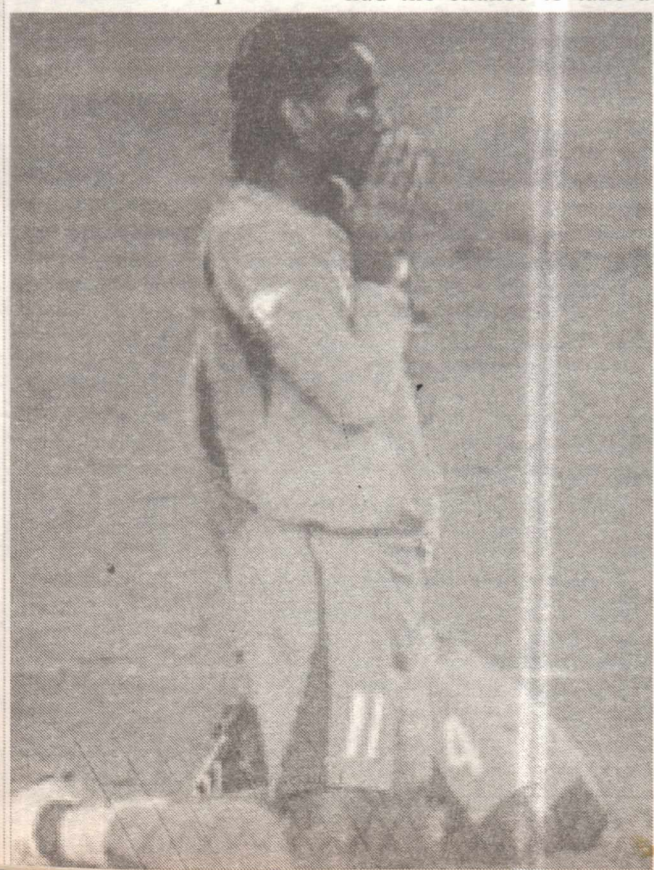
administrators don't celebrate your exit, to your millions of fans you will always remain our hero. Adieu Sunday Oliseh.

Argentina use Nations Cup to assess Ivory Coast

Egypt may have won the African Cup of Nations - but Argentina also came away from the tournament in profit.

By Tim Vickery,
(BBC Sport)

The South Americans had the chance to take a



long, hard look at Ivory Coast, their opening World Cup opponents.

Just as well, because otherwise they might have taken some basic misconceptions along with them on the road to Hamburg on 10 June.

Argentina's assistant coach Hugo Tocalli went to the draw last December.

"Ivory Coast attack a lot and don't defend very much," was his instant verdict on his side's first Group C rivals. Six games in Egypt later, Argentina have been alerted to the fact that the truth is very different.

The Elephants, as shown in game after game, defend deep and look to attack quickly, in moves of one or two passes that set free their dangerous strikers.

The ideal Ivory Coast goal was the semi-final winner against Nigeria; one long, diagonal pass from deep putting Didier Drogba clear of the entire opposing defence.

Coach Henry Michel's Ivory Coast team are

It means that the 10 June meeting has the potential to be a terrific game. Styles makes fights, as the boxing writers say.

The current Argentina side do not base their game on rapid breaks or on set-pieces.

They look to have as much possession as possible, dictate the rhythm of the game and pass their way through the opposition.

They are like an old-fashioned boxer who wears down his adversary by controlling the centre of the ring.

So 10 June then, matches the puncher against the counter-puncher.

Twelve years ago such a clash of styles produced a masterpiece.

In USA 94, Alfio Basile's Argentina side, like José Pekerman's current outfit, had a similar romantic approach to the game. They were an adventurous and attractive passing team.

In the second round in Los Angeles they came up against Romania, who, with

the skill and shrewdness of Gheorghe Hagi and the speed of Ilie Dumitrescu, were lethal on the break.

Romania won 3-2, although it could have gone either way.

Whoever won, it was far and away the outstanding game of the tournament. The clash of styles made for a marvellous contest.

If Argentina against Ivory Coast is anything like as good then Germany 2006 will have got off to a wonderful start. I would also hope that this time the counter-attacking team do not prevail.

This wish is not founded on any South American loyalty. Instead, it is based on loyalty to football.

Increasingly, in international tournaments the road more travelled by is the less risky one - sit back, take few risks, strike on the break.

I truly believe that the game will be all the better if sides with Argentina's current approach - wherever they come from - are successful in Germany this

June.

By no means have all Argentina sides upheld such high-minded principles of the joys of the passing game but it is part of their mix, part of their self-expression, part of their footballing identity.

I wonder - and please let me stress that I am posing the question rather than making any definitive statement - if some of the African sides are in danger of losing their own identity.

Perhaps, traumatised by all those accusations of naivety, they have gone too far in the other direction.

Maybe they have turned to European coaches, who have brought them organisation but have stifled their self-expression, magic and unpredictability.

It would be fantastic if there were plenty of all three of these things from both sides on 10 June when Argentina meet Ivory Coast with World Cup points at stake.

Daily Trust Hotlines

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DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

EDITORIAL

EFCC and Plateau accounts

The tussle between the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Joshua Dariye administration in Plateau State has taken a new twist, with the crimes commission freezing the state government's accounts through an ex-parte order obtained from a Federal High Court sitting in Lagos. The court order followed an application from the EFCC to freeze 33 accounts of the Plateau State government in Diamond Bank, Lion Bank, Allstates Trust Bank and Union Homes. Expectedly, the Federal High Court's order has generated varied reactions from cross sections of the Nigerian public. Those sympathetic to Dariye and the Plateau government condemn the EFCC action as unjust. Those who oppose this stand-point maintain that such a measure was necessary to elicit public support for the impeachment of the governor, particularly in view of the alleged lukewarm attitude of the state House of Assembly toward investigating the money laundering charges preferred against him (Dariye).

The EFCC, in November last year, forwarded a letter to the Plateau State House of Assembly, detailing several charges of money laundering and other misdemeanours by the governor. According to the commission, Governor Dariye allegedly diverted over N6 billion public funds from the state's accounts in the listed banks to his private accounts. Part of these allocations from the Federation Account to the state were allegedly used by the governor through some fronts, including public servants in the state, to purchase foreign exchange and transferred into banks abroad, while others were deployed to purchase choice houses. The commission requested the Plateau Assembly to investigate the allegations and take appropriate action. Prior to that, a similar letter was written by the former attorney general of the federation to the lawmakers in November 2004, shortly after Dariye returned from his six-month expulsion at the end of the Emergency Rule in the state. But the state lawmakers did not investigate the matter.

But while this controversy rages, the pertinent issue borders on the constitutionality of the order freezing the Plateau state government's accounts. Does any tier of government or its agency have the power to freeze the account (s) of another under the subsisting federal system where each tier is supposed to be autonomous?

Although the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2004 which the EFCC is empowered to enforce has authorized it to freeze the accounts of individuals and/or organizations being investigated through a Federal High Court order, the 1999 Constitution stipulates that Nigeria shall be a Federation, with three tiers of government whose powers are clearly defined to be independent of one another. In addition, the same constitution has asserted its supremacy over and above any other law of the Federation, maintaining that any other law which is inconsistent with its provisions shall to the extent of the inconsistency, "be void".

It is significant that the same court which ordered that the state government's accounts be frozen, on Thursday (February 9, 2006) vacated its earlier order, thereby giving some form of relief to the apparently worried civil servants in Plateau who were not sure of getting their wages, with the order firmly instituted.

While this development is laudable, considering the plight of the suffering workers in the state owing to the non-payment of their salaries, the EFCC must be encouraged to carry out its responsibility of bringing to book public office-holders who have betrayed the trust reposed in them.

Kwankwaso: Why Ujudud is disgruntled

By Ibrahim Ado Gwagwarwa

Since his debut as a writer that fascinated his readers on the pages of *Triumph* newspaper in Kano, Ujudud Mohammed Shariff comes across as an enthusiastic young man with a passion for criticisms. One of his most popular commentaries entitled *He Came, He Saw and He Left*, a scathing analysis of the not-too-eventful tenure of Colonel Ahmed Muhammad Daku's military administration in Kano State paid him well. The military governor that succeeded Colonel Daku reckoned with that tide of popularity in social commentary and made youthful Ujudud Commissioner of Information and a member of the Kano State Executive Council. Since then, Ujudud Shariff has known no other means of seeking attention and has chosen to ramble about those he has been remunerated to vilify.

Consistent with his character and the demands of his occupation, Ujudud took advantage of the space allotted him by *Daily Trust* on Tuesday 07/02/06 to savagely go after the Minister of Defence and immediate past governor of Kano State, Engr Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso.

From the language, choice of words and the tone employed, Ujudud Shariff's article contemptuously entitled "Kwankwaso: What manner of minister?" was unpretentious regarding his prejudice and ill-will towards Engr Kwankwaso. Ujudud did not pretend to be objective. As the hack that he has always been since regular employment eluded him, the mission was simple: Go after the target in a deadly way and then come for the money! This Ujudud did with ferocious zeal.

It may not be difficult to fathom why this Kano-born columnist has been so consistent and persistent in a long-drawn anti-Kwankwaso media campaign.

Firstly, Ujudud has his own personal tale. While Kwankwaso was governor in Kano, Ujudud, the Communications Consultant failed in his bid to secure a publishing contract. Not because Governor Kwankwaso was not disposed to patronising him but largely on account of other competitive factors at ministerial level. From then on, as many people are quick to point out, Ujudud developed resentment and later pathological dislike towards Kwankwaso.

Then came a meeting point: Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi, the former governor and former Communications Minister was running as a presidential aspirant before the PDP presidential primaries for the 2003 elections. Mohammed Ujudud Shariff of DAY BREAK Communications Ltd was recruited to oversee the PR unit of Rimi's campaign organisation. Kwankwaso on the other hand was amongst the leading pro-Obasanjo campaigners for a second term. A major part of Ujudud Shariff's contractual obligation to his new boss was to vilify President Obasanjo and Engr Kwankwaso.

And Ujudud has remained faithful to his commitment to Rimi to this day. Perhaps, this explains why on Tuesday January 17 2006, two days after the unfortunate murder of Rimi's wife, Ujudud asked in his column "Who Killed Sa'adatu Rimi?" He went on, "It was a great shock to say the least as I saw her only a few days ago. Was the murder politically-motivated? If it was, the police should be advised to start looking at the PDP, especially the third term prophets bearing in mind the interview he (Rimi) granted the *NewsWatch* magazine last week and his position as one of the opposition leaders that left the PDP and formed the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD). At the same time, they should not overlook the wrangling within the Kano chapter of the PDP."

It is amazing if the relevant police authorities read this and still did not consider Ujudud as someone helpful to the cause of investigation! Certainly, his ad hoc consultancy job for the EFCC does not confer on him any "immunity" from shedding light on this dangerous hypothesis.

Thirdly, what manner of journalist is Ujudud Shariff? Bread and butter? Who is serving his masters to fight a common enemy? I think by all reasonable account, the answer is yes. And here lies the link with the Shekarau clique in Kano. Ujudud had in one of his previous entrepreneurial commentaries offered his service to the ANPP government in Kano at its inception. No formal publicised engagement came his way.

In respect of Shekarau, however, Ujudud has a sentimental reason of shared history both being of Babur heritage in metropolitan Kano as the justification for the celebration of Shekarau's temporary ascendancy.

It is little wonder that Ujudud Shariff is so keen and passionate in his advocacy campaign for the Kano State government on the contentious land in Kano in the custody of the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency. In case those who hired Ujudud did not brief him well, the previous government in Kano between 1999 and 2003 had requested for the land to site the then proposed Kano State University of Technology. The request was turned down with a convincing reason. The federal authorities had earmarked the land as the site for the proposed Total Radar Coverage Training School. The site was professionally chosen. The benefits that will accrue to Kano by the siting of this project far outweigh the benefit derivable from a parochial decision to distribute the land to cronies, thugs and henchmen!

In commenting about the controversial tussle over the ownership of the said land at Kofar Naisa, Ujudud has once again shown his disdain for truth and confirmed him as Shekarau's errand boy by quoting confidential government correspondences between the Minister of Defence and the office of the president. This is in the true character of Shekarau's administration to give official information to political touts and thugs and other detailed classified information for airing on Radio Kano and other medium of communication. It is

common knowledge that when the fraud involved in the acquisition of the controversial land was exposed, the first person to refute the statement was neither the Commissioner for Land and Regional Planning or the Commissioner for Information, but a political thug who has become an irritant in the various radio stations with his shallow and unintelligent responses on various issues affecting government performance.

This Ujudud's write-up could only be seen as another hatched job for the Shekarau administration as its continuous crusade to deceive the people with falsehood and whipping sentiments against its perceived enemies.

It is a painful social contradiction that rather than ask more relevant questions concerning the welfare of the Kano State citizens, Ujudud Shariff is hiding under the controversial land ownership tussle to vilify and defame the character and personality of Engr Kwankwaso.

According to experts, to convert the NAMA land into a residential area will completely alter the development setting of the whole area and add to the congestion of the city, which the Kwankwaso-led administration tried hard and decongested through the construction of metropolitan link roads. Those familiar with this part of Kano do know that right from Gidan Murtala, you have on the same side of the road as the land in question the following institutions:-

1. School of Health Technology
2. SPEB now UBEB Hqtrs
3. Rumfa College
4. NEPA central distribution centre
5. Danagundi Mini Stadium adjacent to the land in question
6. The land in question
7. The Zonal Police Hqtrs
8. Some petrol filling stations
9. Headquarters of Kano State Foundation
10. Isyaka Rabi'u Qur'anic College
11. College of Islamic Legal Studies
12. Kano State Polytechnic, School of Management and Central Administration; and finally
13. Bayero University Kano old site.

Where does a residential layout fit in the above pattern of growth?

Ujudud likes to pontificate that he is a Kano patriot. And if he truly wishes to be seen as one, why is he not asking questions about what Governor Ibrahim Shekarau did with the N146 billion allocation he received for Kano State in barely two and a half years. Compare that with the admirable record of service of the preceding administration which received N72 billion in four years.

In spite of his self-acclaimed love for Kano State, Ujudud Shariff is silent on the following developmental issues of interest to the people of Kano.

- a. The abandonment of the policy of free feeding/uniform of primary school pupils in Kano State introduced by Kwankwaso's administration in spite of its enormous benefit to the growth of education.
- b. The discontinuation of the unique antenatal programme of the Kwankwaso-led administration which offered free maternal healthcare for women in Kano State. It should be noted that since the abandonment of the programme by the Shekarau-led government, maternal mortality in Kano State is reported to have exceeded the national average.
- c. The N4 billion fertiliser shoddy deal for which the full amount is yet to be fully recovered.
- d. The senseless abandonment or failure to put to use completed projects such as KSIP building in Kano and Governor's Lodge at Asokoro, Abuja, more than three years after their completion by the Kwankwaso administration.

The mental state of Ujudud Shariff and his capacity for social precision has undergone an unfortunate depreciation arising from his entanglement with lowly pursuits. That explains why he has chosen to remain a captive of prejudice. What a tragic metamorphosis of what began as a promising career in journalism!

As for the *Daily Trust* newspaper, which prides itself with the motto *Trust is a burden*, the earlier it dispenses with the contribution of any jaundiced columnist in the mould of the frustrated Ujudud Shariff, the better for its credibility and long-term reader confidence, whose trust is truly a burden.

Ibrahim Ado Gwagwarwa was Director, Press Affairs to Engr Kwankwaso when he was governor of Kano State.

COMMENT

The decision to publish this letter was made by the editors of *Daily Trust*, however three questions still remain unanswered:

1. Did Minister Kwankwaso request the Chief of Air Staff via his letter AE/HMOD/75/ABJ of 16 June 2005 directing the Air Force to request for the said land in Kano as contained in the letter to the minister Ref: NAF/526/AOO of 28th July 2005 and signed by Air Vice Marshal N. N. Dilli?

2. Did Kwankwaso write to the president requesting the said land to be transferred to the Air Force (AE/HMOD/81/ABJ of August 1 2005)?

3. If the land was proposed for the so-called Total Radar Coverage Training School, can't the school be established much nearer to the airport or any part of the state?

Finally, I'll swallow all the insults by the writer bearing in mind that I was responsible for his employment into the Kano State Ministry of Information when I was the commissioner of the ministry between 1986 and 1989. I'm happy to note that he has come of age but regrettably cannot trade words with him. He'll one day meet his equal.

- Ujudud Shariff