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Business

Oil reserves in the Niger Delta currently in the region of 30 billion barrels will dry up in 2040 **26**

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US envoy meets with Jonathan today



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Yar'adua:

Senate mulls impeachment

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Turaki A. Hassan
THE Senate may consider the invocation of section 143 of the 1999 Constitution which empowers it to impeach ailing

President Umaru Musa Yar'adua when it resumes sitting today, *Daily Trust* gathered last night. Today's sitting of the Senate will be the first by the body since the country's state governors met last week and resolved

to support moves to ensure that Vice President Goodluck Jonathan becomes acting President in line with the constitution. Some Senators who spoke with *Daily Trust* yesterday said the upper chamber of

the National Assembly is determined to resolve the political impasse caused by the absence of the president who left the country on a medical trip to Saudi Arabia 78 days
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VICE President Goodluck Jonathan, Mr. Plutarchos Sukellaris, Vice President, European Investment Bank and Ambassador Usman Baraya, during the visit of the European Investment Bank's Vice President to the Vice President in the State House, Abuja, yesterday.

Reps to back Jonathan

By Nasidi A. Yahaya & Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

CONTRARY to its earlier stand that ailing President Umaru Musa Yar'adua needn't transmit a medical vacation letter to the National Assembly to enable Vice President Goodluck Jonathan act as president in his absence, the House of Representatives may

today make a resolution recognizing Jonathan as acting president, *Daily Trust* has learnt. Leader of the Integrity Group in the House, Rep Farouk Lawan (PDP, Kano State) told *Daily Trust* last night that a motion to that effect would be introduced on the floor of the House this morning. *Daily Trust* gathered that the
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Speaker advocates unlimited tenure for govvs

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

THE Speaker of the Jigawa State House of Assembly Alhaji Adamu Ahmad Sarawa has called for the amendment of the two term tenure for governors, saying their tenure should be similar to that of legislators.

Alhaji Adamu Sarawa who made the call at a political rally in Birnin Kudu Local Govern-

ment Area said that would enable governors do more in terms of extending dividends of democracy to the electorate. He said the current tenure was not enough for them to execute projects for their people, noting that sometimes they were made to leave office before completing projects that had direct impact on the lives of the people.

He added that giving them

enough time would enable them complete all the projects they initiate, saying, "Since we are about to amend our constitution, that section that specifies a two term tenure for governors should be removed. I am speaking on behalf of the Jigawa State House of Assembly and we are advocating for the amendment of this particular section of our constitution because we want Jigawa

State Governor Sule Lamido to continue with the good works he has started".

Also speaking at the occasion, the Chairman of the PDP in the state, Alhaji Isa Duniya ba Hutu, urged the party executives, political office holders and stakeholders to do everything possible to ensure that the PDP emerged victorious in the forthcoming local government poll.

Yobe council pegs dowry at N5,000

From Hamza Idris, Damaturu

AS part of the strategy to discourage prostitution and encourage marriage among youths, authorities in Jakusko Local Government Area of Yobe State have endorsed a by-law which pegged the dowry of a divorcee that wants to re-marry at N5,000 and N10,000 for a new bride.

Chairman of the council Alhaji Nadira Saleh Amshi who disclosed this to newsmen in Jakusko at the weekend said the move was to discourage social vices in the local government which practices the Sharia legal system.

"After elaborate consultations with various stakeholders, the council has passed the edict in order to encourage people in the local government to marry among themselves without stress considering the economic meltdown in Nigeria and the world at large which makes marriage very difficult", the chairman said.

Nadira said the edict was in line with the interest of the community's tradition, culture and religion. "Many people want to get married but cannot do so because of exorbitant bride price. We have youths, both male and female, roaming around without any hope for marriage, they are our future, we ought to protect them, we cannot fold our arms and continue looking at them without putting them on the right track", he said.

He said the initiative had gladdened the hearts of many parents, adding that with the coming of the new law, prospective grooms from neighbouring towns and villages would seek girls from the area.

Amshi said the local council had directed all village and ward heads to ensure that the new dowry rate is used.

Similarly, the chairman said the council has banned the sale of alcohol and illicit drugs in all parts of the local government area and called on security operatives to ensure strict compliance.

It would be recalled that Governor Ibrahim Gaidam last year promised to pay the bride price for any person that wants to get married at the Central Mosque in Damaturu.

NAFDAC intercepts fake anti malaria drugs

THE National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) confiscated 70,000 containers of fake anti-malaria drugs worth N32 million illegally imported into the country in May 2009.

The Director-General of NAFDAC Dr Paul Orhii said this yesterday in Yola when he paid a courtesy visit to Governor Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State. He said the agency had also in January this year confiscated N10 million worth of Lonart, an anti-malaria drug illegally imported into the country.

Orhii said the drugs were intercepted and confiscated by personnel of the agency on routine checks. Orhii who is in Adamawa for a sensitisation workshop on the dangers of abuse and improper handling of chemicals and pesticides said the agency was collaborating with some countries to check the importation of fake drugs.

He said the countries were India, China and Egypt, noting that the agency had also made proposals for a review of its laws for more punitive sanctions for offenders. (NAN)



FROM right: Former Senate President Senator Ken Nnamani, former Executive Secretary, PTDF Dr. Waziri Maina and former Speaker, House of Representatives Alhaji Bello Masari, during a meeting by political and pressure groups on the state of the nation at Asokoro, Abuja, yesterday.

Two die in Kachako auto crash

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

TWO persons died while several others were injured in an auto accident in Kachako, Takai Local Government Area of Jigawa State when their vehicle collided with

another one along the Kano-Birnin-Kudu highway on Sunday.

The accident occurred when a Volkswagen Golf car, which was coming from Dutse tried to overtake another vehicle but collided

with a Hiace coming from the Kachako market. The incident occurred around 7:30 pm Sunday. Victims were taken to the Dutse General Hospital by personnel of the Federal Road Safety Commission.

Jos: Okada bill for second reading today

From Andrew Agbese & Mahmud Lalo, Jos

THE executive bill sent by the Plateau State government to ban commercial motorcycles from operating in Jos and Bukuru is to go for its second reading today.

The bill was last week introduced on the floor of the House which qualifies it for the second reading.

The House earlier held an emergency meeting following the eruption of crisis in the state where they supported the decision of the state

government on the suspension of commercial motorcycle operation but called on the state government to as a matter of urgency, provide an alternative to alleviate the suffering of commuters. Meanwhile, the Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Riders Association

of Nigeria (ACOMORAN) in the state has appealed to the state government to look into the matter.

Speaking to newsmen in Jos yesterday, their leader, Alhaji Babangida Maihuka said they were not given enough time to prepare for the ban.

Nasarawa lawmakers exempted from new tax - Labour

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

THE organized labour in Nasarawa State said yesterday it had observed that members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly have been paid their January salaries without the new 10 per cent increase in tax.

The tax increase has been the cause of a disagreement between labour and government, result-

ing in the current strike in the state civil service. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Trade Union Congress (TUC) and other unions in the state had earlier alleged that political office holders in the state had not been paying taxes. Labour has been on an indefinite strike for a week now to press against the introduction of the new cut from workers' salaries in what the government said

is a way to generate more funds for development projects.

A statement from the Bulletin Committee of the organized labour yesterday informed workers that the unions were resolute in their stand against the new tax regime which government still insists must be implemented to generate revenue for development.

The committee said, "Members of the Nasarawa State House

of Assembly have been paid their January salaries with the old tax rate", and added that civil and public servants in the state should also be paid with the old rate as "what is good for the goose is also good for the gander".

Labour said the lawmakers were paid their salaries with the old tax rate at the time government was insisting on the new tax rate, which means that political

office holders have been exempted from the new tax regime. It said labour was not going to shake in its position on the matter - that government must rescind its decision and go ahead to set up a committee comprising both parties to look into the grey areas. "Until then, the strike continues and all workers are enjoined to remain at home and await further directives from their leaders", it added.

Compensate Jos victims from statutory allocation, FG urged

By Suleiman M. Bisalla & Muideen Olaniyi

ELDER statesman and veteran civil servant Alhaji Ahmed Joda has said that the reference to some Permanent Secretaries shortly after Nigeria's independence as 'Super-Perm-Secretaries' was not an official recognition but an appellation coined to disparage those referred to as such for their seeming overbearing influence in the then military government.

Alhaji Joda, the Board Chairman of the National Communication Commission (NCC), stated this in an interview with Daily Trust on the occasion of his 80th

birthday which was marked in Abuja on Sunday.

He said the role of some of them played as mouthpiece of the Federal Government within and outside Nigeria and their strong influence in the formulation of government's policies were part of factors that gave rise to the appellation, Super Permanent Secretaries.

"Let me say that there was no time that I was officially, or a set of people were officially called Super Permanent Secretaries. All permanent secretaries were virtually equal. They were only different by the dates of their appointments and the dates of their promotions,

and Super Permanent Secretary really may be a complimentary appellation.

"Those who invented it never meant it to be so. I think it was meant to disparage the persons that originally were targeted. But as time went on, I think those who invented it lost their vision and then they identified three or four people of whom I happened to be one and called us Super Permanent Secretaries," Alhaji Joda said.

The octogenarian recalled that the position he and 'Super Permanent Secretaries' held as well as the ministries they served during the civil war made them more exposed than other colleagues,

thus attracting to then vast attention.

According to him, after leaving office, he reviewed those events and concluded that he and the others so branded were perhaps exercising power and authority beyond what was prescribed in their duties and responsibilities as permanent secretaries.

"I was in the Federal Ministry of Information. I was involved in having to speak for Nigeria at that time. If you remember, it was military era, there were no politicians and we found ourselves making statements in different capitals of the world and also in Nigeria.

"We became a focal point...

We got involved to the extent of going to war theatre to see where the war was being fought; taking people there, organizing for the troop and getting beyond what we were supposed to be doing.

"Of course, we got involved in the formulation of policies, writing the Head of State speeches and managing many different tasks. So it became not an official title but perception of critics. That time personally I did not feel that I was a super anything. I did not feel that I was exercising power or authority beyond the definition of the DG or the responsibility of the permanent secretary," Alhaji Joda said.

NLC wants Iwu sack over Anambra polls

By Francis Okeke

NIGERIA Labour Congress (NLC) yesterday called for the removal of Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Professor Maurice Iwu because of the "lapses observed" during the just concluded gubernatorial elections in Anambra State.

The NLC President Omar Abdulwaheed said the relative success recorded in Anambra is because the election was an isolated one where over 45,000 personnel, which include INEC officials, security, election observers from civil society groups and international organisations participated.

"One wonders how INEC could cope with 36 states to conduct the elections of not only the President but governors, senators, House of Representatives members, etc all about the same time," he said.

The NLC however condemned the mix up in voters' registers which led to the disenfranchisement of many voters, instances where many people were unable to find their names in voters' registers, late arrival of polling materials and in a few instances the complete absence of electoral officials.

Abdulwahed said congress strongly believes that the Anambra election indicates that the current INEC leadership under Prof Maurice Iwu is incapable of organising a proper free and fair election on a national scale.

"INEC certainly needs to be repositioned with a competent and credible leadership before 2011 if we are to avert a worse disaster greater than what was experienced in 2007."

The congress commended Vice President Goodluck Jonathan for not approaching the election as a PDP member or in a do-or-die manner as was the case in the past.



FROM left: Mr. Peter Obaseki, Executive Director, Corporate Banking, FCMB, Mr. Bob Dewar, British High Commissioner to Nigeria and Alhaji Mohammed Auwal Ibrahim, Emir of Suleja, during Interfaith Forum on Climate Change for Sub-Saharan Africa in Abuja yesterday.

Controversy trails Auditor-General appointment

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

THE nomination of Mr. Samuel Ukura as Auditor-General of Federation has been hit by fresh controversy as petitions have reached the Senate seeking to truncate approval of his appointment.

Documents obtained at the National Assembly yesterday revealed that the choice of Mr. Ukura as Auditor-General of Federation does not enjoy the support of the Association of Public Service Auditors of Nigeria (APSAN).

The documents indicate that President Umaru Musa Yar'adua had in respect to the objection

raised by APSAN changed his mind on Ukura's nomination before leaving the country.

President Yar'adua wrote a memo to the SGF on the matter saying "Attached is a letter Ref. APSAN/HQ/ADMIN/Vol. 1/35 dated May 21, 2009 from the Association of Public Service Auditors of Nigeria (APSAN) addressed to His Excellency, Mr. President on the above subject matter.

Specifically, the letter is an appeal to His Excellency, Mr. President to consider appointing any of the most senior Directors in the office of the Auditor General for the Federation to fill the

vacant position of the Auditor General in the interest of public sector auditing.

You may kindly treat the letter as deemed appropriate. Accept, SGF, the expression of my best wishes." The memo with reference SH/PSP/42/A/351 was entitled: Re: Appointment of Auditor General for the Federation; and it was signed by Mr. David Edevbie on behalf of the President.

Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Amb. Ahmed Al Gazali and Mr. Edevbie were said to have nominated Mr. Ukura against the President's directive.

The SGF issued a Federal Gov-

ernment Circular No. SGF/OP/1/S.3/T/1/ dated August 14, 2009 as a reminder to the FCSC and the president's principal secretary.

The circular, entitled: Procedure for Appointing Chief Executives and Heads of Parastatals, Government-Owned Companies, Agencies and Institutions, stated that such appointments should be without prejudice to eligible serving officers competing for the positions.

Though Mr. Ukura has since been screened by the Senate Committee on Public Accounts, the report of the committee is yet to be debated on the floor of the Senate.

Africa malaria drugs 'low-grade'

AFRICANS suffering from malaria may be getting sub-standard treatment, a study by US-based experts has suggested.

Researchers from the Pharmacopeia group found that between 26% and 44% of anti-malaria drugs in Uganda, Senegal and Madagascar were of poor quality.

The group, conducting the study for the World Health Organ-

ization, said low-grade drugs were being used in both public and private health practices.

Some 90% of malaria deaths in the world occur in Africa.

The experts subjected 200 samples of anti-malaria drugs to quality-control testing in a US laboratory.

They found 44% of the drugs from Senegal failed the testing,

followed by 30% from Madagascar and 26% from Uganda.

Patrick Lukulay, director of the US government-funded Pharmacopeia programme, said, "It is worrisome that almost all of the poor-quality data that was obtained was a result of inadequate amounts of active [ingredients] or the presence of impurities in the product," he said.

The particular problem they identified was with artemisinin-based drugs.

The chemical is one of the few affordable and effective treatments for malaria.

But the WHO's malaria programme Chief Robert Newman said low-quality versions of the drug could increase resistance because they would not kill all of

the parasites.

The researchers also studied drugs from seven other countries - Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania - but have not yet released data from those nations.

However, Mr Lukulay said Ghana had already withdrawn more than 20 drugs from the market after seeing initial results. BBC

PIC: AFP

Court adjourns case against Andoakaa to April 15

A Federal High Court in Abuja could not hear a motion filed by a former minister against the Attorney General of Federation (AGF) and the Inspector General of Police (I-G) to stop his arrest.

Former Minister of FCT Malam Nasir el-Rufai had filed the motion against the duo to stop his arrest.

Counsel to el-Rufai, Mr Anthony Itedjere, had brought a motion on notice before the court to restrain the defendants from arresting, detaining or prosecuting his client.

The court could not hear the motion because the AGF, Mr Michael Andoakaa (SAN) was absent in the court. The former minister is praying the court to hold that the defendants should not arrest or prosecute him.

He hinged his prayer on the recommendation of the Joint Committee of the Senate on FCT and Housing, which are subjects of judicial proceedings at the Fed-

eral High Court.

Itedjere informed the court that he was informed that the counsel handling the case from the Ministry of Justice, Mr Anthony Malik, could not be present in court on health grounds.

"The AGF's office informed us that the counsel handling this matter is not feeling fine and that he could not come, they advised us to take a fresh date for hearing.

"The originating summon has been served on the I-G but his office refused the service on the grounds that they have less than 48 hours for the hearing of the case.

"Before now, we have properly served them and left the processes with one of the officers in the I-G's office but they threatened to arrest us," he said.

Justice Gabriel Kolawole adjourned the matter to April 15 and ordered the applicant to serve the processes on all the defendants before the hearing date. (NAN)



PAKISTANI wrestlers at an akhra, a traditional earth floor wrestling club, in Lahore yesterday. Kushti wrestling, popular in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, was developed in the Mughal era by combining native malla-yuddha wrestling with Persina pahiavani.

Court decides appeal of Yar'adua's absence Feb 18

By Atika Balal

A Federal High Court in Abuja has fixed February 18 to decide whether or not it will grant leave to appellants to appeal against the ruling of the court in a suit filed against the Attorney General of the Federation and the Executive Council of the Federation.

An Abuja based lawyer Christopher Onwuekwe had, through his counsel Amobi Nzelu, gone to court seeking a declaration that by the combined provisions of Sections 5 (1) and 148 (1) of the

Nigerian constitution 1999, the Vice President can exercise the executive powers vested in the President in the absence of the president having regard to the circumstances of the suit.

Justice Daniel Abutu on January 13 ruled that Vice President Goodluck Jonathan can lawfully discharge any or all the functions of President Umaru Musa Yaradua in his absence in the interest of peace, order and good governance of the federation pending when the President resumes from his medical leave.

In a motion on notice filed before the court, Chief Nkereuwem Udofia Akpan and nine others are seeking leave of the court to file and serve their notice and grounds of appeal against the ruling of Justice Abutu and an order of accelerated hearing of the application in the overriding public interest to-wit the peace, order and government of Nigeria.

The appellant said the judgment ought to have made a specific order authorizing the Vice President to assume duties in an acting capacity pending the return of the President from his sick leave.

62-year old woman jailed over N17.5m fraud

By Misbahu Bashir

AN Ikeja High Court sitting in Lagos has found a 62-year old woman Grace Iroro guilty of N17.5 million fraud and sentenced her to 12 month with hard labour.

Justice Morenike Obadina found her guilty for conspiring with others to dupe a banker, Wale Bolorunduro, to the tune of N17.5million.

She was found guilty on 3-count charge bordering on

conspiracy, forgery and attempt to obtain by false pretences preferred against her by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

EFCC's spokesman Femi Babafemi said sometime in 2006, the convict and her accomplices, namely Ayo Disu and Udoh Nnaji who are still at large, approached Mr. Bolorunduro, who was then a manager with the Zenith Bank and offered to sell to him a plot of land at Lekki Phase 2 for the sum of N17.5million.

They presented a forged Certificate of Occupancy of the land bearing the name of the real owner of the property, Mr. Samuel Sosanya.

The victim was invited to the 'office' of the fraudsters on Lagos Island where Iroro posed as Mrs. Sosanya, the wife of the owner of the land, while Ayo Disu assumed the identity of Mr. Sosanya, the owner of the land. Udoh Nnaji played the part of the agent to the land owner in the scam.

Information bill recommended for ECOWAS

By Aisha Umar

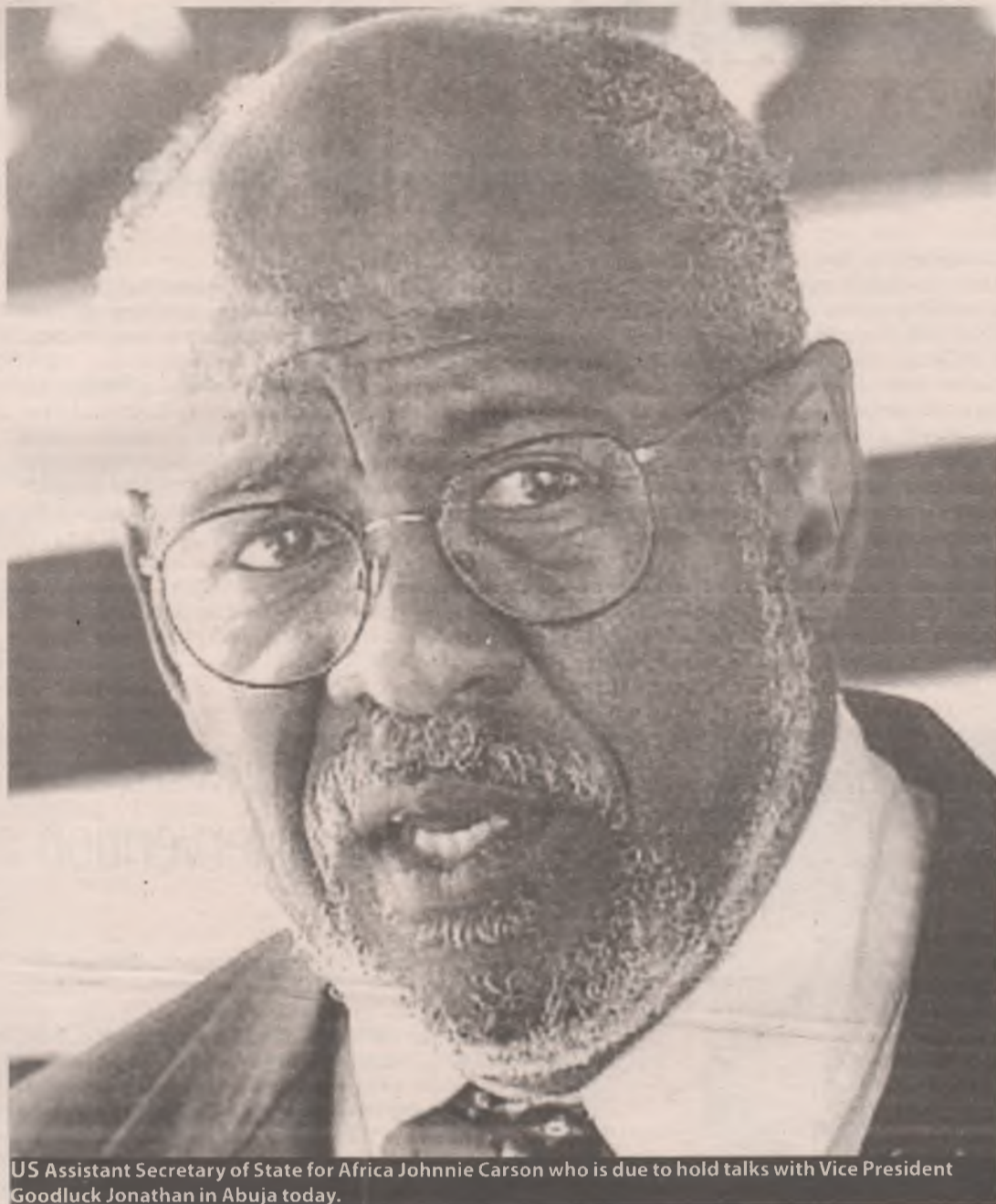
ECOWAS Member States should enact Freedom of Information Bills to strengthen public access to information, promote transparency and accountability in governance in West Africa, media experts have advised.

Experts from within and outside the region said FOI should not be narrowly perceived as being only for the benefit of media practitioners but as an instrument to enlarge citizen's access to information for the promotion of good governance and deepening democracy.

A statement from ECOWAS commission said the experts gave the advice after a two-day meeting to evolve ways of mainstreaming conflict prevention in media practice in the region.

"Experts from within and outside the region said FOI should not be narrowly perceived as being only for the benefit of media practitioners but as an instrument to enlarge citizen's access to information for the promotion of good governance and deepening democracy," the statement added.

The regional meeting on the media, conflict and democracy, was organised by ECOWAS as part of its campaign to address the problem of hate media in the region and mobilise the regional media in support of ECOWAS' initiatives to consolidate democracy, good governance, transparency and accountability as the bedrock for ensuring sustainable regional peace and security.



US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Johnnie Carson who is due to hold talks with Vice President Goodluck Jonathan in Abuja today.

Reps to back Jonathan

Continued from page 1

Reps sudden change of mind may not be unconnected with pressures from their state governors. The Governors' Forum had after its meeting last week, urged the National Assembly to make a resolution recognizing Jonathan as acting president even without any medical vacation letter from President Yar'adua.

Rep Lawan said "The House is coming up with resolution tomorrow (today) that will empower the Vice President to exercise the function of the president in an acting capacity. And this we hope will put to rest and clarify all the concern about the vice president concerning the office and function of the president. The resolution itself will be widely supported by several members of the House of Representatives; that because of our concern with the recent development the house has resolved to come with that resolution."

Rep Lawan however denied that the proposed resolution would mean that the House has reneged on its earlier stand. He said the new resolution is just aimed dousing the political tension in the country. He said "The House is not making a u-turn because we have discussed the matter twice. The first time was when we passed a three-point resolution that we should quickly adhere to the provision of the constitution in handling this matter

and the position we are taking now is also derived from various constitutional provisions as well as court judgment."

"Of course the second resolution to go to Saudi Arabia and the third one is to pray for the president so we are praying for him and expecting Nigerians to continue praying for the president. So, on those three counts we are not making any u-turn.

The motion that came up last week was to ask the president to send a letter and we gave a reason for that. So what we are doing really has nothing to do with our original position but further clarification of that position and we asking vice president to act pending the return of the president", he added.

Meanwhile, five of the six-man delegation constituted by the House to visit ailing president Yar'adua in Saudi Arabia, have arrived in Jeddah. The sixth member of the delegation, Rep Nnenna Ukeje (PDP, Abia State), was dropped.

The delegation, which was sent by the House "to convey the members' goodwill message and discuss other issues of national interest," departed Nigeria on Sunday night via Dubai based Emirates Airline and was received by embassy officials yesterday at the Jeddah airport. It was however unclear when or if the delegation will indeed have access to the ailing Nigerian president.

The other five members on the delegation are: Reps Baba Shehu Agaie (PDP, Niger State), Mohammed Ali Ndume (ANPP, Borno State), Patrick Ikhariale (PDP, Edo State), Moruf Fatai (AC, Lagos State) and Jibril Adamu (PDP, Kaduna State).

Rep Nnenna told *Daily Trust* that nobody contacted before her name was dropped, adding that she would raise the issue on the floor of the House today for clarification by the leadership.

Rep Mohammed Ali Ndume told the BBC Hausa Service shortly before their take-off that, "If we meet him (Yar'adua) in a better condition, I will advise him to hand over power to his deputy so that whenever he recuperates he can come back and continue the governance of the country."

"Our task is simple. The House resolved that since the president is out for months we are mandated to go and visit and wish him well and pray for his quick recovery. Our task is to greet him which is part of Nigerian culture because none of us is a doctor.

"We will make sure that we see the president even if one member will be allowed since I'm the opposition leader in the house and if his doctor says that we cannot see him he must give us reason which we will come back and inform Nigerians and on whatever condition we find him we will tell Nigerians."

VP locks out two ministers for late coming

By AbdulFattah Olajide

THE Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chief Ojo Maduekwe and the Minister of Power, Mr. Lanre Babalola were yesterday temporarily locked out of a meeting at the Abuja Presidential Villa by Vice President Goodluck Jonathan for coming late to the function.

The ministers arrived for the vice president's meeting with the Vice President of the European Investment Bank, Plutarchos Sakellaris slated for 1pm, 15 minutes and 20 minutes behind schedule respectively.

On getting to the door to the vice president's conference room with the hope of entering unin-

dered, Maduekwe was stunned when he was told by the security aides of the vice president that he cannot go inside.

Apparently embarrassed by the action, the foreign affairs minister who said he got a call to attend the meeting just five minutes before it started had to solicit for the assistance of the Chief Security Officer to the vice president to get into the meeting hall.

The same fate also befell the minister of power who got to the meeting venue five minutes after his foreign affairs colleague was allowed into the meeting venue. On his part, Babalola said he became aware of the meeting just ten minutes before its commencement.

Senate mulls impeachment

Continued from page 1

ago.

They said the Senate is now left with no option than to commence an impeachment process in accordance with section 143 of the constitution since the president has not complied with the chamber's earlier resolution asking him to transmit a medical vacation letter to the National Assembly to enable Vice President Goodluck Jonathan act as president in his absence. Contrary to the speculations making the round yesterday, President Yar'adua's adviser on National Assembly matters, Senator Mohammed Abba Aji told *Daily Trust* last night that no such letter has been conveyed as at that time.

Senator Ganiyu Olarenwaju Solomon (AC, Lagos West) said although the Senate did not give any time frame within which President Yar'adua must comply with its resolution, "but it should be within a reasonable time and that seems to have lapsed now. I won't want to pre-empt my colleagues, I think personally that we must do something now. The other options left to the Senate are as provided by Sections 143 and 144 of the 1999 Constitution."

He said the demand by state governors that the Senate should pass a resolution declaring Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as Acting President "is strange" because it is alien to the Constitution. According to him "The move is not in line with any section of the constitution, we have more than enough clauses to take care of the situation in the Constitution. I wonder why they (governors) even came up with this position."

Also speaking to *Daily Trust* by phone yesterday, Senator Annie Okonkwo (PDP, Anambra Central) said since the president has failed to comply with the Senate resolution "We are going to sit again as a Senate to see what we

can do next to solve the problem." On the motion being proposed by State Governors' Forum seeking for recognition of Vice President Jonathan as acting president without formal vacation letter from Mr. President, Senator Okonkwo said the state governors got it wrong.

"We cannot be forced by the governors because we are not in their states. The matter cannot be resolved through a motion. The Senate has already passed a motion and that is the only position we have for now. If that did not work we will look at other options in the Constitution," Senator Okonkwo said.

Another Senator that spoke on condition of anonymity said "We learn that they have concluded all arrangements to swear in the VP as acting president tomorrow (Tuesday) in anticipation of the passage of the motion they are proposing however, let me make it clear that such an action is tantamount to a civilian coup since section 4 of the 1999 constitution does not give us that power.

Moreover, a motion is not a law even if we derail to their illegal path and pass the said motion. According to the provisions of the 1999 constitution a motion is not a law and cannot be binding on any authority to obey not even on this issue."

In his own view, Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan (ANPP, Yobe North) said the state governors themselves are aware that the matter cannot be resolved through a motion passed by the Senate.

He said the leaders of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have lost the opportunity to get a political solution to the matter through appealing to the President to send a vacation letter, adding that "The governors know that the move cannot work. The VP cannot become acting president through a motion."

Senate to review military deployment in internal operation

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Turaki A. Hassan

THE Senate Committee on Defence and Army has commenced the process of reviewing the legal frame work of military participation during internal security operations.

Speaking during a meeting between members of the committee and legal officers of the military yesterday, Chairman Senate Committee on Defence and Army Senator Ibrahim Ida (PDP, Katsina Central) said the review is necessitated by recent allegations of extra judicial killings against the military.

He said "The last crisis in Borno, Bauchi and the most recent in Jos, Plateau State, have made it absolutely necessary for us to review the laws governing the Armed Forces in internal security operations, more so that the Armed Forces have severally been accused of extra judicial killings when acting in aid of civil authority.

It has been reported that some of the persons arrested

during the Jos crisis were alleged to be wearing military uniforms and in possession of military equipments.

He said for such allegations to end, the military authorities must come up with proposal for alteration of existing laws that will enable the military function efficiently in terms of internal security operations.

Responding to the allegations, Director of Legal Services at the Naval Headquarters, Navy Capt. E.D. Enemor said the military is no longer in full control of its uniforms. "The military personnel procure their uniforms by whatever means that is convenient. That creates this kind of situation where we are no longer in position to determine the source of the uniforms."

Also speaking, Legal Adviser in the Army Headquarters Brig. Gen. AbdulQadir Abubakar said, "We have to determine when the military must withdraw after the operation because keeping the military in the role of maintaining internal peace for a long time could lead to some of the

soldiers assuming police duties."

Abubakar said serving military personnel could not have been involved in the Jos crisis because the regimental nature of the Armed Forces will not allow for reckless abuse of ammunition.

On his part, Director of Legal Services at the Defence Headquarters, Air Cdr. Hussein Sabo said it is the duty of the police to prosecute the alleged military impersonators caught during the Jos crisis saying "In the Armed Forces before you are sent anywhere you have to sign for all equipments given to you and all the personnel must account for the equipments after the operation."

To improve the operations of the military in internal peace keeping operations, the Senate Committee has directed that the heads of the legal services departments should meet in order to come up with proposal for legislative intervention.



ONDO State Governor, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko and the State's Commissioner for Community Development, Clement Faboyede with Community Change Agents at the opening ceremony of the training session for the 3is volunteers in Akure, yesterday.

Yar'adua: Group condemns calls for military intervention

By Abbas Jimoh

THE South-South Peoples Assembly (SSPA) yesterday condemned calls by some politicians for military intervention saying such moves could lead to the break-up of Nigeria.

The group also gave the National Assembly up till Thursday 11, 2010 to without further equivocation pass a resolution to empower Vice President Goodluck Jonathan to act as President.

"While expressing concern for and sympathy for President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, the SSPA is worried about the unfolding political implications of the leadership vacuum created by the president's absence, especially the political and contemptuous disregard for constitutionalism being exhibited by major stakeholders in the country," the group said in a statement.

The group pleaded with the ex-militants in the Niger Delta to continue to uphold the tenants and spirit of the amnesty agreement for the sustenance of peace in the region.

It prayed for the speedy recovery of the President and reaffirmed its commitment to continued peace, political stability and good governance in Nigeria as well as called for concerted efforts by concerned Nigerians to put an end to the political impasse created by the president's absence.

Akunyili commends INEC

By Atika Balal

MINISTER of Information and Communications Prof Dora Akunyili has commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over the conduct of last Saturday's governorship election Anambra State.

Prof Akunyili said in a statement that INEC's commitment towards improving its past records is encouraging.

She said even though there were noticeable lapses in some polling centres around the state, it is hoped that such lapses and public complaints will be adequately addressed for future elections.

The minister also described the success of the election as a victory not only for the people of Anambra but a triumph of democracy.

While congratulating Governor Peter Obi for his success at the polls, she urged him and his party to immediately reach out to all parties to commence a reconciliation process so as to ensure adequate collaboration in building a better Anambra State.

Excess crude money drops to \$6.2bn

By Idris Ahmed

NIGERIA'S excess crude account has dropped to \$6.2 billion, the Minister of State for Finance Remi Babalola has said.

He said the drop was as a result of government dipping into the account to counter the impact of economic meltdown.

A statement from the Minister's spokesman Oluwinka Akin-

tunde said that Babalola said in Lagos that Nigeria was affected by the global economic recession, contrary to report that Nigeria was not affected.

He said that the Minister explained that all tiers of government got more money in 2009 to execute their projects.

He said that the minister explained that there was no basis to use "Economic Recession" as

an excuse for non-performance or non-development of the country. According to the statement, the Minister explained in Lagos how the administration met over \$20 billion in the excess crude proceeds account, which has now declined to about \$6.2 billion due to its utilisation by all tiers of government as a result of the impact of the economic recession.

Hajj: States want pilgrims airlifted in 2 weeks

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar.

THE National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has been urged to find a way of completing the airlift of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for this year's hajj in two weeks against the usual four weeks.

Chairman of Ogun State Pilgrims Welfare Board Alhaji

Bisiriyu Ayodele Adebayo Owolegbon made the call yesterday in Abeokuta when he received the NAHCON Chairman Muhammad Bello who was on working tour round the South West in preparations for this year's hajj operation.

Last year the Sultan of Sokoto Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar made a similar call when

the 2009 Amirul-Hajj Senator Kanti Bello visited him.

Owolegbon said the reduction would help pilgrims against staying in the holy unnecessary before and after the Hajj rituals.

He also called on the Hajj Commission to liaise with the Saudi Mu'assasah for the improvement of the state of

security and health.

On the issue of visa, Alhaji Bisiriyu called for the improvement in the arrangement so that pilgrims could get their visa on time.

Responding, NAHCON Chairman said the commission is working toward this direction, promising that things would also improve this year

as the commission is looking for the pilgrims' cooperation, which will come through the states.

Bello said state pilgrims welfare board should also find ways to improve in the welfare of its pilgrims and assure that they improve in their facilities for the smooth operation of the 2010 hajj exercise.

US envoy meets Jonathan today

By Nasiru L. Abubakar

THE United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson who arrived in Nigeria on Saturday will hold bilateral talks with Vice President Goodluck Jonathan today in Abuja.

Mr Carson is also scheduled to meet today with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation Mahmud Yayale Ahmed and Foreign Affairs Minister Ojo

Madueke. He has already met with civil society organizations.

The US envoy would discuss issues of governance, elections, corruption, trade improvement and investment opportunities with Nigerian officials, a statement by the US said.

Carson's visit comes at the time of political tension over the absence of President Umaru Yar'adua who has been in Saudi Arabia since November 23 receiv-

ing treatment for a heart condition.

"The US government looks forward to working with the government of Nigeria as a partner on aviation security and other measures to combat international terrorism," the statement added.

There have been mounting calls from several quarters including the United States for ailing President Yar'adua to write a medical vacation letter to the National Assembly in line with the con-

stitution.

A vacation letter from the president to the National Assembly will pave the way for Jonathan to be declared acting president.

Relationship between Nigeria and the United States was strained after Nigeria was placed on a terror watch list following an alleged failed bombing of a US plane by a Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, on Christmas Day.

Sokoto nab 5 over killing of ex-commissioner, orderly

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State Police Command has nabbed suspected killers of the former Commissioner of Health in the state, Alhaji Zaki Amale, and the orderly to the Grand Khadi, Sgt. Gambo Danga.

It would be recalled that last December, some armed robbers blocked the Sokoto-Isa Road and attacked a Toyota Siena vehicle with official registration number, SOJA.OIA in which the Grand Khadi of Sokoto Alhaji Abdulkadir Saeed and three others were travelling.

The armed robbers were said to have shot the orderly to the Grand Khadi and the former commissioner after robbing them of an undisclosed amount of money and other valuables.

Those paraded yesterday at the state Police Command in connection with the incident include one Jaho Mohammed, Sa'idu Tunau Mainasara Adamu, Sani Lawali and Alhaji Nasiru Gashe.

Briefing journalists on the arrests, the Police

Public Relations Officer in Sokoto ASP Mohammed Umar Dakingari said Jaho and members of his gang also confessed to have been part of the armed robbers who attacked and killed two mobile policemen along the same Sokoto-Isa road recently.

The PPRO said efforts were being intensified to recover weapons used during the robbery.

Dakingari also said another group of hoodlums including Yusha'u Bello, Sifiyabu Abubakar alias Elmon Kore, Sa'adu Ibrahim alias Ataye, Aliyu Bello, Habila Inuwa, Kabiru Abubakar alias Dan Nigeria and a host of others at large conspired with intent to commit an offence and invaded the compound where one Sunday Nwogbo now deceased resided, attacked him took his valuables and subsequently set the compound ablaze. The action resulted in the death of Sunday. One of his sons, Danason Nwogbo, who sustained serious injuries, is still receiving treatment at the hospital. According to him, the case is still being investigated.

Sambo disburses N1.5bn hospital equipment

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

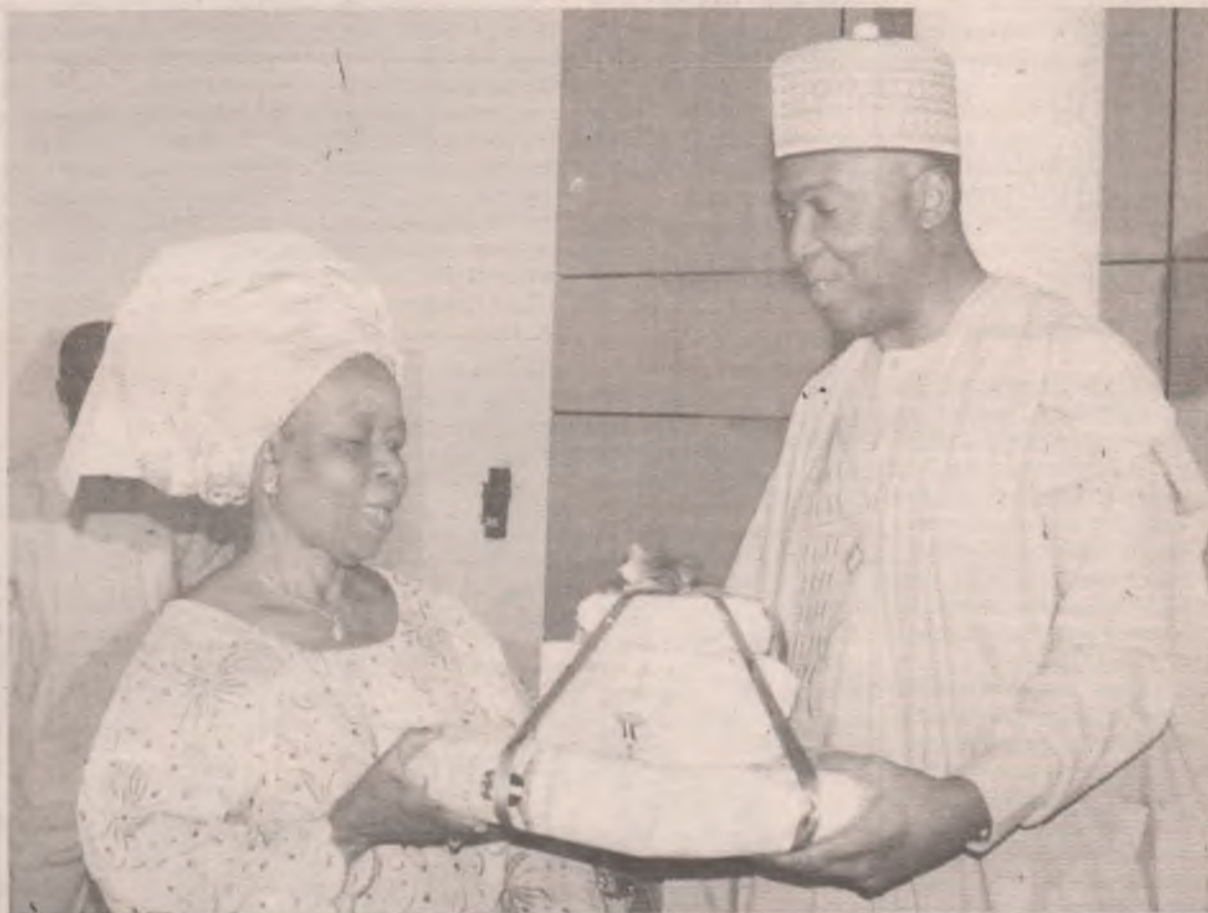
GOVERNOR Namadi Sambo of Kaduna State yesterday flagged off the distribution of hospital equipment and drugs worth N1.5 billion to hospitals in the 23 local government areas of the state.

Flagging off the distribution at the state central store in Kakuri, the governor said the equipment were purchased by the state government in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID). He said the state government through the partnership got drugs worth N470 million and that the

state had also purchased 63 containers of hospital equipment worth N1 billion.

He warned that anyone found diverting the drugs or trying to thwart the efforts of his administration would be dealt with accordingly.

Earlier in his address, the supervising Commissioner in the Ministry of Health Alhaji Mohammed Sani Sidi said 115 primary health care centers and 30 general hospitals were going to benefit. He added that over 3.2 million people had so far benefited from the state's free health care services for pregnant women and children under five years.



GOVERNOR Bukola Saraki of Kwara State (right) presenting souvenirs to the chairman of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, Chief (Mrs.) Rebecca Aikhomu, during the council's visit to Government House, Ilorin, yesterday.

Northern govs congratulate Obi, urge politicians to emulate Soludo

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

FOLLOWING the victory of Mr Peter Obi of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) in Saturday's gubernatorial election in Anambra State, the Governor of Niger State and Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) Dr Mua'zu Babangida Aliyu has congratulated him, saying he was returned because of his good works.

Dr Aliyu who spoke on behalf of the NGF said all politicians should work for the people as it was the only

way to win their hearts. He added that Obi had shown that he was a capable leader and that was why the people gave him a second chance.

"It is in recognition of his hard work and service to his people that he was re-elected. He should continue with the good work", he said.

Governor Aliyu who spoke through his Director of Public Affairs and Media Relations Alhaji Bala Abdulkadir also commended Professor Chukwuma Soludo for accepting the result of the election.

He commended the people of

Anambra for going to the polls with clear minds, adding that their action was a sign that Nigeria was gradually attaining democratic maturity. Aliyu also commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) saying they did their best in making available the result on time and ensuring a smooth voting process.

He said despite the fact that the process was marred with some irregularities, INEC should replicate the Anambra example in other parts of the country in the 2011 gubernatorial elections.

Govt, parents disagree over WAEC, NECO exams in Katsina

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

THE Katsina State government and parents in the state have disagreed over the recent students census conducted by the state Ministry of Education which barred over 1,800 students from registering for the 2010 WAEC/NECO and NABTEB examinations.

The state government had ordered the census to ascertain the number of students and pay the examination

fees of the students. The state Commissioner for Education Abdullahi Garba Faskari who spoke to newsmen through his Director of Schools Aminu Danbaba said 1,806 students would have to repeat the year for what he described as perpetual truancy and absenteeism, saying the state had paid for 27,000 candidates.

On the other hand, the parents alleged that their children were forced to repeat because they missed a one day unpublicized census conducted by

the state Ministry of Education.

A father, Yahuza Abdu, who called on the state government to rescind its decision, described it as harsh and unfair to many students who for one reason or the other could not go to school on that day.

He chided the ministry for refusing to allow parents to pay for the affected children since the state would not pay for them, saying the development would prevent many parents from returning their children to school.

Resign now, Aremu tells Akunyili

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE Minister of Information and Communication Professor Dora Akunyili should stop insulting the sensibilities of Nigerians and resign honourably from the federal cabinet, Vice Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress Comrade Issa Aremu has said. The minister

had during the last Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting urged her colleagues through a memo to revisit their stand on ailing president Umaru Yar'adua.

Aremu in a statement yesterday in Kaduna said the minister was unable to "re-brand" the cabinet, to obey the rules of delegation and representation in a democracy.

According to him, the memo of the minister to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) was belated and 'opportunistic'.

"Her so called memo coming on the heels of mass action by Nigerians, after the commendable intervention of notable elder-statesmen and the recent resolution of the Nigerian Senate urg-

ing President Yar'adua to transmit a letter of his medical vacation to the Senate to enable Vice President Goodluck Jonathan act as president was cheap grandstanding and sheer political diversion. "Professor Dora Akunyili should be courageous enough to resign her appointment as it is the practice in many civilized societies where political appointees

who suffer crisis of confidence with those who appointed them humbly resign. The minister should resign rather than grandstand on a matter already settled," he said.

He urged President Yar'adua to empower the vice president to act as president, pending his full recovery, thereby saving Nigeria and Nigerians from a political crisis.

Agency decries LGs' role in midwifery scheme

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

EXECUTIVE Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPH-CDA) Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate says he is not happy with the role the local governments were playing in the National Midwifery Service Scheme (NMSS) saying their refusal to provide the midwives accommodation was affecting their jobs.

NMSS was launched in 2009 with the sole aim of addressing maternal mortality in the country. The scheme has a tripartite arrangement between the Federal, state and local governments. So far, a total of 2488 midwives have been deployed to 652 health facilities in the country by the agency. Speaking at a "Training of Trainers' workshop for the NMSS in Kaduna yesterday, he said their refusal to provide accommodation for the participants of the scheme was adversely affecting their work.

"The scheme is a quick win intervention that will drastically reduce maternal and child deaths in the country and facilitate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our goal is to make pregnancy safer and let mothers and babies live," he said.

He urged state governors to prevail on local government chairmen in their states to fulfil their obligation and as well provide supplementary allowances to the beneficiaries.

"The road that government took to this point has not been easy and there may be some challenges ahead, but we are determined to make a difference in maternal and child health in Nigeria," he said.

He urged the participants at the workshop to ensure that they take what they have learnt to their respective localities. Earlier in his address, the Chairman of NPH-CDA Dr. Haliru Yahaya said the agency had recorded significant achievement and urged stakeholders in the health sector to support the scheme. Dr. Yahaya said the scheme had in no small measure assisted government in addressing the manpower requirement of primary health care centres in the country.

...She deserves applause — Gov. Aliyu

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

NIGER State Governor Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu has applauded the Minister of Information and Communication Professor Dora Akunyili on her position on the absence of President Umar Yar'adua. The governor made his stand known at the weekend during the end of year dinner/award organised by the Minna zone of the Central Bank of Nigeria Bankers' Committee.

Dr Aliyu who maintained that Professor Akunyili's action had saved Nigeria some shame, frowned at those condemning her action, adding that what she said was the reflection of what the country had been subjected to in the past two months due to the absence of President Yar'adua.

Aliyu said Akunyili deserved applause as he stressed that she reflected the opinion of the average Nigerian, adding the political elite shared her view but lacked the courage to express it openly.

"If the minister failed to speak out as the government mouth piece then who will do it for us? We cannot continue to remain the way we are, we must move on. Most of the problems we have today as a country is because we shy away from speaking out on issues of national and regional interest when it mattered most, and by so doing we give room for people who have no business speaking for government and the regions to do so." "Many of the people calling for the head of Akunyili for speaking out are not doing so because they love Nigeria but because like a cabal they have vested interest", he said.



CROSS section of outgoing NYSC Corps members collecting their discharge certificates in Abuja/

Zamfara begins collection of hajj deposits

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Gusau

THE Pilgrims Welfare Board in Zamfara State has commenced the collection of deposits for this year's hajj to enable low income earners secure hajj seats with ease.

Chairman of the board Alhaji Ibrahim Mallaha who disclosed this after a meeting with local government chairmen and secretaries to review the last hajj exercise said the minimum amount is N250, 000 while the maximum is N477,000, pending the announcement of fares by the Federal Government.

He said since all the board's accounts in local government areas had been closed, hajj deposits could only be paid by bank drafts payable to the Pilgrims Welfare Board.

He added that payment of Hadaya would be made compulsory for all intending pilgrims before departure.

While commending the local government chairmen for the maturity with which they handled the 2009 hajj, Mallaha said discipline, obedience and loyalty to constituted authorities would be considered before registering a pilgrim.

Oba faults minister on Lagos-Badagry expressway

From Femi Akinola, Lagos

THE Vice-Chairman of the Council of Obas and Chiefs in Lagos State Oba Akran of Badagry Kingdom Whenu Aholu Menu Toyi has berated the Minister of Works, Housing and Urban Development Dr. Hassan Lawan's decision to stop the expansion of the Lagos-Badagry expressway, saying the minister's comment on the issue is a slight on the people of Lagos.

The Akran made the condemnation at the weekend during a courtesy visit to him by the working committee of the Lagos State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) alleging that the minister was taking advantage of the absence of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua to create confusion between the Federal and Lagos governments.

According to the Oba, President Yar'adua, before he travelled out of the country for medical check-up last November, had set up a committee comprising ministers and commissioners in Lagos State headed by the Secretary to the Federal Government and Lagos State Attorney-General to look into the issue. "We should allow the committee to resolve the issue amicably instead of making offensive statements," he said.



FEDERAL Capital Territory Commissioner of Police, Haruna John (left) test running a patrol vehicle presented to them by Chairman, Saraha Home, Alhaji Kabiru Haruna, during the donation of patrol vehicles to FCT police command in Lokogoma, Abuja.

NEMA, Bauchi to resettle displaced persons

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

IN the aftermath of Jos sectarian crisis, the National Emergency Management Emergency (NEMA) and Bauchi State government have set up plan for the resettlement of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

in Bauchi State.

Director General of the Agency, retired AVM Mohammed Audu-Bida gave the hint at the weekend shortly after an assessment tour of displaced persons in various camps in both Plateau and Bauchi states.

Represented by the agency's Director of

Relief and Rehabilitation, Dr Olusegun Ojo, Audu-Bida said Bauchi State had already set up a committee that would assess the number of those people and their needs.

He said a large number of the people they met indicated interest to remain in Bauchi and the government is providing

them plot of land, like it did in 2004 as a result of similar crises in Jos.

He enjoined the victims to cooperate with the government and live together in harmony for the development of the nation, adding that lack of coordination in distribution of aids from the other donors.

Group plans confab on Niger-Delta

By Ahmad Salkida

A Non-governmental organization said it is organising a fresh conference on Niger Delta at The Hague, Netherlands, between Feb. 25 and 26, 2010 to bring the inter-

national community in addressing the problem of the region.

The group, Hope for Niger Delta Campaign (HNDC), said that recent developments emerging from the amnesty programme in the Niger-Delta

have shown that the Nigerian government alone does not have the solutions to bring lasting peace in the troubled area.

"In the last months after the former freedom fighters surrendered their weapons, the reality is that there are still several discordant voices reverberating from aggrieved ex-militant leaders who feel short-changed in the process of disarmament," HNDC President Comrade Sunny Ofehe has said.

He said the current efforts to end restiveness in the Niger Delta region could fail unless the International Community such as the

European Union, which can command respect of the parties in the matter, is involved.

Ofehe said the militants also want the Nigerian government to seek foreign help in the post-amnesty programme because of the fear that those currently in charge have little or no experience in crisis management.

The theme of the conference is "Niger Delta Peace Consolidation Conference" and is to host Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan, all governors in the Niger-Delta, ex-militant leaders, traditional rulers and other stakeholders in the troubled region.

“In the last months after the former freedom fighters surrendered their weapons, the reality is that there are still several discordant voices reverberating from aggrieved ex-militant leaders who feel short-changed in the process of disarmament

UBEC chief bags award

By Maureen Onochie

EXECUTIVE Secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Dr. Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed has received the African Star Excellence Award for the Universal Basic Education 2009 in Paris, France.

The Commission in a statement by its spokesman David Apeh said the Chairman, African Leadership Advisory Board, Dr. Bamanga Tukur who signed the award letter noted that, "In arriving at this decision, our consultants took cognizance of your remarkable achievement ascertaining that Universal Basic Education is implemented within the sub-region."

The Girei community in Adamawa State recently also gave the UBEC boss an award for the activities of the basic education in the community and the state in general.

Corp member donates digital display boards to ministry

By Hamisu Muhammad

A National youth corp member, Mr. Samari Yakubu Ibrahim with FCT number 09A/0442 has designed and donated two sets of digital moving message display boards to the Ministry of Science and Technology in Abuja.

The donation was part of the community development projects he executed.

Commending the gesture, Science and Technology Dr. Alhassan Bako Zaku urged all corp members serving in the country to contribute positively to the community development in the area of their primary assignment.

"Where ever you serve, leave a legacy by bringing ideas that would remain indelible in the minds of people" he stressed. A statement from the ministry signed by chief press secretary Tai Shobajo said the two (2) digital moving message displays welcoming visitors were placed at the office of both the Minister and the Permanent Secretary respectively.

Another electronic board will display at intervals some principals officers of the ministry, the Mission and Vision of the Ministry as well as the various parastatals under the Ministry.

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Why cost of living is high in Lokoja - Commissioner

From Isiaka Wakili, Lokoja

THE high rate of rural-urban migration in Kogi State has been identified as a major factor for the high cost of living in Lokoja, the state capital. The state Commissioner for Commerce and Industry

Dr Abubakar AbdulKareem in an interview with our correspondent said apart from the general high level of inflation in the country and the global economic recess, Lokoja was fast becoming an attractive location for people both within and outside the state.

"Even in terms of vehicular movement, one or two years ago, we had about 5,000 vehicles passing through Lokoja on a daily basis. The number has risen to 15,000. Until recently when our roads began to open up, a lot of people had difficulty taking their goods to the metropolis", he said.

He said with the plan by the government to establish at least four small and medium scale industries in each of the 21 local government areas of the state, the entrepreneurial capacity of the people, especially those in the rural areas, would be enhanced.

Netherlands interested in amnesty programme

From Muhammad Bello, Port Harcourt

NETHERLANDS says it is interested in the progress of the amnesty granted Niger Delta militants last year by President Umaru Yar'adua. The Netherlands Ambassador to Nigeria Arie Van Der Weil said this yesterday when he, alongside the British High Commissioner to Nigeria Bob Dewars paid a courtesy visit on Rivers State Governor Chibuike Amaechi at the Government House, Port Harcourt.

Mr. Weil, who said the amnesty programme was necessary for the development of Nigeria, added that the government of Netherlands was in support of it and would assist where necessary. The British High Commissioner to Nigeria Bob Dewars pledged to assist in the economic development of the state and job creation. He said he had already been briefed by Shell on what they were doing for communities in the state.

"I think it is very important for communities to feel the presence of oil and gas industries in their areas in terms of economic development," he said.

NERC proposes alternatives to hydro power supply

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

THE Administrator of the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) Mallam Imamudeen Talba has proposed the use of renewable energy such as solar, wind and bio-energy as alternatives to hydro power.

Talba who spoke in Minna at a one-day power consumer assembly organized by the commission last week noted that the sector witnessed no investment for over 20 years and 19 of the 79 installed generation units were not in operational condition. He said the way forward in Nigeria's electricity problem is by building natural gas evacuation infrastructure, consumer education on energy conservation and awareness, interest and intervention by foreign and domestic investors including state governments.

Talba added that other measures include rehabilitation and expansion of transmission infrastructures to support 4000-6000MW, development of a long term tariff framework and power supply securitization.

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FROM left: National President, Nigerian Labour Co-operation Society (NLCS), Alhaji Yakubu Imam, Managing Director, FCB Redline, Esan Sunday and NLCS Secretary General, Chief Louis Odeigah exchanging document after the signing of Mou between NLCS and FCB Redline on the forthcoming international cooperative conference in Abuja

Plateau judiciary workers resume strike

From Mahmud Lalo and Ahmed Mohamed, Jos

THE Judicial Service Workers Union (JUSUN) in Plateau State has resumed its strike action, following the failure of the state government to implement the consolidated salary of the workers as agreed upon by the government and the union.

Chairman of the union Comrade Philip Adik said, "We reached an agreement with the state government that they will pay us N15, 100. They requested for two weeks to enable them complete all arrangements

and implement it. We gave them four weeks, the recent Jos crisis interrupted, we gave them an additional one week, but they refused to implement it."

Comrade Adik said they would not resume until when government paid them the N21, 000 consolidated salary as recommended by the committee of judges or N15, 100 as agreed.

The Special Adviser to Governor David Jonah Jang on Labour Matters who is a member of the negotiation team Hanssi Suleiman said what the union did was an act of sabotage.

"We reached an agreement with them and promised to send a memo

to the governor on the agreement we reached within two weeks. We sent the memo as agreed, but before the memo could be approved, crisis erupted and the governor became busy with security matters. We explained all these to them and also appealed them. Instead of them to demand to see a copy of the memo we sent, they said they wanted to meet with the governor personally, we told the governor, he agreed and told the director, protocol to give them a date, but they decided to go on strike. We are appealing to them to be patient and go back to work in the interest of the state," he added.

...As Ogun workers strike over new salaries

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

ACTIVITIES at the Ogun State Judiciary complex in Abeokuta were yesterday paralyzed as workers embarked on a strike action over the non-implementation of the new salary structure as promised by the state government last month.

On Friday last week, the workers had staged a warning protest as they alleged that the leadership of the state chapter of the Judiciary Staff Union of

Nigeria (JUSUN) had compromised on the date for the implementation of the Consolidated Judicial Salary Structure (CONJUSS). They had vowed to continue with a strike yesterday if the government did not rescind its decision and have the implementation effected from January 2010. The workers made good their threat as the gates of the courts were shut yesterday. Our correspondent gathered that the workers discovered that the leadership of the union signed a

new implementation date which is expected to commence at the end of February, a development they found unacceptable.

As early as 8.00am, the workers, with various anti government placards, barricaded the main entrance to the state High Court and Magistrate's Court, making vehicular movement into the complexes impossible for several hours. The leader of the group who did not want his name mentioned told journalists that the workers were not happy

with the new date agreed upon by their leaders.

But, the Chairman of JUSUN Prince Adesina Adesanya denied that the leadership had compromised their position on the implementation of the new salary structure. Adesanya who spoke with newsmen yesterday said, "We have to be careful since they said we should wait till the end of February. We should be patient. Our plan is that if the agreement is not reached on that new date, we can then commence a strike."

Online Reactions

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ON www.dailytrust.com



Fear of Bukuru market demolition raises fresh concern

THERE is no truth in the statements by the chairman of the traders. I have a shop which was looted and burnt down by Muslims in Bukuru market. All the Christian shops have been burnt

down and looted completely. It is only the Muslim shops that are still standing. Is the chairman saying, only Muslims have a right to the market? How can they burn our shops, steal our goods and

expect to be commiserated over such wanton destructions? Not at all. If they wanted a place to trade, they would not have touched the market. Many Christian traders were killed while returning to

their shops after the crisis and all the chairman thinks about, is to allow him trade in the market. Please let justice prevail.

Joseph Maren Sampson
marensam@yahoo.co.uk

Jos again. Government should listen to this and avert another crisis.

Ali Umar
alukuram@yahoo.com



PLATEAU State Governor Jonah Jang

Ex-gov urges relocation of federal orgs in Plateau

IF he feels that way, what do we do with the neighbouring states. Bauchi for example has at least two crises every year. Do we take the same action there. In Maiduguri recently, we had three days of senseless killings (Boko Haram). Just to mention those still fresh in our minds. What should be done to those states?

Tony smith
e_ekeng@yahoo.com

In fact, Plateau State should seize to exist as a state. It should be fragmented into Kaduna, Bauchi and Nassarawa, so that their monthly subvention will go to these states, since the people do not want others on their soil.

Inuwa
maitamsdoc@hotmail.com

The call for relocation is too late. The relocation should be a matter of priority more than the president's health. These Plateau people want their own country inside Nigeria. They are the Biafra of today, unfortunately, they gave the ethnic bigotry a religious colouration.

Adayi Ozoku
ozoku2008@gmail.com

In Kano, there have been recurrent riots with thousands of people killed and you kept quiet. Bauchi, that you want federal organizations relocated to is also prone to riots. The most recent was just a few months back. You are only serving your selfish, religious and ethnic interest and not that of the country. Let federal organizations in Bauchi and Kano be relocated to Nassarawa and Kano then.

Jonn Dede
dede30@yahoo.com

Why we lost Anambra, by PDP

IF the PDP is to remain relevant as a political party, then the Anambra election provides a timely opportunity for the party to look inwards. For so long, the euphoria of power has blinded the leadership from realizing that the people are not happy. The party needs to start from the lowest level, the wards. The connection between the party members and leadership exists only when votes are needed. Money, rather than ideas, vision and dream of building a viable Nigerian counts is all that matters.

The leadership is bereft of ideas, innovations and the underlying principles of supremacy of knowledge. Indeed, PDP has to commit itself to internal reforms. PDP has what it takes to start all over.

Merem Emeribe
emeokoro@yahoo.com

The victory of Peter Obi is a clear message to all, that Nigerians have had enough of the PDP and that Nigerians would ensure that in 2011, their votes count.

Ibrahim Tsadu Ibrahim
elkutigi@gmail.com

This is a clear indication that the end of the party is near because of their undemocratic tendencies of imposing candidates for elective offices.

The PDP is in for a defeat in the 2011 elections because the party has done nothing for Nigerians. The promise of providing 6,000 megawatts has become a mirage as the country has been thrown into perpetual darkness despite the billions of naira spent on the PHCN. There are no good roads in the country, etc.

Zanna Bukar Baruwa
bukar.zanna@yahoo.com

NIGERIANS have one habit of not accepting defeat at all. In any game, in any election, there must be a winner and a loser. But the case is different with Nigeria because the loser never accepts defeat. We are supposed to be copying the likes of Abraham Lincoln.

Zanna Bukar Baruwa
bukar.zanna@yahoo.com

I am happy that Soludo lost. I do not think he would have done better than Peter Obi.

Isah Idris
isah1_idris@yahoo.com

Ours is a young democracy. As long as the level of administrative



PDP National Chairman Vincent Ogbulafor

Nigerians are becoming conscious of their rights and no amount of intimidation would deter them from making a change in 2011.

Usman Santuraki
usbaturaki@yahoo.com

I wonder why the PDP wants unity among their supporters in Anambra. Was there fair play in the primary election. Even an amateur politician will know that those who lost out will work against the victory of the imposed candidate. Hope this is a lesson well learnt.

Murtala Shawai
murtala74@yahoo.com

Thank you Anambarians for voting wisely. Though there were some irregularities, this is an indication that the PDP will lose the 2011 elections.

Yahaya Ibn Idris Abu
ibnidrees@gmail.com
Congratulations Gov. Obi. It

is hoped that you will justify the confidence reposed in you by the people of Anambra State. Please continue the good work.

Mukhtar Musa
elmukhtar_musa@yahoo.co.uk

Governor Peter Obi should endeavour to look at the road leading to Ebenebe town in Awka-North Local Government Area and help the people out, especially on the reconstruction of the Ezu River Bridge which has been neglected.

Okwudili Florence
motherchinweike@yahoo.com

Very easy to say. It is only when PDP does not have the opportunity to manipulate an election that you hear them saying all these things. Obi should thank God that Obasanjo is no more in power if not, it could have been another story today.

Abu Sustayyah Omeiza
drkabir90@yahoo.com

Soludo: 'There was administrative rigging'



PROFESSOR Charles Soludo

election a success. The battle to improve elections and not selection in Nigeria must start with the society and the political parties.

Inno
heronow@yahoo.com

When will Nigerian politicians learn to accept defeat? Always shouting about rigging, fraud, disfranchisement etc when they lose elections. Please let us follow the path of honour and extend our goodwill to whoever emerges winner. As it is only God Who gives power and to whom he pleases.

Babagana Boso
babaganaboso@yahoo.com

problem is minimal and no violence occurred, I will consider the

Is it not funny that the PDP is accusing some other party of rigging election, when the party is the expert in election rigging. Please PDP, just accept the result, see it as the wish of the people, instead of a long legal tussle that will last till God knows when.

Oladimeji
dimak_7series@yahoo.co.uk

Why can't Soludo accept defeat and face the realities of life? PDP aspirants always complain when they lose elections. This is just the beginning of PDP's defeat. The greatest shocker will be in the 2011 elections.

Mukhtar Musa
elmukhtar_musa@yahoo.co.uk

Jos: Army denies involvement in video clip murder

I disagree with the defence of the military because the atrocities committed by them are evident. It appears this officer does not know the reality on ground. People who have been shot by the Army are lying critically ill in hospitals here in Jos. This is an evidence that something is wrong somewhere. Only a person who accepts his shortcomings ever finds help. Stop being on the defensive and accept the facts on ground.

Joseph Maren Sampson
marensam@yahoo.co.uk

It is amazing that people are trying at all cost to implicate the Nigerian Army in the mayhem that happened in Jos recently. It is very unfair for people to make a video of something that never happened and circulate it. It is very unfortunate and we should avoid it.

Zanna Bukar Baruwa
bukar.zanna@yahoo.com

The Nigerian Army can only deceive Nigerians, but can they deceive God?

Tanimu Amos
tamamos1@yahoo.com

The Army's denial is not convincing. They are being economical with words. The truth is yet to be told. More often than not, the Army always comes to the aid of their own, to save them from trouble. They should be bold enough to own up, expose those responsible and apologise to Nigerians.

Yahaya Achadu
yachadu@yahoo.com



By Anthony Akinola

The future of Nigeria

“Our boys will defeat them” was what one Nigerian said rather dismissively when told that Ghana was winning one-nil at half-time in the semi-final of the African Cup of Nations. He seemed to have forgotten that Nigeria needed to find an equalising goal before the prospect of winning the match could be realistically assumed. The Nigerian in question had merely exhibited our typical attitude of under-estimating others assuming ourselves to have got to a destination we are not in any way near.

Assuming ourselves to have gone beyond a point we may not have reached could be dangerous, particularly in politics. It could mean we are unreasonable or unrealistic. For instance, when Barack Obama won the American presidency in November 2008, some people called for the removal of those “gadgets” that kept our fragile nation together. One prominent Nigerian was reported as saying that the federal character principle was no longer relevant because the election of Barack Obama suggested we could do without it.

The problem with this naïveté is the assumption that we are at the same stage of political development as the United States of America. We may actually not have been where they were 60 years

“Similarly a responsible legislature or judiciary can bring out the best of an otherwise mediocre leadership”

ago. A blunter individual might say we are 100 years behind them. Is it not a fact of our contemporary history that some Nigerians still do not believe in the importance of Western education? Is it also not a fact that the nation we have today is one in which a significant population of our peoples cannot converse among themselves except through an interpreter?

The truth of the matter is that Nigeria is yet to meet the yardsticks of a true nation. Nigeria may only marginally have advanced beyond being the “mere geographical expression” Chief Obafemi Awolowo rightly called it very many years ago. True acknowledgement of how far we have gone in history is the way forward to getting to how far we may wish to go.

Religion, for instance, should be a private matter – not the cause of the deaths of hundreds of our peoples on a periodic basis. The truth of the matter is that many of us could have been Hindus today if India, assumingly, were the nation that colonised us! Religion does not call for the type of madness that has become our lot. Sadly, the nation we have today is one in which peaceful co-existence cannot be taken for granted. There are parents warning their loved ones not to seek opportunities in some areas of a society they call their own.

The advantages of a united Nigerian nation cannot be over-emphasised. However, the assumption that the future of such an entity is great for all of us

should not be at the expense of innocent lives. Our political and religious leaders must embark on educating our peoples about the advantage of a peaceful and orderly Nigerian society. Such an education is important and urgent, especially in the wild north.

There can be no meaningful development where politics is more important than governance. There is too much politics and too little governance in Nigeria and one explanation for this may be the absence of a realistic Constitution. Debates in the past two months have been about an absentee president not delegating authority to his deputy. While the ethnic factor cannot be ignored, it will nevertheless be unfortunate if the stubbornness or selfishness of President Umaru Yar’adua is responsible for this. Until we acknowledge the dangers posed by our cleavages and work out a political arrangement that accommodates the sentiments of our peoples, the omen would always remain ominous for our society.

There may be occasions when one admires the naivety of others, especially when such a naivety is in itself an expression of hope and patriotism. One with limited knowledge of Nigerian history could be pardoned for concluding that Nigerians have never cared about where their political leader comes from. Of course one should not care about such a thing if one Mr Goodluck Jonathan from a minority ethnic group is afforded the same opportunity, respect and legitimacy as one Alhaji Umaru Yar’adua from a majority ethnic group. The series of crises we have experienced in our history might not have occurred if such a desirable thing as this had always been taken for granted.

The leadership question is a psychological one, which makes it all the more difficult. However, the totality of society is responsible for its development or lack of it. A political leader with the best of intentions can be frustrated by an irresponsible legislature or judiciary. Similarly a responsible legislature or judiciary can bring out the best of an otherwise mediocre leadership. Who, for instance, is responsible for the failure to amend the Constitution or introduce reforms that have been suggested a couple of years ago? How many Nigerians can boast of having confronted their elected men and women about their individual and collective expectations since 1999? It is because we are all involved that one is posing these questions.

We must learn to respect each other. The small ethnic group deserves as much respect as the majority one, the latter not being dismissive of the former as we did of Ghana in that crucial semi-final football match. The small ethnic group or nation has its own strength and determination which the so-called majority group underestimate at its own peril. Respect for one another ensures there are no unwanted surprises – surprises whose consequences may be difficult to reverse. The future of Nigeria can be great if we work honestly towards it.

Akinola can be reached at (anthonyakinola@yahoo.co.uk)



By Fidelis Nnadi

Challenges and implementation of road traffic laws in Nigeria (I)

Road transportation by the use of motor vehicle is the most flexible as it accommodates the wide range of the differences of its users and operators, making it the main carrier of the national economy.

It is against this background that Motor Vehicle Administration through Traffic Control/Management, Testing of Drivers for proficiency and vehicles for roadworthiness became necessary. This has led to the establishment of the Road Traffic Services to initially enforce Trade Vehicle Laws for enhanced safety of lives and property on public Roads and Highways in the then Regions.

The establishment of Road Traffic Services and the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), both serving as State and Federal agencies has not achieved the desired result to date due to duplication of functions by both agencies. The situation is a serious threat to the development, implementation and enforcement of road traffic regulations in Nigeria to the detriment of innocent road users and their safety.

The duplication of road traffic regulation functions, particularly between the Federal Road Safety Commission and the Directorate of Road Traffic Services is a necessary issue that require Fed-

erative statutory document that regulates the use and construction of motor vehicles on public roads and highways, licensing such vehicles and persons in charge of same as well as all other matters incidental thereto (Appendix 11)

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) in 1960 realized that Road Traffic and Motor Vehicle related matters were, by the provisions of the constitution, more of a regional responsibility and advised the then Prime Minister that these duties be excised from the police and ceded to the regional governments (now States and FCT). This development led to the creation of Vehicle Inspection Unit in the Mechanical/Electrical Division of the department of public works of the regions and was charged with the responsibility of Motor Vehicle Inspection, Driver Training, Testing and Licensing, and enforcement of the Road Traffic Regulation as it affects Regional Roads. With the creation of States out of the Regions, and elevation of the public works department (PWD) to Ministry of Works Housing and Transport, Vehicle Inspection Unit was upgraded to a Divisional level under the Mechanical/Electrical Department in the Ministry.

The name Vehicle Inspection Officer (VIO) became a misnomer as a result of the scope of work carried out by the division.

Accordingly, the Motor Licensing Authority under the State Ministry of Finance is responsible for the registration of vehicles, issuance of vehicle licenses and motor related documentation, and collection of revenue on motor related taxation.

This position remained until 1980 when an International Treaty on the Harmonization of Highway Legislations in the ECOWAS Sub-region was signed by the Authority of Heads of States and Governments approving the setting up of appropriate machinery in member States.

In compliance with this International Treaty, the Federal Government in 1993 directed that Motor Vehicle Administration Department should be established in each of the Federating State/FCT comprising Central Motor Registry, Motor Licensing Office, Vehicle Examination and Driver Testing.

However, only the FCT and Lagos State have fully complied with this Federal Government directive by establishing the Directorate of Road Traffic Services in FCT under the Transportation Secretariat (similar to Ministry of Works and Transport in States), and Directorate of Motor Vehicle Administration (DMVA) in Lagos State under the Ministry of Transportation.

During the era of Military Administration, from 1966 – 1999 it did not create the enabling environment for states to fully implement their constitutional responsibilities to operate Motor Vehicle Administration but were more concerned about the revenue which were never re-invested to promote safety on our roads.

To be concluded.

Nnadi is Executive Director, Accident Prevention and Rescue Initiative.

“The situation is a serious threat to the development”

eral Government intervention in view of sections 4(7), 315(1,2 & 3) and the second schedule part 1 item 63 and part 11 item H – 17 (a) of the 1999 constitution, as well as the implications of the assertion on Federalism as enshrined in the constitution, the National Road Traffic Act Cap 548 of 1990, and the Nigeria Tax Law (Decree No 21 of 1998) on collectible Taxes and Levies.

By the provisions of the various Nigerian Constitutions (1960, 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999), a clear definition of the functions of the Federal Government, its agencies and the then Regions (now States and FCT), have been maintained such that under item 14 section 17 (a) of the Concurrent Legislative list, States/FCT have a right to “the health, safety and welfare of persons employed to work in factories, offices or other premises or in interstate transportation and commerce including the training, supervision and qualification of such persons”

Prior to these constitutions, there was the Road Traffic Ordinance of 1949, which has gone through various revisions and review until 1990. This Act and the constitutional provisions gave birth to the various Road Traffic Regulations fashioned by each State/FCT to suit their peculiar environment and culture. The Act, Cap 548 of 1990, is the



By Adamu M. Fika

Dantata was right: The wealth of colonial-era North developed Nigeria (I)

On 17th October 2009 a foundation was launched in honour of the late Sir Ahmadu Bello at the Murtala Square, Kaduna. Alhaji Aminu Dantata, the patriarch of the famous Dantata clan, who was the chief launcher at the occasion, seized the opportunity to debunk the notion that since the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, the Southern Provinces had always subsidized the Northern Provinces. Alhaji Aminu maintained that the reverse was in fact the case. But opinion moulders in the South have pigheadedly continued to insist, without the slightest shred of evidence, that the South had contributed more financial resources to the development of the country than the North.

Lugard's Policy on Taxation and Disposal of Revenue

In order to verify the veracity of either of the two sides of this great debate, I decided to search in public records at the National Archive and at Arewa House, both in Kaduna. One of the documents which I extensively used in this exercise is the report titled *Administrative and Financial Procedure under the Now Constitution and the Financial Relation between the Government of Nigeria and the Native Administration* written by Sir Sydney Phillipson in 1946. In it, Phillipson gave in detail the history of revenue sharing between the central Government and Native Administration including Tax Policy. The other documents used were the Nigerian estimates for the years 1914 to 1947-48.

From the early years of the amalgamation up to 1926, the philosophical basis for the collection and utilization of public revenue in colonial Nigeria was given by Sir Frederick Lugard. In his report, *Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria 1912-1919*, he noted that "among other problems was the problem of taxation, direct and indirect, and disposal of revenue so as to benefit the country as a whole".

Direct taxation was levied by the Government but collected by the Native Administrations the proceeds of which were divided equally between the Government and the individual Native Administrations. The 50 percent contributed by the native administrations together with the centrally collected revenue went to a single fund to be utilised "for the benefit of the whole country" on the basis of need.

The services on which the central revenue was expended were classified into Nigerian (central) and provincial. The provincial services were further subdivided into services in Northern provinces and services in Southern provinces. The figures in schedule I below, give the actual revenue contributed by each group of provinces and the actual expenditure on services in each of them:

Schedule I

Actual provincial revenue contributions to the central fund and government expenditure on provincial services (in pounds) 1914 to 1925-26

YEAR	ACTUAL	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN	TOTAL
1914	Revenue	770,979	200,778	971,757
	Expenditure	737,439	888,651	1,626,090
1915	Revenue	345,622	14,483	360,105
	Expenditure	27,720	33,824	61,544
1916	Revenue	483,041	358,737	841,778
	Expenditure	371,441	1,048,998	1,420,439
1917	Revenue	510,754	357,778	868,532
	Expenditure	257,705	72,793	330,498
1918	Revenue	450,897	290,979	741,876
	Expenditure	184,621	631,515	816,136
1919	Revenue	555,040	575,890	1,130,930
	Expenditure	350,276	1,154,307	1,504,583
1920	Revenue	579,210	588,955	1,168,165
	Expenditure	509,515	1,900,973	2,410,488
1921-22	Revenue	586,155	288,600	874,755
	Expenditure	351,581	865,939	1,217,520
1922-23	Revenue	563,580	101,500	665,080
	Expenditure	360,659	856,566	1,217,225
1923-24	Revenue	610,620	115,326	725,946
	Expenditure	328,170	589,595	917,765
1925-26	Revenue	603,300	115,170	718,470
	Expenditure	351,096	693,625	1,044,721
	Total Revenue	6,059,198	3,008,196	9,067,394
	Total Expenditure	3,830,223	8,736,786	12,567,009

To be cont'd.

Malam Adamu, the Waziri of Fika, is a former Head of Service of the Federation.

Your Letters

Shema rallies Katsina for Yar'adua

Irrrespective of divergent views being expressed across the country over the state of health of President Yar'adua, the trend took a new dimension on Tuesday, January, 26th, 2010, when Katsina State governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Shema gathered thousands of people across the state's 34 local governments, to offer special prayer for speedy recovery of the ailing president.

The prayer session that was held at Kofar Soro, Kangiwa Square in the Katsina which focused on improve health of President Yar'adua, and for continued peace and stability of Nigeria, was attended by former governor of old Kaduna state, Alhaji Lawal Kaita, the state deputy governor, Alh. Sirajo Damari, Emir of Katsina, Alh. Kabir Usman, Emir of Daura, Alh. Umar Farouk, all the government functionaries in the State, the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Alh. Umar Gwajo-Gwajo, and House of Representatives members, Hon. Salisu Yusuf Mahigiri and Hon. Garba Matazu Hon. Bala Banye, the Imams across the state, the state Chief judge, Justice Sadiq Mahuta, and also the state PDP Chairman, Alh. Mai-

wada Daudawa; former Deputy Chairman of PDP who was FCT Minister Alhaji Abubakar Iro Danmusa, among others.

In recent time Governor Shema has refrained from making public comments since the issue of the President's absence from the country on health grounds became a matter for national discourse. It is an indication that the governor has become the arrowhead of a project to stall efforts that could lead to the forced removal of the president from office.

Governor Shema who at the prayer summit that lasted for several hours looked visibly worried over the continued agitation on the issue of the President's health, urged both Muslims and Christians all over the country to continue to pray for President Yar'adua. He stated at the occasion that although Nigeria is a great country, "President Yar'adua is also equal to the task of nation building". In his emotion Laden Speech, the Governor noted that Yar'adua has demonstrated leadership with honesty and accountability, hence the need for all Nigerians to rally behind him. The series of prayer session going on across Katsina State on the president's health is being intensified daily.

Already it is being speculated

that the Governor is quiet about the development surrounding the president who is also his political mentor, however, it has been established that it is part of Shema's ploy to penetrate the camp of those that oppose President Yar'adua continue leadership, and woe them to the support of the President, without people keeping eyes on him.

In Katsina State today, there is no doubt about the fact that the people of the State hold President Yar'adua in high esteem most especially his record of performance when he served as the State Governor. Unfortunately, Katsina State governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Shema just like his political mentor, President Yar'adua is not the singing type. His sprinted effort towards uniting Katsina State residents in support of President Yar'adua is un-paralleled.

Presently in Katsina State, Governor Shema remains the only apostle of Yar'adua that the State residents are looking up to as a rallying point in support of Yar'adua.

The Governor is in full control of the State, while others among the so called president's men are gradually loosing people's confidence and trust across the country.

Abubakar Musa, 34 Usman Kabir Road, Kofar Kaura layout, Katsina.

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

Crisis of development I, II and III
REVEREND Matthew Kukah, if your assertions as to your condition in Kaduna are absolute gospel, why wouldn't you advice Gov Jonah Jang on our own condition, for our own situation is worse.
MUSA Abdullahi, Jos, 08032890676.

Strange bedfellows
BUHARI and Atiku? Believe me these two cannot work together; while the whole country still enjoys the benefits of PTF projects, Adamawa people are still suffering from underdevelopment.
IBRAHIM Aliyu, Wuse, Abuja, 07030056667.

A better option
BUHARI should follow the path of honour and quit politics, not just a political party.
08029091902.

Administrative rigging?
THIS must be equal to the 'oversight' failure in detecting serious economic sabotage by the bank executives that operated under the watchful eyes of the defeated Anambra gubernatorial candidates.
KEVIN, Kaduna, 08035896187.

Anambra fallout
NIGERIA would be a true giant of Africa and a shining example of democracy in Africa, if politics of primordial interest, which

is based on electoral malpractice, politics of godfatherism, etc, stopped. INEC should try to make liberal democracy in Nigeria just they demonstrated in the Anambra governorship election.
AMOS Yakubu, Gombe, 07031001849.

Trips would solve a thing
LEGISLATORS planning to travel to Saudi Arabia to see Yar'adua over his health will not add anything useful. They are not health practitioners; it is just a waste of time and our resources, and after all they will not tell the truth. The best thing is that we keep on praying for President Yar'adua's speedy recovery.
AMINU Kura, 08032554873.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

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Obasanjo's confession

Any election in a truly democratic environment must start with the individual. He nurses the dream and begins to take the steps necessary to realize it. He prepares himself, he acquires the relevant education, he acquires the requisite experience, he establishes contacts that may be helpful and then he begins to organize to be acceptable and electable by the electorate.

If it is to be the President of Nigeria that a man sets his sights on, then in addition to these steps, he must register with a political party, explain within and outside his party what his mission and vision are. If he emerges as the candidate of his party then he campaigns on the basis of his vision and the manifesto of his party alongside the candidates of other parties.

Supervised by an electoral body that is independent and impartial, the winner of the contest is the person who truly wins the hearts and minds of a majority of the electorate expressed as is required by law.

In Nigeria, since 2007 when Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as winner of the presidential election that pitted him against other contenders, it has been the contention of some of those who lost and in fact many Nigerian and foreign observers, that the election of 2007 was hugely flawed.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has dismissed any suggestion that its victory at the presidential poll was tainted. INEC with its chairman, Prof. Maurice Iwu as spearhead, has also pushed the argument that the election was a reflection of the choice of the electorate.

The point that the election was tainted by irregularities, which was canvassed at the Supreme Court and dismissed, appears now to have some element of truth after all. That in our view is the major part of the statement made by former President Olusegun Obasanjo last month at the Congress Hall of the Hilton Hotel, Abuja when he chaired the 7th Annual Trust Dialogue: the admission of the role he, by his own admission, played in determining the outcome of the Presidential election of 2007.

Obasanjo's advice to ailing President Yar'Adua to take the path of honour and morality if his health status begins to affect negatively his capacity to govern cannot be impugned even if the point is made that there is a touch of opportunism in the timing of his intervention and his decision to make public his advice.

We are however shocked more by Obasanjo's admission that he was the one who singlehandedly imposed his successor as President on his party and on the people of Nigeria. He, and not the voter, decided what part of the country his successor would come from. He and not his party or, for that matter the 1999 Constitution, drew the criteria that his successor must meet. He, and not his party, chose the candidate for the party. By this apparent confession, Obasanjo has not only exposed INEC to public ridicule, he has also admitted his role in the wilful violation of the fundamental norms of a democratic order.

The dire consequences of Obasanjo's impositions are everywhere around us today, in the examples of insensitive and unaccountable power that permeate the country. The most positive reaction to Obasanjo's statement is a determination by all Nigerians to reclaim their God-given rights to choose who presides over their affairs as legislators, governors and president. When that happens, then the interests and well being of the people can

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Akunyili: Between loyalty and sycophancy

"I want people around me who will tell me the truth, who will tell me the truth as they see it. You cannot operate and manage effectively if you have people around you who put you on the pedestal and tell you everything you do is right because that, in practice, can't be possible".

-- Harry Truman

This week, the Nigerian political elite will be compelled to make an important decision with far reaching implications for the survival of our democracy. By the time the weekend the heavy cloud hanging over the polity since the President went AWOL nearly eighty days ago today, would have dispersed, or become ticker with unpleasant implications for the nation.

The foibles that portend a gloomy future for our democracy are legion: we have the unbridled ascendancy of mediocrity in all the corridors of power and the serial betrayal of the national interest by selfish elites and the intelligentsia. We also have the cultural capitulation by custodians of our highest societal values; religious pervasion and abuse by those whose duty it is to interpret the words of God; and, of course, the criminal docility of the led in the fatal neglect of their civic responsibilities.

We are confronted with arguably the most dangerous political crises the nation has experienced since democracy returned to these shores after a lengthy coup-strewn hiatus in 1999. At the root of the crises is the fact that the President has been absent from his duty post for nearly eighty days now without fulfilling the necessary constitutional obligations required of him.

His absence has badly affected the smooth functioning of the state. Important appointments have been delayed. The Niger Delta peace process has stalled. For a sovereign nation, and a responsible member of the international community, it is highly distressing to contemplate that our government officials have no access to their leader without clearance from Saudi security agents, while a tiny cabal with a misguided sense of loyalty to the Nigerian state operate the affairs of state with the facade of normality.

Those who posit that there is a vacuum in the presidency do not even know the meaning of the word. The obvious constitutional breach may suggest that a void exists on paper, but in reality, some individuals we never elected continue to exercise presidential powers by proxy for almost three months! The situation is better likened to a coup the accompanying protocols. No one bothered to serenade us with martial music, or assault our sensibilities with a usual lengthy justification speech.

My fear is that given the obvious 'provocation', and the delay in invoking constitutional provisions the situation could be exploited for different reasons. Genuine patriots and

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democrats may keep knocking on the arrogant wall of defiance erected around the presidency. Our severely bruised national pride may be too much for patriots with more than a passing interest on the obvious violation of sovereignty and the sanctity of the Presidency to swallow. That is not to mention undemocratic forces that may be emboldened to 'correct' the anomaly by any means necessary for their selfish interests.

have been behind the thinly veiled attempt by late General Abacha to transmute into a civilian President in 1998, and were surely full element when Obasanjo embarked on his tenure elongation misadventure in 2006.

That aside, I refuse to join the ranks of those who have rushed to celebrate the gesture of Information Minister, Dora Akunyili, for breaking ranks with her colleagues in the FEC on the lingering crisis on the transfer of power the Vice President Jonathan Goodluck, last week. I have no quarrels with the Minister achieved at NAFDAC, but beyond her tenure at the agency, her other credentials hardly qualifies absolves her from blame in the unfolding drama.

The Niger Delta peace process has not only stalled, it has swiftly degenerated into renewed violence and destruction of oil pipelines. But that is not all

History has consistently shown that whenever nations experience the sort of crises confronting Nigerians presently, truth has always been the first casualty.

And because they are economical with the truth, the simple task of interpreting relevant portions of the constitution in this impasse has become rocket science.

Their flawed understanding of the essence of loyalty in the democratic space is further aggravated by the proliferation of sycophancy in the corridors of power. But how do we differentiate between loyalty and sycophancy in this dispensation? The distinction is important because a thin line divides the two.

The pedestrian definition of loyalty relates to our personal devotions, sentiments, or attachment to particular objects, which could be an individual like Umar Musa Yar'Adua. In political terms, it connotes devotion and identification with group or community interests. The essence of loyalty in the latter instance invariably includes conformity with the norms of the community or state institutions, their basic laws, political ideals, and even general policy objectives.

The political dinosaurs that have made hard work of enforcing our constitutional provisions on this matter have clearly failed to make the distinction between loyalty to Yar'Adua the President, and the document they swore to uphold! Their betrayal is the clearest manifestation of symptoms of extreme disloyalty to the state in any democratic dispensation.

Wherever sycophants prevail, meritocracy retreats as a direct consequence. The situation breeds mediocrity with catastrophic consequences for effective national development. Sycophants probably urged IBB to annul the June 12 Presidential elections in 1992. They may

Akunyili supported Obasanjo's tenure elongation project; rabidly defended the rape of the electoral process in 2007, and proceeded to accept appointment in a government with a questionable mandate. The same person now wants to be taking seriously for preaching the virtues of political decency to her peers in the political class of infamy.

While treachery may be too strong a word to describe her political 'rebellion', like Obasanjo, she also has her credibility problems. Was she emboldened by privileged information garnered on the degree of the President's incapacitation? Was she scheming for an even bigger role in government once the Vice President becomes the President?

Akunyili's motives may be questionable, but we cannot ignore afford to ignore her message in our quest for effective national development. Loyalty to the constitution must be superior to our allegiance to individuals it empowers. We need to be vigilant in that respect.

That explains why the belated solidarity visit of former leaders, and eminent Nigerians to the VP, last week hardly resonated with me. The same people were deafening in their silence when OBJ embarked on his third term folly and proceeded to foist a sick presidential candidate on us in 2007! If they had shown the same commitment to democratic values back then, perhaps we would not be at this sorry pass today. But all that now belongs to history.

For now, as the politicians in the NASS and the FEC, condemned by destiny to navigate our present constitutional crises strewn with lethal Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) meet this week, my prayer is that they exhibit sufficient decorum, and patriotism. They must overcome primordial sentiments in the collective national interest.

INTERNATIONAL

Egypt arrests Muslim Brotherhood leaders in raid

EGYPTIAN security forces arrested several leaders of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood in a pre-dawn swoop yesterday, ratcheting up pressure on the Islamists ahead of elections this year.

In a series of raids carried out across the country, 13 members of the Brotherhood were rounded up including its deputy chief, Mahmud Ezzat, who was taken from his Cairo home, the group's lawyer said.

Senior Brotherhood members Essam Erian and Abdel Rahman el-Berr were also detained, lawyer Abdel Moneim Abdel Maksud said in a statement posted on the group's website.

The attorney, citing initial reports, said 10 other Brotherhood members were arrested in other raids, including in the coastal city of Alexandria in the north, the southern province of Asyut and the Nile Delta.

He said the group was still trying to determine exactly how many of its members were rounded up.

"This campaign of arrests is unjustified and we expect that more people have been arrested as Brotherhood lawyers are still receiving the names of those detained from the various provinces," Maksud's statement said.

A security official who declined to be named, confirmed the arrests in a brief statement to AFP, saying those rounded up "are accused of membership in an outlawed group."

The Brotherhood said it would not be deterred from its drive for greater political freedom.

"These arrests will not deter (the Brotherhood) from the path they have chosen," the Islamist group said.

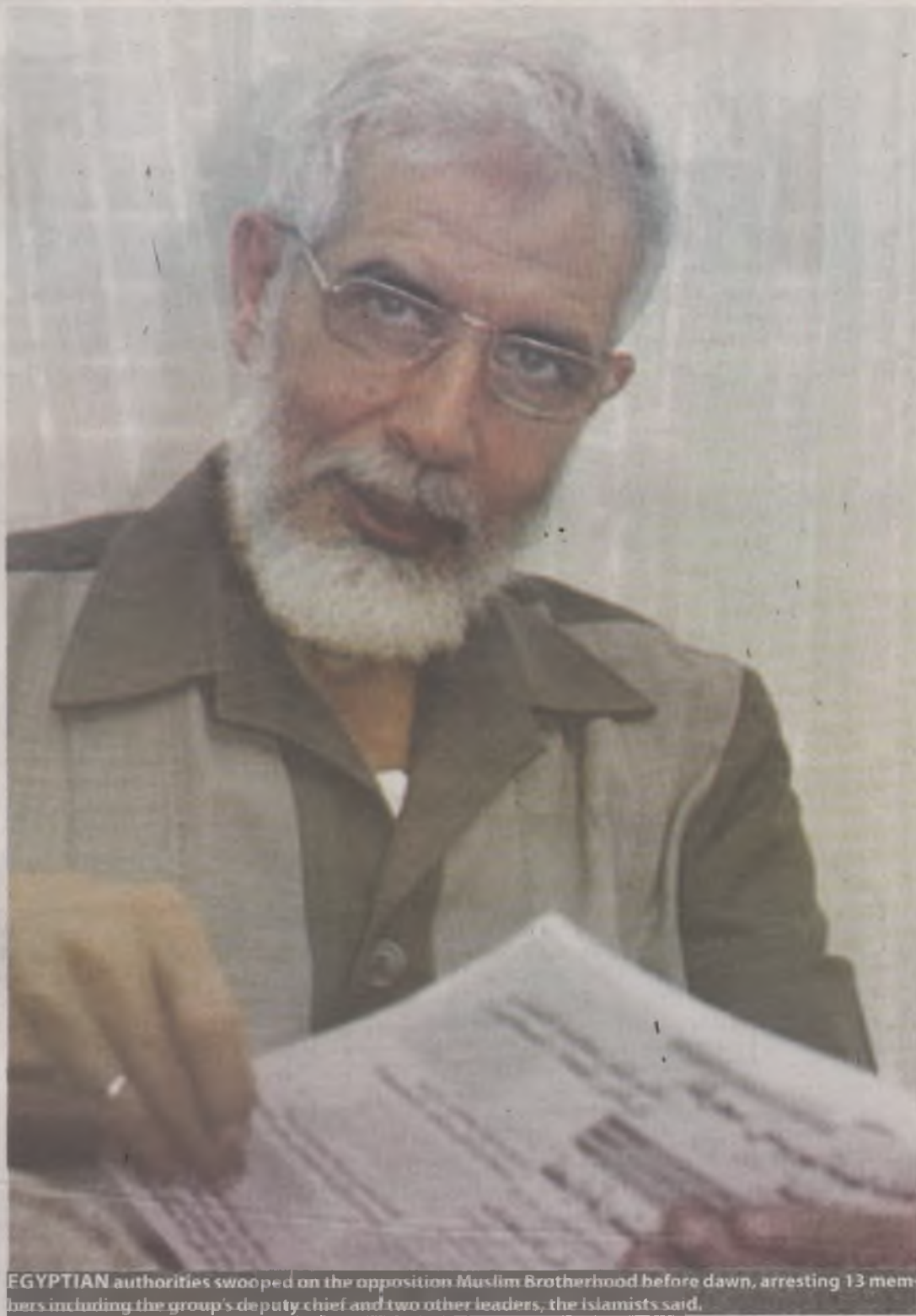
It said the Brotherhood would "continue in their struggle by all peaceful means to secure freedoms, confront corruption and battle oppression."

The group's statement suggested that the arrests were linked "to the political activity expected in Egypt ahead of parliamentary and presidential elections."

Egypt is due to elect parliament's upper house, or Shura Council, in April while elections for the lower house are expected to take place some time in autumn, and presidential elections are scheduled for next year.

The Islamists hold a fifth of the seats in parliament after fielding candidates as independents in the 2005 legislative polls.

Authorities frequently crack down on the officially outlawed but tolerated Brotherhood, Egypt's main opposition group.



EGYPTIAN authorities swooped on the opposition Muslim Brotherhood before dawn, arresting 13 members including the group's deputy chief and two other leaders, the Islamists said.

Ivorian ex-rebels demand dismantling of Gbagbo's militia

A former rebel group in Ivory Coast yesterday demanded the dismantling of militias loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo, in line with the latest peace accord.

Leaders of the New Forces (FN), which has controlled the north of the country since a foiled coup against Gbagbo in September 2002, issued their demand after a meeting in their central headquarters at Bouake.

FN leader and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro was absent, since he had been talking at the end of last week to Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore, who is "facilitator" in the long drawn-out Ivorian crisis.

Chad leader in Sudan for bid to boost ties

CHADIAN President Idriss Deby Itno paid a "historic" visit yesterday to Khartoum, in a bid to seal a thaw in ties and boost efforts to bring peace to Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir greeted Deby at Khartoum airport on the start of a visit expected to help seal last month's accord normalising ties which are essential to peace in Darfur. "This is a historic visit," Sudan's Foreign Minister Deng Alor told reporters at the airport.

"I think it is going to promote relations between the two countries. We have been trying to improve relations between Chad and Sudan. I think this visit is a testimony to what we have been doing and we hope to see a lot of issues being discussed and

resolved," he added.

Chad has long accused Sudan of supporting rebels seeking to oust the government, while Khartoum has charged Njamena with backing ethnic minority rebels in the western region of Darfur.

But the two neighbours also agreed in mid-January to deploy a joint force on their border, in a move aimed at ending the presence of rebels on each other's territory and stemming their activity, as part of normalisation efforts.

Chad and Sudan had in the past signed similar agreements but these accords were never implemented. "This time it seems serious. They both need it right now," a diplomat told AFP last month on condition of anonymity.

Rwandan opposition figure arrested for genocide

A Rwandan opposition figure who returned from exile last month was arrested at the weekend to serve a 19-year prison term handed down by a local tribunal trying genocide suspects, police said yesterday.

Joseph Ntawangundi, an aide to the leader of the Unified Democratic Party (FDU), had been convicted in absentia for genocide by one of the grassroots courts known as gacaca in Rwanda's eastern Ngoma province.

"He was arrested Saturday on an arrest warrant issued by a gacaca and dated 2007," police spokesman Eric Kayiranga told AFP.

"He was sentenced to 19 years prison in absentia in 2007," Ntawangundi and FDU leader

Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza returned home in mid-January to register their party ahead of presidential elections set for August in which Ingabire plans to run.

The FDU protested that Ntawangundi was not in the country during the 1994 genocide that left some 800,000 dead.

"During the genocide Mr Joseph Ntawangundi was doing two months of training in Sweden for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Shortly after that he returned to Kenya," Ingabire said in a statement on her party's website.

"There is no way he could have been in the place where he is supposed to have committed this alleged crime," added Ingabire, a critic of the gacaca courts.

FOUNDATION STONE CEREMONY AND FLAG-OFF OF YOUTH AGRO-BUSINESS SCHEME WAS PERFORMED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, ALH MAHMUD ALIYU SHINKAFI, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR ZAMFARA STATE, AT EKA FARMS GWASHI, ZAMFARA STATE. ON 2ND FEBURARY 2010:

PICTURES FROM THE EVENTS ARE PRESENTED HERE.



His Excellency, Alhaji Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi, Dalhatun Zamfara delivering his speech at the ceremony , beside him is the Hon. Commissioner Min. of Youth Development and skills Acquisition, Alhaji Kabiru Moyi B/Magaji.



Dr Isyaku Muhammad of the MDG office delivering the senior Special Assistant to the president on MDGs Hajia Amina zubair's speech at the occasion.



Gov Mahmuda Aliyu Shinkafi unveiling the Plaque to flag off the Zamfara state youth Agro Business scheme in Gwashi, right to the Gov is the Chief management consultant, Arch A.A Gusau while to his left is Dr Isyaku Muhammad of the MDGs



His Excellency, Gov Alh Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi giving forms for admission of the first set of youths for the scheme from Bukkuyum Emirate to the Emir of Bukkuyum in whose domain the Gwashi farm is located in the middle is Dr Isyaku Muhammad who represented the SSAP MDGs.



His Excellency, Gov Alh Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi Dallatun Zamfara laying the foundation stone of the Zamfara state youth Agro Business Scheme (at Gwashi Bukkuyum L/Govt)



Fattened European Cows for Artificial Insemination were also on Display of the ceremony.



His Excellency, Gov Alh Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi inspecting site of crop irrigation on the farm. On his right is the commissioner for Youth Dev & skills Acquisition, Alh kabir Moyi B/Magaji while on his left is the chief management consultant Arch A.A Gusau.



Agriculture Inputs , fertilizer, insecticide herbicide and seed being displayed by public and private companies during the ceremony.



Poultry farming is also one of the courses to be taught of the centre.



Horticultural seedlings on displayed at the farm during the ceremony.

**Sponsored by the
CHIEF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT,
OF ZAMFARA STATE AGRO BUSINESS SCHEME
(A. I. Development Services Ltd. Gusau)**

International

Yas: UAE island of leisure and pleasure

By Aisha Umar who was in UAE

UNITED Arab Emirates has been able to accomplish Yas Island, one of the wishes of UAE former president late Shiekh Zayed who conceived of the idea of an Island devoted to the sport of speed. It is now currently being developed with the most up to date technology. It is a natural island measuring 7.5km by 6.5km.

Yas Island city is a \$40 billion project opened to everyone who wants to live in, a place full of leisure facilities and close to the fast lane. However, acquiring a house at Yas Island does not give one citizenship of UAE and does not open room for participation in politics no matter how long an individual stays. Marrying a UAE citizen does not also open anyone to having UAE citizenship.

The Yas Hotel, Abu Dhabi, is one of the main architectural features of the ambitious Yas Marina Development. Sitting on Abu Dhabi's Grand Prix circuit, this distinctive hotel is designed to embody aesthetics associated with speed and spectacle.

New York architects, Asymptote Architecture, have worked closely with designers Jestico + Whiles and Richardson Sadeki to create this iconic structure. Visitors will be initially struck by the engineering feat that has been undertaken to create the incredible Gridshell.

This 219 metre expanse of sweeping steel and 5,096 diamond shaped glass panels provides a 'veil' that drapes over the two hotel towers, linked by a bridge that crosses the Grand Prix circuit. The optical effect is stunning, reflecting thousands of coloured lights against the surrounding sky, sea and desert landscape.

The Main Entrance (02) brings visitors into the heart of the circuit, passing the Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management building (03) before going under the track to the area behind the Main Grandstand (04) which accommodates almost 7000 spectators opposite the Pit Building (05). The Pit Building has 40 garages for teams and officials and is surmounted by exclusive hospitality facilities. The Team Buildings, which house racing team staff and drivers, are immediately behind while the circuit Medical Centre (12) is at the western end.

Patrons enjoying the spectacular view from the West Grandstand (07) will be part of another world first: the run-off for cars which fail to negotiate the tight turn at the end of the long straight passes directly



YAS Marina circuit

“Yas Island city is a \$40 billion project opened to everyone who wants to live in a place full of leisure facilities and close to the fast lane. However, acquiring a house at Yas Island does not give one citizenship of UAE and does not open room for participation in politics no matter how long an individual stays.”

underneath them!

In fact every seat on the circuit has a very special view. Spectators in the North Grandstand (15) will enjoy an arena atmosphere at the hairpin, while those in the South Grandstand (09) have one of the greatest panoramas in motorsport, looking out over the 500 room, 5-star The Yas Hotel (11), the Marina itself and the Yacht Club (10).

The seating on top of the Support Pit Building (08) will not only allow spectators to see the support race action up close but take in a broad sweep of the circuit including critical turns around the Marina.

While everyone at the circuit will feel like a VIP, the 60m

solar powered Sun Tower (13) is reserved for VVIPs. The Driving School Building (14), Drag Racing Centre (16), Maintenance Building (17), Karting Centre (18) and Business Park (19) will be busy year-round with access via the North Entrance (20)

Yas Hotel was opened in November 2009, The Yas Hotel, operated by Aldar Hotels & Hospitality, is the first hotel in the world to span a Grand Prix circuit, hosting the inaugural 2009 Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Offering 499 luxuriously appointed guest rooms, international cuisine in 8 restaurants and pioneering design and architecture, The Yas Hotel will host several illustrious events in its

first year, ranging from fashion to sports on a global scale. Located on Yas Island, The Yas Hotel is 10 minutes drive from Abu Dhabi airport, 15 minutes from Abu Dhabi's National Exhibition Centre and 50 minutes from Dubai Marina.

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is set to open to the public in 2010. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi pays tribute to Ferrari's brand essence: excellence, performance, technical innovation and innate Italian heritage with attractions, facilities and food & beverage outlets that offer guests a unique sensory experience, bringing to life the Ferrari story in a way never seen before. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is a must-visit destination for Ferrari fans and families from across the world. Sun Tower, a VIP Hos-

pitality about 60 metres above the ground, offers guests a view over the whole racetrack and the Yas Marina Yacht Club offers another great view - if you can afford it, you bring your yacht and watch the race from the huge yacht marina.

Yas Marina Circuit is part of an impressive project on Yas Island: a Ferrari theme park, a Warner Brothers theme park, a mega mall, golf courses and numerous First Class Hotels are developing.

Yas Marina Circuit is the gem amongst many spectacular projects on Yas Island. On November 1st, 2009, the first Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix started there. It's clear that this racetrack is unique in the world.

International



IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, wears eye protection goggles as he visits an exhibition of Iran's laser science, in Tehran, Iran.

Iran moves closer to nuke warhead capacity

IRAN moved closer to being able to produce nuclear warheads yesterday with formal notification that it will enrich uranium to higher levels, even while insisting that the move was meant only to provide fuel for its research reactor.

Iranian envoy Ali Asghar Soltanieh told The Associated Press that he informed the International Atomic Energy Agency of the decision to enrich at least some of its low-enriched uranium stockpile to 20 percent, considered the threshold value for highly enriched uranium.

Soltanieh, who represents Iran at the Vienna-based IAEA, also said that the U.N. agency's inspectors now overseeing enrichment to low levels would be able to stay on site to fully monitor the process. And he blamed world powers for Iran's decision, asserting that it was their fault that a plan that foresaw Russian and French involvement in supplying the

research reactor had failed.

"Until now, we have not received any response to our positive logical and technical proposal," he said. "We cannot leave hospitals and patients desperately waiting for radio isotopes" being produced at the Tehran reactor and used in cancer treatment, he added.

Western powers blame Iran for rejecting an internationally endorsed plan to take Iranian low enriched uranium, further enriching it and return it in the form of fuel rods for the reactor — and in broader terms for turning down other overtures meant to diminish concerns about its nuclear agenda.

At a news conference with French Defense Minister Herve Morin, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates praised President Barack Obama's attempts to engage the Islamic Republic diplomatically and chided Tehran for not reciprocating.

"No U.S. president has reached out more sincerely, and frankly taken more political risk, in an effort to try to create an opening for engagement for Iran," he said. "All these initiatives have been rejected." Israel, Iran's most implacable foe, said Iran's enrichment plans are "additional proof of the fact that Iran is ridiculing the entire world."

"The right response is to impose decisive and permanent sanctions on Iran," said Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had already announced Sunday that his country would significantly enrich at least some of the country's stockpile of uranium.

Still, yesterday's notification to the IAEA was important as formal confirmation of the plan, particularly because of the rash of conflicting signals sent in recent months by Iranian officials on the issue.

Although material for the fissile core of a nuclear warhead must be enriched to a level of 90 percent or more, just getting its stockpile to the 20 percent mark would be a major step for the country's nuclear program.

While enriching to 20 percent would take about one year, using up to 2,000 centrifuges at Tehran's underground Natanz facility, any next step, moving from 20 to 90 percent, would take only half a year and between 500-1,000 centrifuges.

Achieving the 20-percent level "would be going most of the rest of the way to weapon-grade uranium," said David Albright, whose Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security tracks suspected proliferators.

Soltanieh declined to say how much of Iran's stockpile — now estimated at 1.8 tons — would be enriched. Nor did he say when the process would begin.

Abbas mulls indirect talks with Israel

PALESTINIAN president Mahmud Abbas has agreed in principle to indirect talks with Israel under US mediation but has requested a number of guarantees, a Palestinian official said yesterday.

The latest US proposal for renewing peace talks suspended more than a year ago would have the two sides hold three months of indirect negotiations and have Israel make several goodwill gestures to the Palestinians.

The Palestinians would continue to require a complete freeze of Israeli settlements before any direct negotiations but not as a precondition to indirect talks.

"These contacts will be aimed at creating a better climate and reaching an understanding on the borders of the Palestinian state, and they will begin on February 20," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"They will last three months, with the Americans negotiating directly with the two sides after determining a timetable and agreed-upon mechanisms for implementation."

The official said US Middle East envoy George Mitchell would shuttle between the two sides, either travelling between Jerusalem and the West Bank political capital of Ramallah or between separate rooms at a hotel or other location.

Under the proposal, Israel would implement a five-point initiative proposed by Mitchell that would include the freeing of Palestinian prisoners and a halt to Israeli incursions in Palestinian cities, the official said.

Yemen's al-Qaida deputy chief urges new attacks

THE deputy chief of al-Qaida's offshoot in Yemen has called for attacks on Saudi Arabia and US interests in the region.

Said al-Shihri urged followers in an audio message posted yesterday on the Internet "to attack the interests of America and the Crusaders, and their agents ... especially the Saudi" rulers who he claimed are waging a proxy war against Muslims.

It was al-Shihri's first appearance since the December 24 airstrike by Yemeni forces that targeted him and other al-Qaida figures in the Arabian Peninsula country. He sought to reassure al-Qaida's leadership in Afghanistan that they are well despite the attack. Al-Shihri also congratulated Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab for his "blessed" attempt to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas.

Palestinian municipal elections set for July 17

THE Palestinian government in the West Bank has announced plans to hold municipal elections on July 17.

It will be the first election in the Palestinian territories since

the Islamic militant Hamas wrested control of Gaza from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, leaving the Western-backed president in control only of the West Bank.

Yesterday's Cabinet statement says elections would also be held in Gaza, but it's unlikely Hamas would agree. Hamas was not immediately available for comment. Presidential and legislative

elections were to have taken place in January, but are on hold indefinitely because of the political split. The municipal elections are seen as a low-risk popularity test for Abbas' Fatah movement.

International

Pakistan: Militants targeting Americans arrested

AUTHORITIES arrested six suspected Taliban militants with a suicide vest and hand grenades allegedly on their way yesterday to attack a five-star hotel and kill Americans in Pakistan's cultural capital, said police.

The eastern city of Lahore has suffered a spate of bombings at markets and security installations in recent years as the Taliban have expanded attacks beyond their main sanctuary in the northwest. Militants have also targeted hotels and restaurants in other parts of Pakistan popular with Westerners.

The militants arrested yesterday on the outskirts of Lahore included a 14-year-old boy and a prayer leader from Pakistan's Khyber tribal area near the Afghan border, said police official Zulfikar Hameed. The prayer leader was wearing a vest packed with explosives. They told police they were targeting Americans at the Pearl Continental hotel, he said.

"We think they were on their way to launch the attack," said Hameed. "They told us that Americans are responsible for the death of every innocent Muslim in the so-called war on terror."

Police seized 26 hand grenades and five detonators from the militants, who were traveling by car and motorcycle, said Hameed.

Despite their intentions, the men didn't know for certain whether any Americans were staying at the hotel, he said.



AN Afghan policeman conducting a search.

Taliban defiant as Afghans flee ahead of assault



US Marines check their gear at a company operation base in Helmand province.

NATO commanders urged the Taliban to surrender as troops dug in yesterday for a major assault on a key insurgent stronghold in southern Afghanistan, sending thousands of residents fleeing.

The Taliban remained defiant as civilians of the Marjah plain accused the militia, which is leading an eight-year insurgency,

of massing fighters and arms for a bloody battle in Helmand province expected to start this week.

Taliban fighters "prefer to stay and fight," Yousuf Ahmadi, a purported Taliban spokesman, told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

"Afghan and foreign forces have come to the Marjah area and

our mujahdeen forces are also in the area firing rockets at them," he said.

"We can see three possibilities in the fight for our country -- we might be killed, wounded or arrested. We are ready to fight. We will also use different tactics and we will not give up."

The Marjah operation -- dubbed Mushtarak ("Together") -- is the biggest push since US President Barack Obama announced a new surge of troops to Afghanistan, and military officials say it is the biggest since the 2001 US-led invasion.

It is seen as pivotal to a new counter-insurgency strategy, which meshes military operations with the civil and political aims of establishing governance and security as the basis for development.

Brigadier General Eric Tremblay, spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, called on the militants to lay down their arms, and said the aim of the operation was to "separate the insurgents from the population".

At least six dead in China bus accident - Report

AT least six people were killed and more than 30 injured in rugged southwestern China yesterday when a bus plunged down a 300-metre (990-foot) valley, state media reported. The bus collided with another vehicle on a highway in the Guangxi region and rolled down into the valley, the official Xinhua news agency reported. It said of those who were injured, 16 were in serious condition. The bus had been carrying 51 people.

China is in the midst of its massive annual travel rush for the Lunar New Year, in which more than 200 million people across the country

were expected to journey to their hometowns for holiday celebrations. This year's Lunar New Year, the nation's most important holiday, falls on Sunday.

The accident occurred on a highway linking the provincial capital of Nanning with the city of Hechi, the report said. The driver of the other vehicle, an SUV, was seriously injured, it added.

China's roads are among the most dangerous in the world, with nearly 73,500 people dying in road accidents in 2008, or just over 200 fatalities per day, according to police statistics.

Avalanche kills 17 Indian soldiers in Kashmir

SEVENTEEN Indian soldiers were killed yesterday in an avalanche that slammed into a group of 70 combat troops at a high-altitude warfare training camp in Kashmir, the army said yesterday.

Army spokesman Colonel Vineet Sood said the avalanche struck in the Khelenmarg mountains, close to the Kashmiri ski

resort of Gulmarg, which has become a major draw for foreign, off-piste adventure skiers. "We have 17 dead and 17 injured. No one is missing and rescue teams have returned to their bases," Sood told AFP. The soldiers were from the Indian army's High Altitude Warfare School, which houses around 450 troops.

International



PRESIDENTIAL candidate Viktor Yanukovich attends a concert in Kiev.

Yanukovich, monitors, press Ukraine PM to concede

UKRAINIAN opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich pressed rival Yulia Tymoshenko to concede defeat yesterday after a narrow victory in a presidential election that could tilt the ex-Soviet state back toward Moscow.

Adding to pressure on the fiery Tymoshenko, international monitors declared the election an "impressive display" of democracy and urged her to shake hands with her opponent.

With 98.4 percent of votes counted, official figures gave ex-mechanic Yanukovich, whose party is allied to the Kremlin's United Russia, a margin of 2.8 percentage points over Prime Minister Tymoshenko, meaning she could not catch him up.

Tymoshenko, who called supporters onto the streets in the 2004 "Orange Revolution" to overturn a Yanukovich election win that was ruled fraudulent, was uncharacteristically quiet on Monday. She put off a planned news conference until today.

Her supporters alleged numerous violations of electoral law in Sunday's runoff vote but election officials and monitors said they had not seen serious faults.

The international observer team headed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called on Ukraine's feuding political leaders to "listen to the people's verdict."

The OSCE verdict was tantamount to a call for Tymoshenko

to accept the fight was over.

"Normally for the good of the nation the one who loses shakes hands with the one who wins," Assen Agov, head of a NATO monitoring delegation, told a news conference. She seemed likely to make clear her position today. Western investors and Ukraine's powerful neighbor Russia reacted cautiously to the election outcome, aware that a prolonged period of uncertainty over the result could hurt the country's sickly economy even more.

The hryvnia currency traded little changed from last week at 8.06/8.08 to the dollar by 1115 GMT, while prices for insuring Ukrainian debt against default were steady.

UK's Brown vows more cancer care as race heats up

YOU know an election is coming when British politicians suddenly promise sweeping improvements to the National Health Service, a simultaneous source of national pride and worry.

Britons are proud of their free, universal medical care, but worry that long waiting lists and underfunded hospitals can damage their prospects should they fall ill.

Enter Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who announced plans yesterday to provide home care and personalized nursing for cancer sufferers, a program he said could help about 1.6 million patients in the next five years.

"These bold plans for reform will be part of our ambition to create an NHS which focuses far more on prevention and early intervention, on keeping people healthy," Brown said.

The prime minister said the program could be funded by more than 2 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) the NHS could save by managing long-term conditions better and reducing the number of hospital admissions for acute

conditions. The Conservative Party's health spokesman, Andrew Lansley, accused Brown of grandstanding.

"Yet again Gordon Brown is making promises on the NHS which he knows he cannot keep," Lansley said. "He says that he will provide cancer sufferers with their own specialist nurse, but the extra money he's providing would only represent 30 minutes of a nurse's time per patient per year."

Brown's cancer announcement comes at a promising juncture in his re-election campaign. Long far behind in opinion surveys, he has been edging up, raising the possibility that the election may be closer than expected.

It is a curious (and nasty) pre-campaign campaign: No election date has been set — the vote must be held by June 3, with most insiders predicting early May.

Both party leaders are starting to act very much like candidates, with Conservative chief David Cameron yesterday launching a blistering, personal attack on Brown.

Aid groups launch Haiti mass vaccination campaign

AID groups say they are launching an emergency vaccination campaign for 140,000 people in Haiti to protect them against measles and other diseases.

The campaign is being conducted by the international Red Cross federation, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Haitian Health Ministry.

A Red Cross statement says the campaign will focus on the

capital Port-au-Prince because the disease risk to earthquake victims there is greatest.

The federation said it expects to start by vaccinating about 1,800 people yesterday at a camp on the old airport runway and then move on to hundreds of other camps over the next two weeks.

Vaccinations will also be against diphtheria and tetanus.

Costa Rica elects 1st woman president in landslide

COSTA Ricans have elected their first woman president as the ruling party candidate won in a landslide after campaigning to continue free market policies in Central America's most stable nation.

With most of the votes from Sunday's election counted, Laura Chinchilla held a 22-point lead over her closest rival. Her 47 percent share of the vote was well beyond the 40 percent needed to avoid a run-off.

The 50-year-old protege of the current president, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Oscar Arias, promised to pursue the same economic policies that recently brought the country into a trade pact with the U.S. and opened commerce with China.

"Today we are making history," said Chinchilla, who will be the fifth Latin American woman to serve as president when she takes office in May. "The Costa

Rican people have given me their confidence, and I will not betray it."

The closest contender, Otton Solis of the Citizens Action Party, got 25 percent of the votes. He and the other main rival, Libertarian Otto Guevara, quickly conceded defeat.

It was unclear, however, whether Chinchilla's National Liberation Party would gain a majority in congress.

Analyst Heather Berkman of the Eurasia Group said coalition building without a majority would likely delay or derail controversial fiscal reforms to shore up government finances and energy deregulation.

The third-place candidate, Guevara, congratulated Chinchilla as "our president," but he also pointed out the new political muscle of his tax-bashing Libertarian Movement Party.



LAURA Chinchilla, center, candidate for the National Liberation Party, accompanied by members of her party, greets supporters after presidential elections in San Jose.



MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE COUNCIL OF NIGERIA

Federal Statutory Body established by Act. 11 of 2003

8, Harvey Road, (Block D) P.M.B. 1048, Yaba, Nigeria.
(Tel: 01-7745280, 5870565, Tel / Fax: 01-863368) E-mail: medlabcon@yahoo.com

TO ALL EMPLOYERS OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS, TECHNICIANS AND ASSISTANTS

ILLEGAL PRACTICE OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES IN NIGERIA

The Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria wishes to bring to the notice of ALL EMPLOYERS and stakeholders in the provision of quality healthcare services in the country the following information and notice.

That pursuant to section 4(a)(b)(f)(h), 18(2), 22(8)(9) of the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria Act, 2003 (the Act), it is illegal to engage the services of Medical Laboratory Scientists, Medical Laboratory Technicians and Medical Laboratory Assistants not registered with the Council or operate **Medical Laboratory Facility** not accredited and registered by the Council.

In this respect, all employers are required to:

1. Ensure that staff designated as Medical Laboratory Scientist, Laboratory Technician and Laboratory Assistant regularize their registrations with the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria.
2. Ensure that their employees who are Medical Laboratory Scientists, carry current annual Licenses to practice issued by the Council.
3. Ensure that Medical Technicians and Assistants in their employment carry identity tags issued by the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria.
4. Ensure that Medical Laboratory facilities in their establishments, organizations and states are registered with the Council in accordance with Section 4(h) of the Act.
5. Forward the names and status (Associates/Fellows) of all Medical Laboratory Scientists, Medical Laboratory Technicians and Assistants in their employment to the Council at its registered address for verification.

While soliciting Employers' support to streamline the Practice and check quackery, Council would however not shy away from applying the law to defaulters.

Inspectorate department of Council will be visiting health institutions/ facilities from time to time to monitor and ensure compliance of the provisions of the Medical Laboratory Science Council Act, 2003.

Signed:

Lady E.U. Okonkwo
Registrar

&

Secretary to the Governing Board



NIGERIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING STANDARD NO. 10 ON ACCOUNTING BY BANKS AND NON-BANK FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (PART 1)

WAIVER OF THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH 55 FOR 2009 FINANCIAL YEAR ONLY

The Governing Council of the Nigerian Accounting Standards Board (NASB) hereby announces the waiver of the provisions of paragraph 55 of Statement of Accounting Standard (SAS) No.10: Accounting by Banks and Non-Bank Financial Institutions (Part 1) for financial statements ending on or before December 31, 2009 only.

The said paragraph states that **"Banks should make general loan loss provisions of at least 1 % of risk assets not specifically provided for, in addition to specific provisions, to provide against the as yet unidentified losses which are known to exist in any portfolio using a systematic method which should be consistently followed from period to period."**

The waiver of the requirement of one per cent general provision for performing loans for banks was necessitated by a request from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

In approving the request, the governing council of the NASB relied on CBN's explanation of the recently concluded special examination of Deposit Money Banks by the CBN/Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) which ensured that full provisions were made for all impairments by banks on a case by case basis.

The NASB wishes to emphasize that this waiver is strictly for financial statements ending on or before December 31, 2009 only.

Signed:
Management



WORLD BANK JOB VACANCIES

The World Bank, Nigeria Country Office, requires the services of highly organized and energized professionals, capable of operating effectively and discretely in a very demanding, fast-paced and culturally diverse environment, to fill the vacant position of Social Protection Specialist – Youth Employment.

Job Title: Environmental Specialist
Location: Abuja Country Office
Duration: 2 year Term Appointment
Grade: GF/GG

Background

Sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of around 782 million people in 47 countries, is home to 36 of the world's poorest countries. Making headway against poverty in sub-Saharan Africa continues to present the world with its most formidable development challenge. The Africa Region is committed to working with Africans and other development partners to make faster progress toward the MDGs, particularly cutting poverty levels in half by 2015. The Region is comprised of approximately 1750 staff members of whom over 60% are based in the Region's 37 field offices.

Nigeria: With a population of 148 million people, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa and accounts for 47 percent of West Africa's population. Nigeria is also the second largest economy in Sub Sahara Africa and accounts for 41 percent of the region's GDP. Development partner coordination in Nigeria is strong. A Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for FY10-13 has been prepared by the World Bank, DFID, USAID and AIDB to increase development effectiveness and its main components are driven by the Government's 7-Point Agenda. In addition to support in response to the global financial crisis, the partnership will focus on three themes of: (i) improving governance; (ii) maintaining non-oil growth; and (iii) promoting human development. The International Development Agency (IDA) is the Bank's interest-free lending arm for the poorest countries. The Nigeria portfolio currently supports twenty eight IDA projects and 2 GEF grants. Bank commitments have tripled from \$1.5 billion in FY05 to \$4.5 billion in early FY10. The Bank is the largest development partner in Nigeria and the country's portfolio is the largest in terms of net commitments in the Bank's Africa Region. The strong focus on the current portfolio is on project implementation for results. The country portfolio cuts across a range of sectors including: Infrastructure (water supply, energy/energy and transport); Human Development (health, HIV/AIDS, education and social projects), Agriculture and Rural Development; Urban Development, Public Sector Governance, Financial and Private Sector and so on.

The strategic thrust of the Environment and Natural Resources group includes sustainable land, water, forest, coastal and marine management; climate change adaptation and mitigation and related disaster risk management; environmental governance; and ensuring sound environmental design and implementation of all projects and programs in the Africa region, including addressing environmental issues in key natural resource extraction and large infrastructure projects, and protecting regional and global public goods.

The core values guiding our work are passion for our mission of sustainable development and poverty reduction, putting the needs of the client at the center of all our activities, trust and respect as a common currency, intellectual rigor and curiosity, honesty and integrity, teamwork, openness to learning and the courage to admit we do not always have the answer.

Duties and Accountabilities:

A good understanding of environmental issues is essential to provide high quality support to our client countries in the sustainable development agenda. An Environmental Specialist is needed to join the World Bank Environment and Natural Resources Management Unit, located in Abuja, Nigeria. The Environmental Specialist primary duties are to help bring environment dimensions into the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and into the overall dialogue with the Government on various areas of Bank involvement. He/she would contribute in particular to mainstreaming environment into the economic and sectoral development programs. This assignment is a two-year term position with a scheduled start date of April 1, 2010. The Environmental Specialist will be under the general supervision of the Sector Manager of AFTEN. The duties and responsibilities shall include (but not limited to):

- Participate in the development and review of Bank social and environmental guidelines and policies;
- Prepare environmental and social screening checklists for project categorization;
- Take part in the identification and preparation of sectoral projects with potentially significant environmental and social impacts, and which are likely to be categorized A or B;
- Participate in project preparation and appraisal missions to identify, assess and document key environmental issues; utilizing technical background and experience to recommend mitigating measures;
- Take responsibility for a variety of operational tasks (Project categorization, environmental and social impact assessments, project design, procurement);
- Participate in policy dialogue with government in the area of climate change and environmental sustainability;
- Draft Terms of References for Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA); Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF); stand-alone environmental studies; ESIA Executive Summaries for Category A projects and prepare and/or review the environmental sections of studies, ISDS, project preparation and appraisal reports;
- Review and evaluate studies and documents from other sectors to ensure mainstreaming of environmental and associated cross-cutting issues;
- Participate in training programs for the mainstreaming of environmental and associated cross-cutting issues and the integration of environmental issues in Country Partnership Strategies (CAS) Papers, policy dialogue with Government;
- Evaluate the implementation of environmental management plans during project supervisions, monitor progress achieved in integrating environmental concerns in Bank operations and report on how the borrowers have effectively used Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) to mitigate environmental degradation;
- Represent the Bank at environmental and natural resource management seminars and conferences and participate in project portfolio management (procurement, supervision, mid-term review, etc).

Selection Criteria:

- Have a minimum of a Master's degree in environmental engineer, natural resource management, or economics;
- Have a broad understanding of institutional and policy as well as technical issues;
- Have had at least five years of practical experience in project development and AAA;
- Familiar with World Bank safeguard policies;
- Conversant with environmental laws and covenants in Nigeria;
- Familiar with environmental institutions and their roles in environmental governance in Nigeria
- Experience of environment and natural resource management;
- Experience on climate change a strong advantage;
- Exhibit trustworthiness, integrity, dedication, perseverance, and a "can-do" attitude;
- Demonstrated record of independent analytical and research support work;
- Fluency in English, including demonstrated report writing skills;
- Very good time management skills and ability to multi-task and work under time pressure;
- Demonstrated attention to detail and quality assurance;
- Ability to work flexibly on a range of assignments, and adjust to and prioritize a variety of complex evolving tasks;
- Ability to work effectively in a team-oriented, multi-cultural environment;
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to develop effective relations within and outside the Bank, and to promote collaboration within the team to meet Department and Regional objectives;
- Have a problem solving approach and understand well the constraints of working within tight budgets;
- Sound understanding of information technology, with experience in applying Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) as a minimum skill set.

Electronic Applications:

For the full position description and complete selection criteria, qualified candidates are requested to visit and submit the electronic application at www.worldbank.org/careers. Once on the site, candidates should follow link to access **job number 100280** and submit their application online. **Paper applications will not be considered.** The closing date for receipt of your electronic application is close of business on **March 2, 2010**. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Qualified male and female candidates of diverse background (gender, religious, ethnic) are encouraged to apply.

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

OUR CLIENTS, AN UPCOMING ULTRA MODERN COMMERCIAL & SECURITY PRINTING PRESS WITH OFFICE IN THE NORTH CENTRAL ZONE, SEEKS TO RECRUIT THE FOLLOWING INTO DYNAMIC EXECUTIVE POSITIONS.

1. PRODUCTION MANAGER

- Must have a BSC or HND in Printing Technology from a prestigious university/polytechnic or must have over 20 years experience in a modern press in a managerial position.
- Must be at least 40 years old and have 10 – 15 years experience in commercial printing.
- Must be conversant with the use of modern printing machines and job processes from –Pre press, Press and Post Press.
- Must also understand and be able to manage work processes through Printing Estimation, Graphics, Computer to Film, Computer to Plate, Direct imaging, Production, and Finishing. **Must also understand job planning details etc.**
- Must have vast knowledge of security printing, large format and heat transfer.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE & PERSONNEL MANAGER

- Must be a graduate of any of the Social Sciences and or ARTS.
- Must have at least 10 years cognate working experience, and at least 5 years as a manager.
- Experience in a functional printing press is an added advantage.
- Membership of and/or training from a recognized Management /HR certified Institute and /or course is an added advantage.

3. SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER

- HND/BSC in marketing or in any business related courses.
- At least 12 years working experience, of which 7 must have been in a printing press, and 4 years as a manager.
- Must be target oriented and computer literate. Knowledge of graphics is an added advantage.

4. FINANCE, PURCHASE & SUPPLY MANAGER:

- Must be a graduate of Accountancy or Economics.
- Must be at least 40 years of age, 12 years working experience, of which 6 years was spent as Head of Accounts.
- Experience in Audit in a commercial setting will be of added advantage.
- Versatile in the use of computer and accounting software.

To apply for any of these positions, send your applications to;

The Recruiter,
PMB 7399
Wuse, Abuja.
Or by Email: itrxn@yahoo.com

(Apply within 2 weeks of this advertisement).

Positions applied for should be written boldly on the top left corner of the envelope.

Vacancies

An International Organization managing a large programme to support the strengthening of the health care system in Nigeria is recruiting qualified professional staff to fill a senior level technical position and a junior/mid level administrative position.

The programme provides technical assistance in health systems strengthening in Nigeria. The programme addresses the financing, governance, operational, and capacity-building constraints that block access to and use of priority population, health, and nutrition services in the country. The programme shares an office with another programme of the same organization and is located in Abuja.

Health Systems Strengthening Liaison Officer: Will provide technical and programmatic oversight of the planning, implementation and monitoring of all project activities. S/he will ensure regular and timely communications with the USAID Mission and other relevant partners in Nigeria. S/he will provide relevant technical guidance to the Ministry of Health and other partners across the six building blocks of the health system. In collaboration with the organization's international headquarters office, will ensure proper financial management of relevant project resources and guarantee timely and well-organized implementation of project activities.

Qualification requirements include a Masters Degree in Public Health or related field; MD or PhD is a plus. Candidate must have 8 or more years of experience in international health, particularly with an emphasis on health systems strengthening, HIV/AIDS and TB. Experience working with large donor-funded projects, in particular USAID programs, is highly desirable.

Health Systems Strengthening Project Assistant: Will support the HSS Liaison Officer and international headquarters staff with all administrative and operations related tasks for the programme. S/he will coordinate in-country logistics for all programme events, assists with programme procurement at the local level, maintains financial and technical reporting systems and prepares reports for headquarters staff, and ensures compliance with both USAID and the organization's financial reporting procedures.

Qualification requirements include a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration or related field plus four or more years of experience in Business Administration and office management. Demonstrated competency in financial management and coordination of events logistics is required. Experience working for an international organization and with USAID programmes is a plus.

To Apply: Please email CVs and cover letters to hssjobs@yahoo.com with the position title specified in the subject line. Closing date for all applications is February 17, 2010.



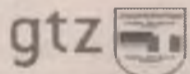
UNITED NIGERIAN TEXTILES PLC

Unaudited Balance Sheet as at	SEP 30, 2009	DEC 31, 2008
	N'000	N'000
FIXED ASSETS	3,863,282	4,238,818
INVESTMENTS	23,631	23,631
NET CURRENT ASSETS	4,019,980	3,163,438
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	7,906,903	7,425,887
PROVISION FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES	795,555	1,565,891
NET ASSETS	4,903,952	5,859,996
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Share capital	421,642	421,642
Capital reserve	4,022,100	4,022,100
General reserve	460,210	1,416,254
	4,903,952	5,859,996

Unaudited Profit & Loss Account for the period ended 30th September	2009	2008
	N'000	N'000
TURNOVER	6,544,669	8,838,424
LOSS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	(956,044)	(659,635)
Taxation	-	-
LOSS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER TAXATION	(956,044)	(659,635)

By order of the Board

Fathu Abdullahi, mni,
Company Secretary



National Automotive Council (NAC)
(Federal Ministry of Commerce & Industry)
In Collaboration with
Federal Ministry of Labour & Productivity
and
German Technical Cooperation (gtz)

Cordially Invites the General Public.

To the Launch of the
CURRICULUM ON AUTOMOTIVE MECHATRONICS
PROGRAMME FOR THE NIGERIA AUTO
INFORMAL SECTOR

(Leading to the Award of Federal Labour Trade Test III, II & I
Certificates in Automotive Mechatronics)

Date: Tuesday, February 16th, 2010
Venue: NICON LUXURY HOTEL, Area 11, Garki Abuja
Time: 9.00am prompt

Corporate Invitees:

- * National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)
- * Industrial Training Fund (ITF)
- * Consumer Protection Council,
- * States Poverty Eradication Agencies, NGOs
- * National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- * Nigerian Automobile Technicians Association (NATA)
- * All Auto Assembly Plants
- * All Automotive Mechanic Trainers
- * Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIOs)
- * Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC)
- * Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE)
- * Auto Sales/Repair outfits
- * Council for the Regulations of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN)
- * Training Centres (Vocational, Tertiary Institutions, Head of Technical Schools - Automobile).
- * NAPEP,

Signed:
Prince Adetokunbo Kayode, SAN
Hon. Minister of Labour & Productivity

Signed:
Engr. Aminu Jalal, FNIM
Director-General, National Automotive Council (NAC)



NATIONAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF NIGERIA

Km 26 Lagos-Badagry Expressway, P.M.B 2003, Ijanikin, Lagos
Tel: 01-8970944, 01-8182614, 01-7413228
Website: www.npmcn.edu.ng E-mail: enquiry@npmcn.edu.ng

Announces

A 5 -DAY WORKSHOP ON

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN MEDICINE

Designed for: Resident Doctors, Medical Officers of Health, Fellows and Other Medical and Dental Practitioners.

Date: Monday 1st March - Friday 5th March, 2010

Time: 8:00am - 6:00pm Daily

Venue: Conference Hall, National Sickle Cell Centre, (Opp. LUTH) Idi-Araba, Lagos.

Course Fees: N25,000.00

Fees which cover Materials and Lunch are payable directly into the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN) Bank Account - Account number 0641030085331 at Union Bank Plc., Idi-Araba, Lagos. NO CASH WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE VENUE OF THE WORKSHOP.

Topics:

- * Definition, Spectrum and types of Health Research
- * Proposal Writing
- * Research Design
- * Clinical Trials - Literature Search / Internet/Medline/Pub. Med. Search
- * Basic Principles and Methods of Writing Papers for Publications.
- * Statistics
- * Writing-up and Defence of Dissertation
- * Computer Appreciation: EPI-INFO Package
- * Faculty-based Group Discussion of Research Proposals
- * Evidence Based Health Care
- * Practical Sessions of Processing of Proposal and Presentation to the College
- * Writing Research Proposals (Planning and Protocol Development)
- * Budget and Sources of Funding for Research

Certificates will be issued to participants at the end of the workshop. Participants should bring Research Topics and Proposals for discussion.

Mode: Non-Residential

Prof. O.E Antia-Obong, FMCPaed
College Registrar

Dr. S.S. Sule, FMCPH
Deputy Registrar (Academic)
E-mail: sssule2002@yahoo.com
Course Co-Ordinator

BUSINESS

0805 1000 536

NITEL sale: BPE shortlists MTN, GLO

•Bids open Feb. 16

By Yunus Abdulhamid

SIX out of 14 prequalified consortia that submitted bids for the acquisition of 75% stake in the Nigeria Telecommunications (NITEL) Plc have been shortlisted by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE).

They are: Brymedia (WA) Ltd; AF21/ Spectrum Consortium; MTN Nigeria Communication Ltd; Globacom Nigeria Ltd; Omen International Ltd (BVI); and New Generation Telecommunications Ltd (formerly Telefonica Consortium).

The opening of financial bids for the privatization of Nigerian Telecommunications Plc (NITEL) and its mobile arm, Mtel, has been scheduled to hold next week Tuesday, February 16, Daily Trust learnt.

The BPE said the six consortia met the deadline for the submission of the technical and financial proposals.

The deadline for the submission of technical and financial proposals was February 5, 2010. Fourteen prospective investors undertook virtual data room on Nitel and Mtel. The investors were MTN Nigeria Communication Ltd; Etisalat Nigeria; Brymedia (WA) Ltd; Finetek.com/Ericsson consortium; Omen International Ltd (BVI); Fugar Technologies and MTI Consortium. Others are Telefonica Consortium; Globacom Nigeria Ltd; Conau Ltd; Dansacom Technologies Ltd; Adison Consulting; AF21/ Spectrum Consortium and Foneama.com.

This is the fifth time the federal government is attempting to sell the once vibrant telecom outfit which had a monopoly of the Nigeria telecom landscape for decades. The fortune of the company has taken a dip in the past years, following deregulation of the sector which saw the emergence of MTN, Globacom among others.

The BPE said the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), as part of the evaluation of the prospective bidders, conducted a 'fit and proper' test on each bidding consortium to participate in the bidding exercise.

The NCC had also advised against allowing major GSM operators like MTN and Globacom with licenses to acquire Mtel alongside NITEL. The commission reasoned that such situation would create low competition which is against the Nigerian telecoms laws.

The 14 consortia that were pre-qualified paid a non-refundable fee of \$25,000 for access to the data room and bidding documents and executed the confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement.

BPE last year invited prospective



BPE boss, Dr. Christopher Anyanwu

investors to apply to acquire either at least 75% equity in the entire NITEL conglomerate or a stake in one or several of its components, namely, SAT-3; domestic fixed line telephony; national fibre-optic transmission backbone; CDMA network; and MTEL (GSM).

Agric Bank to publish names of debtors

THE Nigerian Agricultural, Co-operative and Rural Development Bank Limited (NACRDB) has secured the approval of the Senate to publish names of its debtors owing N5million and above.

Mr Kingsley Ogungbade, an Executive Director of the bank, made the announcement on Monday in Kaduna.

He said some 200 farmers who obtained facilities under the bank's large-scale agricultural loans had refused to pay back.

Ogungbade said the defaulters included corporate organisations and individuals who had been served with warning letters in December 2009 to pay up their loans within 21 days.

He said that over the years, the small-scale farmers were the ones sustaining the bank, due to adequate repayment of loans.

Ogungbade said loan repayment would enable other small-scale farmers to benefit from the bank's facilities.

He said the bank's mandate was to support farmers to ensure food security in the country. (NAN).

BRIEF

3,000 marketers to load fuel from Lagos

By Hamisu Muhammad

THREE thousand independent marketers will between now and end of this month load petrol from the Pipeline and Products Marketing Company (PPMC) depots in Lagos to all parts of the country. PPMC is a distribution and supply arm of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

Treasurer and Communication Adviser to the President of the Independent Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) Danladi Fasali told Daily Trust that under the new agreement with the NNPC the association has now mobilised about 3,000 of its members to load the product from Lagos for distribution to other parts of the country.

Fasali said following the creation of a special task force called 'NNPC War Room' mandated by the Group Managing Director of the NNPC Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo to end the recent petrol scarcity in the country within Seven days, the association has reached a new arrangement with the corporation.

He said under the new arrangement, marketers will no longer go with bank drafts to load fuel instead use cash to pay for the product they bought from the depots.

According to him the protocol in the former payment system constituted great obstacle for IPMAN members in the past which made many of them to prefer buying petrol from private depots in Lagos than to go to NNPC depots.

The deadline given the war room to ensure free flow of petrol at the filling station ends tomorrow.

Trust Index

Inflation	→	12%
GDP	→	6.90%
Budget	→	N3.1tr
External Reserves Acct	→	\$42.47bn
Excess Crude Acct	→	\$6.2bn
Poverty Ratio	→	54.4%
Interest Ratio	→	6%
Banks	→	24
Oil Price	→	\$72 a barrel
Power Supply	→	2,700MW
Oil output per day	→	1.9mbd

CBN EXCHANGE RATES				BUREAU DE CHANGE RATES	
2/8/2010					
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	Selling (NGN)		
CFA	0.2976	0.3076	0.3176	BUYING	
DANISH KRONER	27.1445	27.2362	27.3279	DOLLAR.....	N151
EURO	202.16	202.8433	203.5265	EURO.....	N210
POUNDS STERLING	230.4313	231.2101	231.9889	POUNDS.....	N248
RIYAL	39.4507	39.584	39.7173	SELLING	
SDR	228.0495	228.8203	229.591	DOLLAR.....	N153
SWISS FRANC	137.7852	138.2509	138.7166	EURO.....	N213
US DOLLAR	147.94	148.44	148.94	POUNDS.....	N250
WAUA	229.9588	230.736	231.5132	Source: S&J Bureau de Change, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.	
YEN	1.6559	1.6615	1.6671		

Stock Market Index	
Date:	Monday, February 8, 2010
Index:	23,226.28
Deals:	6,012
Volume:	227,492,123
Value:	N 1,581,539,016.36
Cap.:	N 5,593,645,143,350.12

Business

Nigeria's oil reserve to dry up in 2040

By Jibrin Abubakar

THE oil reserves in the Niger Delta currently in the region of 30 billion barrels will dry and disappear by the year 2040.

Activities of militant groups in the region, ineptitude leadership and rapid depletion of ore, a major component for the exploration are contributory factors that may see the end of Nigeria's oil.

Regulatory and monitoring organs in the country including the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) and the Revenue Mobilisation

Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) are concerned about the development.

A source in one of the agencies confirms that some of the agencies especially NNPC and RMAFC have undertaken visitations and mounted various campaigns on need for the diversification of the economy to other sectors and on the necessity for passage of Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) into law.

The RMAFC had toured some states to verify existing and abandoned oil wells and other prospective areas for exploration. It also provided each state in the

federation with lists of abundant mineral and natural resources in its location which could be tapped for more revenue to their Internally Generated Revenue and the Federation Accounts.

Minerals and hydrocarbon deposits have life-span and can be negatively affected if there are fewer activities to extend the life indices through intensive exploration to augment the resource base, Economic Confidential reports.

Members of the Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), which comprises commissioners of finance, account-

ants general of states, NNPC, Customs and Federal Inland Revenue Service are being told on the need for new investment and diversifications of the economy because they would soon run out of oil for export and local consumption.

The campaigns have also gone to Governors and federal legislators on the need for early passage of PIB because the future of Nigeria's oil, according to the campaigners, depends largely on new oil bill that would promote continued investment in new oils and security of facilities in the Niger Delta region.

At another forum in Abuja

recently, a General Manager, Planning, National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) Victor Briggs stated that that Nigeria is not investing in new oil discoveries whereby all the revenues from oil goes to the Federation Account directly without reinvesting into oil fields.

The disbursement figures made in January 2010 from the Federation Account shows that while Bayelsa and Edo States received the sum of N4.29billion and N3.48billion respectively the non-oil states of Lagos and Kano States received N9.16billion and N6.49billion respectively.

Australian firm wants to mine gold in Nigeria

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

AUSTRALIAN Mining Company CGA Mining Limited announced its intention to invest in the Nigerian's Gold mining project soon.

The company made the statement last week at the Mining Indaba Conference held in Cape Town, the capital city of South Africa.

It stated that it would be investing in a 750,000 tons per annum gold project in Nigeria, which will yield a minimum production profile of in excess of 100,000 ounces a year.

Speaking at the third day of the conference, the President and Chief Executive Officer CGA Mining Limited Mr. Micheal Carrick explained that the company so far "had a 51 per cent stake in the Segilola Gold Project in Ijesha, Osun State, Nigeria."

He added: "We anticipate building a project with number of 750,000 tons

per annum, which will yield a minimum production profile of in excess of a 100,000 ounces a year and we will expect cash cost to be under \$300 an ounce."

Describing the preliminary results from the gold project as exceptional, Carrick confirmed that Nigeria has great geological potential, especially as the Ghanaian belt where extensive mining is taking place extended down into Nigeria. According to him, "We have just done a first part of drilling; just over 10,000 meters and we have proven a very high quality initial resources of over 600,000 ounces.

"We have only drawn down to 150,000 meters, but the grade is 6.7 grams per ton and the recovery is 96 per cent. The deposit is open and there is a substantial evidence of parallel zones of mineralisation. The grade is exceptional; I think more 50 per cent of gravity."



OIL Rig

SEC DG lists agenda for NSE transformation

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

DIRECTOR General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Ms Arunama Oteh at the weekend said her immediate priority in the transformation of the nation's capital market would be to restore investors' confidence as well as implementation of the zero tolerance policy on sharp practices in the market.

Oteh, in an interactive session with newsmen in Lagos, said investors' confidence is key to investment opportunity that the market has to offer. The Nigerian capital market, it would be recalled suffered a serious decline last year following a period of unprecedented growth and development. From being one of the fastest growing among the world's developing and emerging economies, it had become one of the worst performing, having declined by about 70 per cent from the peak in March 2008. This was traced

to governance weakness that led to improper behaviour and sharp practices such as insider trading and share price manipulation.

But Oteh pledged: "I am determined to eliminate sharp practices, deter malpractice and change behaviour by ensuring that both the institutional and personal costs of any wrongdoing is extremely high. We will ensure high standards in regulatory oversight and enforcement and will name and shame where necessary." The new director general stated that SEC would continue to strengthen inspection and investigation and any operator found erring would be suspended, issued a warning, or fined depending on the gravity and nature of violation.

"We will also revitalize our enforcement programmes to ensure a focus on the cases that are of prime importance to the investors, that we pursue our programme speedily without compromising on fairness, and that we

impress on violators of the rules of the capital markets that there is a cost associated with flouting the regulations", she said.

Oteh emphasized that the absence of transparency undermines the market and creates perverse incentives for those individuals determined to bend the rules.

She said: "Therefore, SEC will request that all public companies disclose meaningful and relevant information to the public. Information technology will play a vital role in modernizing the disclosure system under the new regulatory framework and in promoting transparency, liquidity, and efficiency in our market."

Oteh also said there is need to expand market offerings to include products such as fixed income securities, adding that hedging instruments such as futures and other derivatives need to be promoted as well as securities lending and collective instrument schemes.

Lack of patronage retards automobile growth in Nigeria

By Sunday Williams

LACK of patronage of locally manufactured automotive products is one of the greatest obstacles to the survival and development of automotive industry in Nigeria, the Director General of the National Automotive Council (NAC) Engineer Aminu Jalal has said. He said that the Auto sector will be revived if the Federal Government takes the lead in the patronage of the local automotive products by directing the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to ensure that local auto products are given priority in all government vehicular purchases.

He said: "If the auto industry knows that they can sell what they produce, they can take money from the Banks even at 20% interest rate. In the early 80's when Peugeot were producing 55,000 vehicles, there was no government funding. The problem we have is the environment and the conditions of doing business." He said that some of the auto manufacturers were given funds with good interest rates but they rejected it because they were not sure of sell after production. "Dunlop were given about 1 million dollars ECOWAS funds in Lome to do some retooling that will enable them produce higher rim of tyres but they returned the fund because of the environment," he said. He said the only way to attract foreign direct investment into Nigeria's auto industry is for the federal government to give some grants to the sector operators, as it is being done in USA.

The National Automotive Council in a joint communiqué with the House Committee on Industry recently Urged government to inject N750 billion as counterpart funding to attract foreign Direct Investments in the auto industry so that it can join the global supply chain for parts and components.

Business/Agric

10,000 Kano farmers to benefit from World Bank project

From Auwalu Umar, Kano

MORE than 10,000 farmers are expected to benefit from the World Bank-assisted Commercial Development Project in Kano State, project coordinator for the state Alhaji Muhammad Badawi has disclosed.

Speaking in Kano shortly after the election of executive members of Kano State Commercial Agriculture Development Association (CADA), Badawi said the five-year project would also support the provision of rural infrastructure such as roads and energy for their positive contribution in enhancing agricultural productivity and growth. He said the value chains selected for promotion under the intervention for Kano are rice, maize and

dairy.

A statement by communications officer for the project Dan'asabe Yahaya said the project was specifically geared towards supporting access to productivity enhancing technologies, improving market access and capacity building as well as improving rural infrastructure.

He said small and medium scale commercial farmers must be organized into groups and assist them with necessary supports like production packages and other implements, processing equipment and training in order to enhance their productive capacities and the ability to compete with their counterparts the world over.

The coordinator said the Commercial Agricul-

ture Development Association, as an apex organization of economic interest groups that have common interest in agricultural commercialization, has a critical role to play in coordinating the activities of the Commodity Interest Groups within the value chain associations.

Also speaking, chairman Kano State Commercial Agriculture Development Association (CADA) Prof. Abdu Salihu Kibiya said full implementation of the World Bank-assisted commercial agriculture development project in Kano State would complement government's food security initiative, generate employment opportunities, provide raw materials for agro-allied industries and reduce post-harvest

losses among participating farmers,

Prof. Kibiya said the project gives emphasis on value chain approach that promotes value addition from production up to the final consumer.

He said the project is a complete departure from previous agricultural development interventions which were designed only to enhance production.

He described the project as timely since any increase in agricultural production would consequently bring about new challenges in the areas of agro-processing, value addition and marketing in addition to having the potentials of making a great and meaningful impact on both farmers and economy.

Kaduna procures 50 tonnes of fertilizer

KADUNA State Government has procured 50 tonnes of fertiliser for use by farmers during the 2010 farming season, Gov. Namadi Sambo said.

He disclosed this on Saturday in Maigana, headquarters of Soba Local Council, where a group -'Namadi Pillars', distributed vehicles and motorcycles, as well as scholarship awards, to some PDP supporters and students.

The governor said that the fertilizer was procured in large quantity to ensure adequate distribution to all categories of farmers in the state.

According to him, the gesture will boost the morale of farmers towards bumper harvest. He called for efficient use of the products.

Sambo said that his 11-point agenda was designed to better the living conditions of the people,

adding that the state government had earmarked N4 billion for disbursement to people, to cushion the effect of poverty.

The State Chairman of the PDP, Alhaji Ya'u Usman-Jama'a, called on public-spirited individuals in the party to emulate the gesture of the 'Namadi Pillars' in attracting people to the PDP in Kaduna state.

Speaker Ahmed Hassan-Jumare, of the Kaduna House of Assembly commended the 'Namadi Pillars' for their "excellent initiative."

Earlier, Alhaji Sani Dauda, the group's member, said that over 450 students benefitted from the group's scholarship scheme annually.

Dauda said that the group sought to complement the efforts of the governor at educational development in the state.

(NAN)

Borno rice farmers want modern tools

THE Zabarmari Rice Farmers Association in Maiduguri on Sunday, called on the Borno Government to provide it with modern processing machines, to add value to their produce.

Alhaji Umaru Dan-Maigyara, spokesman of the Community, in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Maiduguri, lamented that they lacked modern equipment to produce polished rice.

"We are predominantly a rice farming community

located just about 40 kilometers from the state capital. We produce an average of one million bags of unprocessed rice annually.

"We produce seven varieties of rice- De gold, Cameroon, Baban Fari, Tanko, Dan Maizube, Gajere and Yar Wuri.

"But our best brand is De gold which has similar characteristics with the imported Thailand Caroline brand.

"The remaining six varieties also have the potentials of competing in

the international market," he said.

"But the absence of processing machines and other equipments had always hindered

our efforts as most Nigerians prefer polish rice than the local ones," he said.

Dan-Maigyara said the communities also lacked good roads to transport their produce.

"We are appealing to the state government to establish a rice market close to our village.

"This is because most people find it difficult to visit our village to buy our produce especially during the rains," he said.

Dan-Maigyara also called on the government to construct primary and secondary schools in the settlement to provide easy access to education for their children.

"The only public school in the settlement was built about 30 years ago and the pupils then finished school in class two when the only teacher posted to the school left.

"But we have been able to set up a community school through self help efforts. But we need government's assistance," he said. (NAN).



GOV. Ali Modu Sherif



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Star Feature

Abuja's 'car boot traders'

A new habit of using car boots to sell items, especially clothing, is growing around the country. Our Reporter looks at the trade in Abuja.

By Solomon Chung

THEY mostly use fairly used vehicles to display their goods, some do engage in some kind of local broadcast advertisement, where they hang megaphones on the vehicles that send messages to attract unsuspecting customers.

The car trunks are like the 'show rooms' while the space in the back seats serve as extra space for stocking items. Though some

of the traders, especially those who sell shoes, use the back seat as a test unit. There, customers sit and test if the shoe they got attracted to fits them, before making their payments.

This is indeed another style of marketing/trading that is considered cost effective and easy to manage by the traders involved. It has become the order of the day in most major



THIS is indeed another style of marketing/trading that is considered as cost effective and easy to manage



"AS you can see, I no more display my items on the ground

cities where shop spaces are difficult to come by.

Like other major cities in the country (Kaduna, Jos, Minna etc), some Abuja traders have joined the band wagon of selling items. At major markets and other areas around the city's suburbs, these traders engage in their style with enthusiasm. The lists of items traded in these car boots are endless. From perfumes, jewelries, shoes, clothes/materials (Ankara etc). Even some fast foods are sold by some of these

Murtala Ibrahim, one of the 'car boot traders, who is a disabled person, tells our reporter that a side benefit is the relative ease and other salient advantages of this sort of trading. He finds it compatible considering his disability challenges.

"I am a disabled person and I live in far away Karamaji, (a village). It has always been a challenge for me and my colleagues to board vehicles to Wuse where we ply our trade. As you can see, a lot of us do not beg for alms, we are genuine traders. I sell pens, wallets, sports souvenirs... But before we board our vehicles to town, it takes us 4 hours due to our physically challenged conditions."

Murtala said it was this transportation challenge that prompted him to save some money for the purchase of the car he is now using to ease the transportation trouble as well as his mobile shop.

"As you can see, I no more display my items on the ground

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Use my car trunk to display my items, and it is now my shop.

my car trunk to display my items, and it is now my shop. This car has reduced my suffering. It is a beautiful concept which I am benefiting from. I sell my things here. When it is closing hours, I don't need to start packing the items on display. I just shut the car trunk, get inside and drive home."

As the 'boot traders grow more in number in the FCT, our reporter gathered that the trend is not just peculiar to Abuja. It is a usual practice across many states in the country.

Another 'car boot trader' Uzo, told our reporter that the practice is found in most places.

"Go to Kano, Jos, Lagos or Aba. This is the practice. It is an easier and better way to trade. In this way, the customer gets satisfaction by pruning down the stress he would have, by going to scramble in the market. For us the traders, it cuts down our spending on transportation. All I have to do for example is to fuel my car with just 1,500-2,000 naira and that is good to go for the day. Sometimes I don't even use the whole of the fuel, depending on the day's activity."

Uzo said he owns 3 different shops in different locations, but still engages in the mobile sort of trading, due to the relative ease in the trade pattern.

"This is not my only store/shop, I have 3 of them. One in Gwarinpa, one again in Kubwa, and another one in Kado, all

manned by boys. But instead of me to just relax, I just decided to use one of my cars to display some of the products we sell, and also move around to contact some of our customers who are extremely busy. It is risky in business if you don't keep contact with your customers. There are other people in the same line of business who are also searching for new customers. But by the time you keep in touch with your customers, by taking new clothes to their offices or homes, the relationship would keep on cementing for good."

He said the money generated through his mobile trading would help complement what his boys would sell in the other shops. However, he said he is always on stand-by, "most of my customers are busy workers, some in the banks, some in other corporate offices. I do call them on phone, if there are things I feel they might need, especially when we have new arrivals. To some extent, I know what some of them like and would likely request for. I enjoy the trade. I drive myself, and get my transactions done within minutes"

He further confirmed that a lot of people are into this style of trading saying that it is a modern and better way to trade.

"Even abroad, they do this, it is not new. It is just like the home delivery system which obtains in the developed world. The slight difference is probably the way we display ours in the car boots around market areas, or busy settings coupled with the office/home delivery aspect. I think it is virtually the same.

This style of trading seems advantageous, as it gives the small traders the leverage to use their vehicles to go for their purchases from wholesalers without having to pay some extra transport fare.

Sharing his personal business experience, Mallam Zakari who sells clothes, said he actually started his business with a very meager capital base, and thus had to trek long distances with yards of cloth on his head. He later succeeded in buying a second-hand bicycle and kept on going with determination. Now he owns a car which he uses to sell his yards of cloth.

"There are some potential customers that do not have the luxury of time to go to the market. This sort of mobile trading gives

us the opportunity to reach out to them."

Zakari said he doesn't have a shop yet. Thus, he is a full-time 'car boot trader,' but hopes to rent a shop space sooner than later.

"The way I started with trekking, to bicycle and then car, that is how I would soon get my shop. One thing at a time. But that is my utmost priority now. Even if in the suburb of Abuja, I would get a shop. But that would not in any way stop me from my mobile trading, I am happy doing it."

Most of the traders revealed that even if they operate other shops, quitting the mobile trade has never been an option. They usually have a system of employing workers to man the shops they have rented, while they move about with their vehicles, to market their various products or items, and display some in the car trunks as well.

This mobile trade is so 'encouraging' for small time traders, as they do not have to pay rent or tax of some sort. What a way to enjoy tax holiday, while they grow their businesses. They said if there is any way they could be made to remit their taxes, they would be willing to do that, because they are law abiding way citizens.

These traders are strategically positioned around most market locations in Abuja. Their advertisement method is so attractive that passers-by get so close to them to see what items are on display, and subsequently, what it takes to take them home.

They however complain that having conducted their trading activities satisfactorily, some officers of the environmental tax force used to disrupt their activities.

"Environmental workers tend to worry us, though this is not always the case, and not as harsh as they handle other hawkers. The harassment is more intense around Wuse. Those people operating in other suburbs do not face such intimidation and harassments. That is why some of us do go to Mararaba or Nyanya sometimes to sell our items."

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Business

Financial meltdown: Yobe officers feel the heat

From Isa Umar Gusau, Maiduguri

REACTING to the global economic crisis, Yobe State government has slashed salaries of its workers.

It was learnt that the state government was applying a law passed by the state assembly sometime in September, 2009, which slashed salaries of political office holders by 50% following President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's call for slashing of salaries of federal government political office holders in reaction to the global financial meltdown which was intensely being between September and November, 2009.

Political office holders in the state have been left under intense confusion following the slashing of their January, 2010 salaries that left many of them with less than 10 percents of their expected net payments.

Numerous elected and appointed public office holders across the executive, legislature and judiciary lamented that they were affected in the gross slash

while there has not been explanation from government, our correspondent has learnt. Some of them told our correspondent that they were shocked with what they received as their salaries for the month and worse of all, is that there is no explanation for that.

An appointed aide to Governor Ibrahim Gaidam who preferred anonymity said: "After deductions for car loan, pay as you go tax, contribution to the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and contribution to the Yobe Mosque building (even though the project has since been completed in 2007) over two hundred thousand was supposed to be my net salary for the month but I got slightly above thirty thousand naira which really shocked me, I am confused. But I even learnt that some of my colleagues got between twenty thousand, less or slightly above, we just don't understand this at all," the appointee bewailed. Another appointee in the legislative arm lamented that rather than receiving over two hundred and

fifty thousand after deductions from gross salary, slightly above twenty thousand was paid as net. Some other respondents said they received around ten thousand or less, noting that they were surprised that while the economic recess was biting in 2009 there was no such slash and so they asked "why now, when the economy is picking up". Some of them alleged that the slash was done this time because the Yobe government may be in financial crises and finding it difficult to pay full salaries.

When contacted for government's response on the purported law for the slash, the state's Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Ahmed Mustapha Goniri said he was just returning from three weeks' long trip and would make enquiries and get back to our correspondent on the matter but he didn't. The state commissioner for finance, Alhaji Kaigama Umar had his MTN mobile phone line switched off for hours yesterday while the accountant general, Alhaji Umaru Babayo



GOVERNOR Ibrahim Gaidam

Hassan didn't pick calls after his phone rang twice. Both the men didn't also respond to text messages sent to them on the issue.

Unclaimed deposits still in failed banks – NDIC

From Ibraheem Musa, Kaduna

THERE are still unclaimed depositors funds laying in some of the failed banks despite request by NDIC for owners to come forward and claim them, Alhaji Umaru Ibrahim, acting Managing Director and Chief Executive of Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has disclosed.

The MD who made this known in Kaduna State during a four-day Intensive Communication Skills training organized by NIDC, also said that NDIC has appointed various banks as agents all over the country so that those who have any claim can go and verify their claims before they are paid.

The MD said that the depositors may have relocated elsewhere or the amounts may be considered too small for some of them to bother about claiming it.

While speaking on the financial health of Nigerians banks and the effort NDIC and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) are making to ensure that none failed again, Ibrahim said, "We have a joint tar-

get examination of all the banks which we are conducting with the CBN. The purpose is to re-ascertain the financial conditions of these banks and it is a continuous process," he said.

Ibrahim further said that he doesn't see the possibility of any failed bank in the country.

Regarding effort at improving the competence and capacity of NDIC staff, the acting Chief Executive Officer said that 174 staff attended various overseas training programmes while 346 others benefited from local training last year. He said that the training has yielded result based on the credible performance of NIDC examiners during the recent banking reform initiative embarked upon by the Federal Government.

According to him, the value of the four-day training will enable NIDC to satisfy the yearnings of its clients which include depositors, banks, governments and its agencies and the general public, as well as other regulatory agencies both within and outside the shores of Nigeria.

Dangote to showcase products at Kaduna trade fair

By Sunday Williams

THE Dangote Group is set to make a big appearance at the forthcoming Kaduna international Trade Fair, which is scheduled to take place from February 19 - 28, 2010 at Kaduna International Trade and Investment Centre, Kaduna - Zaria Road, Rigachikun, Kaduna.

AT the Fair, the Group would be showcasing its

different products ranging from Cement, Sugar, Salt, Beverages, Flour, Pasta (Spaghetti and Macaroni), a statement said.

"IN keeping with its brand promise which is touching lives every day, the public would get to know more about its new offerings - Dangote Noodles and Kally Sparkling Soft Drinks, available in 4 flavours Guarana twist, Apple Bite, Cola thrill, and Red

Orange," it said.

DURING this period, the Group said it would emphasize more about the new products on a Special Day at the fair ground, while guests to the stand will have opportunity to taste the products. School children who visit the stand would be taught the benefits of nutrients in their diets and as well go home with treats.

European Bank zeroes on three Nigerian banks

By Idris Ahmed

THE European Investment Bank (EIB) said yesterday it will buy into three of the eight troubled banks in Nigeria.

EIB Vice President Plutarchos Sakellaris did not name the banks as he addressed a joint press conference with the Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi in Abuja.

Sakellaris and a delegation of senior EIB executives are in the country to announce a number of key deals in the Nigerian financial sector.

The eight troubled banks rescued by the CBN last year are Oceanic bank, Intercontinental bank, Union Bank, Afribank, Fin-Bank, Bank PHB, Equatorial Trust Bank and Spring Bank.

Two biggest in South Africa, FirstRand Limited and Standard Bank Group Limited have registered with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to investigate and acquire one or two of the banks.

At a press conference yesterday, the EIB boss said details of the deal with the banks will be disclosed on Thursday.

He said: "On Thursday, we would unveil major operation with three banks. I will not go into any further details. It will be the kind of

operation which would be both supportive over their liquidity and their contribution to the real economy."

He said EIB's involvement into the banks would be in the area of financing infrastructure which would also be helpful to strengthen the capital base of the banks.

He said there would be a concrete approach of the EIB's willingness to re-enter and re-enforced its involvement in the financial sector in Nigeria.

He said the involvement would boost the support of confidence for the good work that is happening in "providing a solid financial sector to this economy."

Last year alone, EIB provided over \$1.5 billion of funding for about 30 projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. The bank has provided over 600 million Euros loans to the Nigerian financial sector.

He said the bank was pleased about the decisive actions taken by the CBN Governor to improve the Nigerian financial sector.

He described the reform measures of the CBN as similar in substance to most measures taken by financial regulators both across "Europe and beyond at a time of global economic turmoil challenge and questioned confidence."

He said: "This also mirrors the EIB's focus on

investing in projects that promote economic growth and foster private development, especially where there is a strong potential for this benefit to be delivered to the wider region. Support is also given to the public sector where government led initiatives are crucial to create a competitive business environment."

He said EIB is eager to enter into financing other branch of the real sector of the non-financial sector. He specifically mentioned agro-business, power and the gas sector.

Governor Sanusi thanked the EIB delegate and other development partners for their supports and recognition of the actions taken by CBN to lay a solid foundation for long term stability of the Nigerian's financial system.

"This clearly is a sign of retaining confidence in the Nigerian economy and the banking system. The VP will be meeting with some banks and further announcements are going to be made and we hope that we would continue to look at the positive sides of things," he said.

He said the second aspect of discussion with the EIB has to do with the consistency between "our vision of turning banks into proper transmission channels of monetary policy, of the real economy and the EIB's own objectives."

Business/Power

Is Nigeria drifting towards total blackout?

Stories by Fidelis Mac-Leva

LAST Thursday the Power Holding Company of Nigeria [PHCN] came out with a shocking revelation on the current power generation situation in Nigeria that may have left not a few Nigerians wondering whether or not the country is heading towards total darkness.

The occasion was the ministerial press briefing held by the Power Ministry to update and present an assessment of the Power sector's performance in the previous year.

For over an hour, Lanre Babalola, Minister of Power painstakingly took time to review the performance of the sector; particularly against the backdrop of the failed presidential mandate of delivering 6000MW of electricity to Nigerians by the end of December last year.

The Minister's briefing dwelt extensively on the Power sector's strategic plan of 2009; budgetary appropriation; performance and achievements; operational challenges as well as highlights of strategic plans for 2010.

During the interactive session with the press which was moderated by Information and National Orientation Minister, Professor Dora Akunyili, a barrage of questions was directed at Babalola. Among the first set of questions was the one in which the questioner sought to know whether or not the continued absence of the president has impacted on the performance of the power sector.

The response from the Minister was an emphatic no! "The ministry has been carrying on with its statutory functions suc-

cessfully despite the absence of Mr. President. Our capital releases and other requirements are being made as at and when due without hindrance", Babalola said.

Responding to another question on the recent claim made by former President Olusegun Obasanjo that the Yar'adua administration should be blamed for the collapse of the Power sector, Babalola answered in the affirmative.

Obasanjo had while responding to a comment from a member of audience during the 17th Annual Trust Dialogue in Abuja claimed that he met the country generating 1,400MW of electricity in 1999 and that he left it at 4,000MW, adding that the Nigeria Integrated Power Project [NIPP] plants which he started were yet to be completed by the current administration.

Of all the questions asked during last Thursday's Ministerial Press briefing by the Power ministry the one that attracted curiosity even from members of the public in attendance was on the current power generation profile of the country. In other words the Minister was asked to tell Nigerians how much megawatts of electricity the country was currently generating.

As if he wanted the audience to her from the proverbial horse's mouth the Minister requested the Managing Director and CEO of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria [PHCH], Engineer Hussein Labo, to respond to the enquiry.

Like a bombshell the PHCN boss disclosed that the country currently generates 2,700MW of electricity. "The actual power

generation in Nigeria as at today [Thursday] is 2,700MW as against the 3700MW that was obtainable by December last year", Labo said.

Attributing the drop in power generation to gas constraint the PHCN boss, however, explained that given the availability of sufficient gas to service the power generating plants the country currently has the capacity of generating 5,500MW of electricity.

Not a few members of the audience were shocked at the revelation which implied that rather than improving, the nation has now lost 1000MW out of the 3,700MW that was obtainable by December last year. The revelation further cast doubts over the projection of attaining additional 10,000MW by 2011 as well as the actualisation of Nigeria's Vision 2020 development goals.

Of course, that was not the first time the PHCN was raising alarm over the drift towards total darkness in the country. In March, 2008, electricity generation in the country had dropped to an alarming level due to what the PHCN equally attributed to shortage of gas supplies by the nation's power plants.

The situation was particularly blamed on the fall of gas supplies by the Nigeria Gas Company [NGC] to both the Egbin and Geregu power generating plants. Worried by the situation, PHN through its General Manager Public Affairs, Mrs. E.Igbo, said in a statement: "For some months now gas supply by the Nigeria Gas Company to Egbin and Geregu power stations has steadily declined due to the build up of condensate in the Escravos



LANRE Babalola, Minister of Power

gas pipeline."

As a combined result power generation at the time at Egbin was said to have dropped from 800MW to a paltry 100MW [a loss of 700MW] while the Geregu plant suffered a shortfall of 150MW. The daily loss of over 800MW of power generation that year had forced the PHCN to embark on load shedding

throughout the country.

With an estimated 70 million Nigerians said to be living in darkness due to lack of access to electricity, last Thursday's revelation by the PHCN over the drop in the country's power generation by 1000MW has further raised fears that the acclaimed giant of Africa might be heading towards a period of total darkness!

Contractors threaten court action against Power Ministry, REA

THE Association of Rural Electrification Contractors has threatened to resume its court action against the Power Ministry and the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) over their outstanding contractual debts amounting to N19.6 billion.

Secretary General of the Association, Engineer Noel Keyen, made this known to *Daily Trust* when he led other members on a peaceful protest during last week's ministerial press briefing by the Power Ministry in Abuja.

Keyen said the court case against the Power Ministry and the REA was initiated in August last year sequel to the winding down process of the Rural Electrification Agency that was initiated by the federal government.

According to the secretary general, the case was later withdrawn due to a proposed out-of-court settlement pointing out, however, that the Memorandum of

Understanding [MOU] that is expected to seal the out of court settlement was yet to be signed by the Power Ministry.

"We have been waiting patiently for the Power Ministry to sign the MOU but until date that has not been done. Therefore we are in doubts about the sincerity of the out-of-court settlement and we are discussing with our lawyers on the option of resuming our court action in order to get our payment.

He said it was in an effort to register their displeasure over the matter that they took advantage of the Ministerial press briefing by the Power Ministry to draw attention over the plight of the distressed REA contractors.

Some of the placards displayed by the protesters read: "Sign our out of court settlement MOU now and pay REA contractors", "REA contractors are tired. Please pay us", "Hon Minister of Power, please pay us our REA debts."

Ministry announces 'Action Plan' as power drops by 1000MW

THE Ministry of Power says it has designed an extensive framework for the development and implementation of a commercially oriented market for electricity to improve the efficiency of Power sector management and foster an enabling environment for private sector participation.

Minister of Power, Lanre Babalola, who stated this at a ministerial press briefing in Abuja said the action plan which would be vigorously pursued in 2010 would involve full corporatization of the of PHCN Successor Companies as well as a framework for balanced market development.

To this end, Babalola said,

the Power Ministry would institute appropriate corporate and industry governance structures and engage technical consultants to assist the successor companies in corporatizing and commercializing their operations. "This would allow for adequate monitoring, evaluation and accountability", he said.

According to the Minister, the Ministry would also carry out a revision of the National Electric Power Policy and EPSR Act 2005 to ensure consistency with the current status of the power sector.

"This revision will include provisions to facilitate hydropower project development as well as final-

ise and put in place the essential commercial documents for improved electricity supply", Babalola stated.

To enhance what he referred to as energy security, in view of the fact that the Nigerian Power industry is predominantly driven by gas; the Minister announced the introduction of new projects aimed at diversifying the sources of power.

He listed the projects, some of which he said are currently at different stages, to include: Kaduna Power Plant Project [215MW; Katsina Wind -farm Power Project; the Mambilla hydro electric power project and the Zungeru hydro electric power project.

Business/INTERVIEW

How we grew Legacy Pension's Assets to over N56bn-MD

Bello Mohammad Maccido, son of the former Sultan of Sokoto and Wakilin Sokoto, is the pioneer Managing Director/CEO of Legacy Pension, one of the 25 Pension Fund Administrators that were licensed by the Pension Commission. Cornered by our reporters at a public function, the lawyer and one time Acting Managing Director of FSB International Bank PLC tells of how Legacy Pension under his leadership grew its pension assets under management to N56.8billion. He also explains how the new pension scheme is impacting positively on the economy as well as some of the challenges in the industry.

By Jibrin Abubakar & Abubakar Momoh

AS Managing Director of one of the Pension Fund Administrators, can you provide our readers with the background behind setting up of Legacy Pension?

As pioneer MD of Legacy Pension, I can tell you that it was incorporated in 2005, soon after the Pension Reform Act was passed into law in June 2004. The new Act was meant to address many of the pitfalls in the old system, which among other things include difficulties encountered by workers in receiving their pension when they reach old age. We worked with ING of Netherlands during our start up period. Presently, we have FCMB as strategic shareholder, holding 25% of our equity, while the balance 75% is held by other individual and corporate investors.

How would you describe the journey you made so far?

The last four years have been years of remarkable progress for our fast growing company, despite the challenge of operating in an entirely new industry. We closed our first year of operations, which was December 2006 with assets under management of N2.3billion, which grew steadily to N22billion by the end of 2008. As at February this year, 2010, our assets under management have further grown to a remarkable figure of over N56.8billion. With over 170,000 registered contributors from over 400 organisations across the country covering both public and private institutions, as well as employees of a number of States of the Federation, I believe we have covered reasonable distance in our journey. In terms of our standing in the league tables, I believe we are within the top 5 in an industry with about 25 PFAs. In 2008, we were one of the 5 PFAs nominated by ThisDay Awards as the best PFA for 2008. Our company has also broken even and has been operating profitably throughout last year.

What has been your performance in the area of investment?

In the area of investment, our company has also provided very good returns to our contributors over the years. Presently, the unit value of our Retirement Savings Account (RSA) Fund stands at 1.5884 which suggests a 58.8 per cent return to our RSA holders over

the four year period. This translates to an average of 15 per cent return per annum. So, despite the market meltdown that has taken place, one will say that a positive 15 per cent annual return is certainly a good return on investment. And based on our unit value, I also believe we rank among the top four in terms of returns we are providing on investment. So from all these indicators, one can see the picture of a rising company, a young but steadily rising company that has grown remarkably over the years using many benchmarks of financial performance.

How have you been ensuring prompt payment of pension benefits to retirees?

As I mentioned earlier, one of the key objectives of this pension scheme is to ensure that contributors receive their pension timely and without difficulty once retire. In this area, Legacy Pension already has about 660 retirees who have retired under the new scheme to which we have already paid over N1.6billion as retirement benefits. This clearly brings to the fore that our company has grown to full maturity, that is from registering active workers, to making investments on their behalf while they are in active service and finally to paying their retirement benefits when they reach their retirement age. Our company has covered all these areas within its four years of operations.

What is your assessment of the industry generally?

Truthfully, the new pension industry has grown remarkably well since the first set of licences were issued towards the end of 2005 and today the industry has grown to such a point where over four million Nigerians have been registered under the scheme across the country. In addition, the industry has also accumulated over N1.3trillion in assets both from the private and the public sector. The private sector probably has contributed about 500 billion of the sum. You can see that the participation of both sectors have been quite remarkable. Quite a number of states of the federation have embraced the scheme; states such as Lagos, Sokoto, Kebbi, Ogun, Niger, Kebbi, Delta, Imo, and Kaduna have all passed laws under this scheme. Some of them have begun paying into the retirement accounts of their workers with the various PFAs. Many other states are at various stages of promulgating laws. Some have passed

through the first and second reading in their respective state assemblies. So clearly what one will say is that the pension industry has really experienced remarkable growth. Even the scheme itself has come to full maturity as over 18,000 workers have already retired from this scheme and are receiving their regular payments as and when due. Probably over N47 billion has been paid industry wide as retirement benefits. Therefore, the scheme has run appreciably but as with every new phenomenon, it is bound to encounter its own challenges. One of the challenges has to do with compliance with regular remittances by employers on behalf of their employees. Very many employers of labour are complying with the provisions of the Act by ensuring that they send the contributions of their own staff into their retirement savings accounts regularly. However, many other employers are not regular in making their remittances to the accounts of their workers as at when due. So for this scheme to continue to be successful employers must also take up their responsibilities of remitting their monthly contributions, which is typically 15% of the monthly emolument of the staff with employers contributing 7.5 per cent while the employee contributes 7.5 per cent. The second challenge is how to incorporate workers in the informal sector into this new pension scheme. As you are aware, based on available statistics, over 40 million Nigerians are employed in the informal sector. If this challenge is properly addressed, total industry enrolment will jump from the current figure of four million. Then the third issue is the issue of communication. Even though there has been some appreciable level of awareness, awareness needs to be cascaded further down. Workers in remotest locations can become informed about the new pension location and its benefits. Sometimes people who have enrolled do not communicate when they are transferred. They do not communicate their true contact addresses which makes it difficult for us to send them their quarterly statements.

To what extent has the financial meltdown affected the pension sector?

Truthfully, the effect of the financial meltdown on pension funds has been very marginal. It is very marginal because the largest proportion of the pension assets is not located



BELLO Mohammad Maccido

in the stock market. Based on the investment guidelines issued by the National Pension Commission (PENCOM), PFAs are only allowed to invest up to 25 per cent in the stock market, while the other 75 per cent is in fixed income investments such as bank deposit and treasury instrument (such as treasury bonds issued by the Federal Government) and State government instruments. Now the return on the 75 per cent has more than cushioned the effect in the loss on 25 per cent equity investment. Due to the foresight of PENCOM that the PFAs' largest per cent of assets should be kept away from the stock market, PFAs only lost about 3per cent of their investment in the stock market; while others lost as much as about 67 per cent of the value of their investment. And those who lost in actual terms are those who sold off their investments at a loss, but because PFAs are long term investors, our own loss is not real economic loss, rather it is just accounting loss as we are still holding on to our investments which have potential of regaining their value as the market rebounds in the future.

What role has the PENCOM played in supporting the growth of the industry?

The Commission is the agency responsible for the regulation and supervising of the activities of all the operators in the industry. In the areas of regulations, PENCOM has issued numerous guidelines that have assisted in the steady growth of the industry. I had earlier highlighted to you the investment guidelines which guided us in the area of investment in equity. Thanks to the foresight of the Commission for putting together these conservative guidelines, the sector would have lost lot of money during the meltdown. The Commission has also introduced other guidelines such as those on how we adminis-

ter retirement benefits and on corporate governance. It has been very pro active in terms of conducting regular examination of the PFAs to ensure that we fully comply with all the provisions of the law. In the area of creating awareness, The Commission has been helping in conducting road shows together with other stakeholders, such as Labour. It has been very active to the point that it has nurtured this industry to this enviable level. PENCOM has also been active in ensuring that employers remit to the accounts of their employees. Don't forget that for its pivotal role in the development of this industry, The Commission won ThisDay Award of being the most efficient regulator for 2008. It is all a way of acknowledging their effort of mid-wifing this young but promising industry.

What are the changes you would propose for a better operation?

I think the law needs to strengthen compliance on regular remittances by employers into the account of the employees. As things stand now many employers have not been complying and it is very difficult to insist on their complying because the law does not provide effective sanctioning for non-compliance. We need stiffer sanctions on employers so that non-compliance and fear of retirement will be a thing of the past.

Readers would like to know how the new pension scheme helps the economy.

As you may be aware, through the new pension system, Nigeria has finally created the long awaited avenue for mobilising long term savings. Before the advent of this scheme, long term savings have not been very predominant in the financial system, and that is why most banks can only lend short term.

Business/INTERVIEW

Bank PHB to recapitalise by March-MD

The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Bank PHB Cyril Chukwumah explains how he has guided the bank since he assumed office on October 2, last year. In his maiden press outing last week, he threw light on some grey areas including the future of the bank's workforce. Our reporter was there.

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

HOW far have you gone in debt recovery?

In terms of debt-recovery, we had a huge challenge, when we got on board on October 2 last year. That challenge bordered a lot on the integrity of the data in the financials.

However, what we did was to bring the top 10 debtors to the table to commence discussion. When we did that and brought them to the table, one after the other, there were issues in terms of disputes as to the actual loan figures. And I'm sure, if you recollect after the intervention, CBN did advertise those debtors' list, and there were people who took up pages in the newspapers refuting those balances. So, as reasonable managers, we had concerns because you would not make much progress, if you sit down and you are disputing numbers as against looking at their capacity or ability to pay. So, what we did immediately was to halt and we focused on retooling the Balance Sheet. When we finished retooling the Balance Sheet, we moved on to the loan book and we actually reconstructed the loan book.

At the end of that exercise, we then sectorised those debtors and this time around, the numbers were not in dispute, it was now a function of interest charge, negotiation and so on. This took up unto the middle of December, to achieve the reconstruction of the loan book which spanned over a 1,000 pages. After having achieved this, we sat down and we talked about recovery strategy. We strategized and we put them in at least three buckets. After establishing like three different buckets of generic type debtors, we then came out with a demand notice and a follow through. I can tell you in terms of what we have accomplished, that it is working. We have reconstituted the management credit committee and we meet twice every week. I can tell you from our strategy in terms of recovery, over the next two quarters, our goal basically is to recover over N61 billion. In our situation, when you are looking at companies, you also have to look at the classification of your loan book.

From October up until now, we've done over N10 billion in recoveries, but again, that is more with people who were willing to get their names off the pages of the paper. Those were not the hard-core ones. The hard core ones have just begun and those are the real difficult ones. The ones that come readily are those that you can possibly restruc-



CYRIL Chukwumah

ture, do some debt forgiveness or give some concession by way of interest rate and they pay it out.

What did you met on your assumption of duty in the bank?

In terms of people, when I got into Bank PHB, on October 2, I met about 5,000 or more people. I had this huge challenge in front of me in terms of the need to establish our financial condition. That is the starting point of any form of rehabilitation, and transformation work. If you do not know where you stand financially, you could go on and on and it's like walking on slippery ground. If you look at the situation in the US and Europe, two years after their intervention, they are still taking huge provisioning. And that doesn't augur well for the turnaround of the institutions, nor the economy.

Secondly, as a stranger among 5,000 people, there is a need to relate with them and let them know what the whole exercise is about. Some will agree with you, some won't because of loyalty to former management and all that. You have all these concerns.

Having taken ownership of the business continuation plan, and having established our true financial condition... in a situation where your earning assets, because of the level of non-performing loan that had been created, and you know for non-performing assets, you can't accrue interest, on them, we have a portfolio now of about 35 per cent

earnings. And against that 35 per cent real asset earnings, we have a full bloated liability base that we are paying a 100 per cent to the depositors. So there is a huge mismatch, in terms of my balance sheet and in terms of my profit and loss.

It automatically then follows that in making those corrections you have to look at every single expense line in trying to cut your cost to fit your balance sheet, and also in terms of your ability to begin to go back to the market to start doing credible banking business as well as rebuilding your loan book.

We've done that successfully and what we know today essentially is that there is no way we can carry that bloated expense base that was being funded by pre-intervention 100 per cent of the assets.

So, there is necessarily going to be a cut right across all our expense, right across all our operations and it would definitely affect the people.

However, we are also very mindful in terms of how we go about making those expense cuts, because you do not want to strangle your ability to turn around or move the business forward. We are studying this in detail and over the next couple of weeks we would begin those necessary reductions against all our expense line.

The ones we've been able to do, we've done. We have over 70 per cent of our branches making loss. The bigger expense head of those branches is diesel. Whether you have one person in a branch or 20,

you must run those generators.

So, we are taking another look at our business and opportunities in those market areas as against having a full-fledged branch where you offer all services against no business - you sort of down size and then redeploy people to where those services are needed and then you keep what you need to move that business.

Also, you have to find several ways of managing this diesel expense, and we have started to do this from the head office. We shut down the generators at 7.00 o'clock, save for those for essential services. It is part of the sacrifice we have to make even though we are in the office, sometimes up to 10 o'clock. We have to set example so that the other branches can emulate.

Currently, if you look at industry cost to income it's about 50 per cent. Based on our depleted earnings and our full expenses, our cost to income is close to 80 per cent. You cannot overnight wake up and say, let me slash it to 60 per cent, it will be suicidal. So it's going to be a gradual process of getting back that expense and getting our people to also work smarter.

What are you planning to achieve?

What we are working to achieve in the next three months which will be six months after intervention, is essentially to get the bank ready for recapitalisation. By the end of March, you'll be able to see a much stable bank with a very clear focus directed at the middle sector in terms of what we do. You will be able to see highly motivated people, people willing to work and you'll see major corrections in terms of the strategy error that we met six months before. The bank we met has a good brand and we are going to leverage up that brand.

So, in ensuring that we strategically do what we plan to do and come back, based on our capacity to the market, (because you cannot go out to profess to do everything to everybody), we will tell people that we have the capability to fund you up to x-level.

We will not go into speculation. We are going back to the basics, your bread and butter business. You take deposits and you lend it and that you monitor it closely, you get repaid and you carry on.

We heard that you took \$120,000 for vacation?

When I got on board on October 2 last year, the mandate letter of my engagement by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) clearly said, when you get there, take whatever remuneration your predecessor was earning, and you earn it.

When I got in there, as an industry specialist, I had a very good knowledge as to market remunera-

tion right across the industry. I also know that in this trying time and what we are going to be doing, moving forward, there is a need for one to set the example upfront, so that by the time you get it right across the board, you would have been a role-model in terms of whatever expense cut you're making.

I can tell you when I got on board, I slashed the then CEO's remuneration by 47 per cent. Not only did I do that, I also looked at the benefits in kind and I felt that given the tenure of this engagement, which is a maximum of two years, right, why go and deplete the liquidity you don't have, in buying yourself cars, and so on. I have not bought a car for myself. What I did immediately was to downgrade and standardise my benefits in-kind to match those of my executives. I did the same exercise for the executives, way back in October because I wanted to set the stage. So by so doing, I slashed the executives' salaries by over 26 per cent. In the compensation survey I did when I got on board in October, I looked at those allowances - travel, benefits, and I scaled down. This \$120,000 in question is to do with my travel allowance when I'm on vacation. Again, the modification I did here was to cut my vacation allowance. What I met was \$450,000 per annum incorporating tickets, etc.

So that reference to the \$120,000 is my vacation allowance from October 2, 2009 to September 30, 2010.

I said, we will use the little liquidity we have in providing facilities for our retail consumer customers than buy ourselves cars. Even at the Board of Directors meeting, it came as a big shock to them to learn what I've done. What they then said was that I should have got approval by the Board to slash my salary. I was there for three months and as far as I was concerned, I was setting the stage. I was living by example.

What is your bank position in Expanded Discount Window?

On the Expanded Discount Window (EDW), as at September 30, 2009, Bank PHB had exited from that market. As at the time I got on board, there was zero exposure in the EDW.

How far has the bank gone on Spring Bank case?

Essentially, Bank PHB concluded the acquisition of Spring Bank, I believe in December, 2008, and since then, it has embarked on the integration of both banks.

We seconded like 12 solid bodies in there to facilitate that process. Now with the recent pronouncement of the court stopping us from consummating the merger, we have since appealed. Bank PHB, in terms of ownership of the 55 per cent it is not in dispute.

Business/Finance



Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE)

Monday, February 8, 2010

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	3	0.50	315,000	157,500.00
SECTOR TOTALS	4		315,000	157,500.00
AGRICULTURE				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.86	2,500	2,150.00
FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	40	0.90	1,842,112	1,622,597.68
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	13	0.76	401,458	305,108.08
PRESKO PLC	20	4.78	240,700	1,132,446.00
SECTOR TOTALS	74		2,486,770	3,062,301.76
AIR SERVICES				
AIRLINE SERVI.& LOGISTICS PLC	4	2.85	21,581	59,147.75
NIG. AVIATION HANDLING COY PLC	209	8.19	2,009,808	16,441,917.79
SECTOR TOTALS	213		2,031,389	16,501,065.54
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DNTYRE & RUBBER PLC	4	0.50	28,887	14,443.50
INCARN NIGERIA PLC	2	2.17	243,500	528,395.00
R.T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	14	5.38	174,780	955,404.57
SECTOR TOTALS	20		447,167	1,498,243.07
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	242	8.78	8,992,500	78,061,544.13
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	117	3.16	4,061,237	12,681,693.69
DIAMOND BANK PLC	49	8.81	1,399,410	12,383,021.00
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	7	6.39	122,000	779,580.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	90	9.50	6,667,759	62,680,450.00
FIDELITY BANK PLC	153	2.55	7,830,170	19,699,405.02
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	934	14.83	10,939,708	161,580,028.50
FIN BANK PLC	196	0.77	25,562,561	19,523,336.09
GT BANK PLC	333	17.81	3,633,673	64,510,556.22
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	37	8.65	888,001	7,689,237.68
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	84	2.20	1,665,629	3,546,755.71
OCEANIC BANK INTERN. PLC	109	2.18	3,070,411	6,656,922.25
BANK PHB PLC	58	2.05	1,763,044	3,588,022.90
SKYE BANK PLC	239	7.31	13,316,942	97,465,686.61
SPRING BANK PLC	27	1.36	384,024	539,384.86
STERLING BANK PLC	63	1.60	2,776,765	4,452,158.16
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	67	13.00	3,067,739	39,880,607.00
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	142	6.00	2,719,372	16,399,119.85
UNITY BANK PLC	25	1.03	1,526,297	1,523,823.00
WEMA BANK PLC	61	1.34	4,672,071	6,079,057.01
ZENITH BANK PLC	201	15.77	4,209,557	64,887,358.2
SECTOR TOTALS	3,274		109,268,870	684,722,016.00
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	76	15.30	2,312,229	34,977,625.83
BENUE CEMENT COMY PLC	34	50.00	708,678	35,345,224.36
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG PLC	46	15.17	3,665,999	55,923,688.38
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	44	34.00	1,281,835	43,539,746.69
SECTOR TOTALS	200		7,961,741	167,855,385.26
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS NIGERIA PLC	4	3.36	14,384	50,631.68
CHEMICAL & ALLIED PRODUCTS PLC	4	28.00	12,000	319,200.00
DN MEYER PLC	1	4.88	3,870	17,956.80
SECTOR TOTALS	9		30,254	387,788.48
COMMERCIAL SERVICES				
AFROMEDIA PLC	5	0.63	6,855	4,113.00
COURTVILLE INVESTMENTS PLC	4	0.50	1,080,000	540,000.00
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	5	2.64	40,493	102,042.36
SECTOR TOTALS	14		1,127,348	646,155.36
COMP. & OFFICE EQUIP.				
HALLMARK PAPER PRODUCTS PLC	1	3.22	14,058	43,017.48
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC	5	8.13	20,100	156,103.00
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	1	0.63	2,500	1,500.00
SECTOR TOTALS	7		36,658	200,620.48
CONGLOMERATES				
A.G. LEVENTIS (NIGERIA) PLC	16	3.00	734,506	2,187,580.88
JOHN HOLT PLC	2	9.28	1,160	10,231.20
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	44	26.00	184,926	4,624,625.80
TRANSN. CORP. OF NIGERIA PLC	15	0.50	404,719	202,359.50
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	47	39.91	2,532,469	101,219,367.78
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	75	25.00	2,191,236	54,561,850.18
SECTOR TOTALS	199		6,049,016	162,806,015.34
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	110	5.95	1,569,940	8,983,145.41
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	23	28.00	328,259	8,936,357.72
MULTIVERSE RESOURCES PLC	7	0.50	226,650	113,325.00
SECTOR TOTALS	140		2,124,849	18,032,828.13
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	8	30.60	78,696	2,489,364.50
BIG TREAT PLC	17	0.84	571,026	466,693.84
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	50	14.36	357,506	4,971,818.71
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	185	12.98	4,741,723	57,965,627.3
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	89	15.17	1,102,206	16,783,161.91
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	67	36.60	1,266,697	46,169,036.3
HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	13	6.35	115,900	735,965.00
NATIONAL SALT COY NIG. PLC	50	6.32	1,244,908	7,902,766.64
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COY PLC	31	27.08	811,272	22,479,489.29
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	31	270.00	80,903	22,118,865.40
NORTHERN NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	5	21.80	38,000	786,980.00
TANTALIZERS PLC	25	0.90	994,670	891,171.00
UTC NIGERIA PLC	2	0.82	1,466	1,134.8

SECTOR TOTALS	573		11,404,973	183,797,636.13
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	8	1.12	110,486	125,263.76
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	16	2.09	468,916	983,844.44
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	27	26.00	1,151,211	29,879,315.72
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	9	5.23	38,920	203,715.00
NEIMETH INTERN. PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	7	1.64	48,605	75,848.00
PHARMA-DEKO PLC	1	4.97	200	946.00
UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SER. PLC	23	0.69	1,350,998	952,666.26
SECTOR TOTALS	91		3,169,336	32,221,599.18
HOTEL & TOURISM				
CAPITAL HOTEL PLC	4	2.37	250,500	594,700.00
SECTOR TOTALS	4		250,500	594,700.00
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMACO PLC	1	17.50	50,005	875,087.50
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIG. PLC	2	0.50	501,000	250,500.00
VITAF OAM NIGERIA PLC	10	5.00	80,080	391,942.00
VONO PRODUCTS PLC	2	0.63	206	123.60
SECTOR TOTALS	15		631,291	1,517,653.10
INFORMATION & COMM. TECH.				
CHAMS PLC	24	0.73	1,069,830	791,136.50
IHS NIGERIA PLC	1	4.03	800	3,064.00
MAS TELECOM INNOVATION NIG. PLC	1	0.50	200	100.00
STARCOMMS PLC	33	2.25	1,385,622	3,108,176.80
SECTOR TOTALS	59		2,455,652	3,902,477.30
INSURANCE				
AIICO INSURANCE PLC	117	1.06	4,268,076	4,646,116.44
CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE PLC	3	0.99	160,000	152,500.00
CORNERSTONE INSUR. CO. PLC	13	0.55	1,180,300	648,165.00
CUSTODIAN & ALLIED INSURE PLC	24	2.78	1,054,014	3,025,313.37
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	2	0.50	50,444	25,222.00
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	16	0.57	1,734,140	1,052,129.40
GUARANTY TRUST ASSURANCE PLC	40	2.17	9,208,900	19,862,265.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	11	0.50	162,000	81,000.00
CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSUR. PLC	1	0.50	7,600	3,800.00
INTERN. ENERGY INSURANCE COY PLC	38	0.57	4,997,331	2,854,491.98
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	45	0.52	7,632,013	4,015,460.29
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSUR. PLC	28	0.63	4,430,000	2,586,320.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSUR. PLC	5	0.64	183,236	117,271.04
N.E.M. INSUR. CO. (NIG.) PLC	28	0.56	871,755	483,878.15
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	17	0.75	880,000	687,340.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	3	3.61	8,100	27,783.00
SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	2	0.50	24,060	12,030.00
STACO INSURANCE PLC	4	0.87	19,090	15,844.70
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSUR. PLC	14	0.65	2,091,000	1,396,960.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	6	0.77	306,000	229,103.60
UNIVERSAL INSUR. COY PLC	4	0.50	84,573	42,286.50
INTERCONTINENTAL WAPCO INSUR. PLC	14	0.93	221,386	207,959.96
SECTOR TOTALS	435		39,574,018	42,173,240.43
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	10	0.69	60,900	43,848.00
SECTOR TOTALS	10		60,900	43,848.00
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAVINGS & LOAN PLC	51	0.64	16,883,108	11,229,636.56
RESORT SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	3	0.50	1,530,000	765,000.00
UNION HOMES SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	21	1.07	760,751	814,156.57
SECTOR TOTALS	75		19,173,859	12,808,793.13
OTHER FINANCIAL INST.				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC	11	0.97	177,307	174,237.79
DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	1	2.02	500	1,010.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	13	0.56	1,321,000	715,760.00
SECTOR TOTALS	25		1,998,807	891,007.79
PACKAGING				
NIG. BAG MANUFACTURING COY. PLC	100	1.92	790,856	1,534,148.63
NAMPAC NIGERIA PLC	2	6.99	1,700	11,305.00
STUDIO PRESS (NIGERIA) PLC	1	2.92	150	417.00
SECTOR TOTALS	103		792,706	1,545,870.63
PETROLEUM (MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	63	39.37	315,629	11,989,894.78
BECO PETROLEUM PRODUCT PLC	7	2.07	67,500	132,975.00
MRS OIL NIGERIA PLC	8	69.79	6,275	442,070.00
CONOIL PLC	6	31.00	10,881	336,344.50
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	37	6.01	1,024,000	6,184,539.55
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	6	97.51	1,884	177,912.43
OANDO PLC	4	93.99	6,656	625,597.44
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	6	150.00	2,566	373,540.92
SECTOR TOTALS	137		1,435,391	20,262,874.62
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	17	4.89	76,828	370,829.68
SECTOR TOTALS	17		76,828	370,829.68
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEV. CO. PLC	25	21.20	487,000	9,911,650.00
SECTOR TOTALS	25		487,000	9,911,650.00
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	4	1.49	3,000	4,260.00
SECTOR TOTALS	4		3,000	4,260.00
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANS INCORPORATED	56	15.20	7,801,730	121,284,318.50
SECTOR TOTALS	56		7,801,730	121,284,318.50
OVERALL TOTALS	6,012		227,402,123	1,581,590,636

What is Beta?
A measurement of the relationship between the price of a stock and the movement of the whole market.

Google

GAINERS

UNILEVER	1.00
DANGFLOUR	0.61
ASHAKACEM	0.34
PRESKO	0.21

LOSERS

UACN	1.99
NBC	1.42
FLOURMILL	1.41
ALUMACO	0.92



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Motto: Justice, Unity and Progress

Queen Elizabeth Road, Mokola, Ibadan

OYO STATE PDP CAUCUS

21 Darlington Street, Mokola, Ibadan

Tel: 07082141606

Prince Vincent Ogbulafor,
The National Chairman,
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP),
Wadata Plaza, Abuja.

Your Honour,

OYO PDP: PLEASE DON'T ROB PETER TO PAY PAUL

We, the undersigned, on behalf of the teeming members of our great party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the three Senatorial Districts of Oyo State, wish to express our displeasure with the insistence of the Senator Ike Nwachukwu-led National Peace and Reconciliation Committee (NPRC) to dissolve the State Exco of the PDP as presently constituted and put in place a committee carved out of the Alhaji Shuaib Oyedokun-recommended 15-man Implementation Committee to be headed by Alhaji Yunus Akintunde, erstwhile member and, indeed the senatorial candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the April, 2007 election and also the chairmanship candidate for Oyo West Local Government under the Labour Party in the sordidly arranged local government election conducted by Senator Rashidi Ladoja on 24th May, 2007 at the twilight of his (Ladoja) exit from office.

As you are rightly aware, the senator Ike Nwachukwu committee was saddled with the task of reconciling members who deserted the party and have indicated their willingness to return for proper reintegration into the PDP fold.

Much as it is desirable to re-absorb those who left the party at such a crucial period when their services were most needed in the preparation towards the April, 2007 general elections, yet it would be preposterous and absurd to allow the returnees to dictate the pace, particularly determining which position to assume upon their re-absorption.

You will kindly recall that Senator Ladoja was in the forefront of the campaign against the PDP in the 2007 general elections. As a matter of fact, he directed all his supporters to vote for the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) governorship candidate, Senator Abiola Ajimobi and subsequently for the Labour Party.

To further demonstrate his disdain for the PDP, he has consistently, at any given occasion stated with glee that the PDP did not win the 2007 governorship election, in spite of the pronouncement of both the Lower and Appeal Election Petitions Tribunals affirming the victory of the PDP in the 2007 elections. For instance, in the *Sunday Vanguard* of 31st January, 2010, he stated and we hereby quote, "Yes, it was a gamble, but it nearly

came through because the Thursday before the election, I asked people of Oyo to vote for Ajimobi because I would not have had the opportunity of saying that, Ajimobi won and Akala also knew that Ajimobi won."

His open hatred against the party notwithstanding, God in His infinite mercy, has continuously made the PDP in Oyo State to wax stronger as evidenced by the mass movement of people into the party. Even since the inception of this administration, there have been peace, stability and, we must add, good governance as depicted by the monumental achievements by the PDP-led government.

It is instructive and pertinent to draw your attention to the reconciliatory efforts embarked upon by the leader of the party in the state, Otunba (Dr.) Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala JP, psc, which had yielded positive results. In his bid to further strengthened and repositioned the party to face the arduous task of electioneering campaign for the 2011 general elections, he has reached out to all genuine party members who initially left the party. Notable party returnees are Chief Adigun Irawo, Chief Jacob Adetoro, Alhaji Dauda Yusuf, Chief Adewale Atanda, Chief Mrs. Kemi Jayeoba, Chief Micheal Adegbite, among several others. These people have demonstrated total loyalty and interest in the affairs of the party.

Finally sir, it is incontrovertible that no meaningful development can be achieved without peace. We therefore, wish to emphasize that this state have enjoyed relative peace since this administration came on board. We are, therefore, stating unequivocally that to foist those who deserted the party in time of need as leaders, may lead to disruption of peace and cause great damage to the fortune of the party. As a matter of fact, the present State Exco, which Senator Ike Nwachukwu is insisting on dissolving, was instrumental to the eventual emergence of the National Working Committee (NWC), having voted as accredited delegates at the 2008 Convention of the party that produced the present NWC.

Accept the assurances of our highest regards.

SIGNED:

OYO NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT. OYO CENTRAL SNEATOR DISTRICT. OYO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

1. Alh. (Hon) Raheem Oyedemi Muslim
2. Mrs. Maria Adeniyi
3. Mr. Yusuf Sarafadeen Alani

1. Rt Hon. Asimiyu Alarape
2. Hon. Segun Odeunmi
3. Alhaji Laide Bsuari

1. Hon. Sina Alabi
2. Dr. Babalola Owolabi
3. Chief Gabriel Olayiwola

DIGEST

More people fear losing independence in old age than death

MORE people are afraid of losing their independence in old age and being forced to move into a nursing home than they are of dying, a survey has found.

As elderly care becomes more expensive, more than two in three Britons fear becoming a burden on friends or family in their old age, it found.

While three in four people said they feared getting ill in their old age, just 29 per cent said they feared dying, according to the survey.

The research, from the national Disabled Living Foundation charity, also found almost half of people feared moving into an aged care facility.

The government has previously warned the health care system was facing a "time bomb" due to Britain's ageing population.

Ministers have previously said Britain's ageing population poses as big a threat to the country as climate change, as the government grapples with how to help the 1.7 million more people expected to need social care over the next two decades.

With the recession leaving many retirees and people approaching retirement with substantially less pensions, almost half feared being financially secure as they aged.

The research also found that almost two thirds of people currently help an elderly "family mem-

ber, neighbour or friend with basic tasks to help them 'get by'.

Christine Shaw, the DLF's chief executive, said with an ageing population, the system needed more people living in their homes for longer.

"People want to remain in control over their own lives, to be able to do things for themselves and carry out everyday living tasks independently, like dressing, bathing and cooking," she said.

"Getting older should not be a barrier to having choice and control over the quality of your life, or be a reason to move out of your own home.

"Many older people just need help, ideas and advice about the simple equipment that exists to help them with daily tasks and to lead full, active and safe lives."

She added: "It is reassuring that ... a huge number of people out there are caring for neighbours, friends and family members who can't cope with these daily living tasks."

Mrs Shaw said the DLF had many services, which could help people maintain an independent existence.

Earlier this year, Health Secretary Andy Burnham admitted the care system could no longer cope with the elderly health care "time bomb".

By 2020, one in four adults in Britain will be pensioners, increas-



PEOPLE still wanted to remain independent in old age rather than be moved in to a care home, the study found

ing even more the burden on the benefits system and health care as well as their families and carers.

In 1948 life expectancy was 66 while today it is 78 and for the first time there are more people over the age of 65 than there are under the age of 18, according to Department of Health figures.

Under reforms announced in

July, a compulsory charge to cover the cost of nursing home care or home help could be introduced with "National Care Service" also established.

This could mean every adult could be forced to pay £20,000 upon their retirement to cover the cost of old age care services that they might never need or use,

under the government's proposals contained in the Elderly Care Green Paper.

Latest government figures showed about 48,000 pensioners living in care homes have been forced to sell their houses to pay for long-term care, equivalent to eight homes every day.

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

Primary schoolgirls getting pregnant aged 10

PRIMARY schoolgirls as young as 10 are getting pregnant, according to shocking new figures released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Since 2002, a total of 15 ten year olds and 39 aged 11 have fallen pregnant in England and Wales.

The figures come as a shock since until now, the UK's youngest known mother, from Scotland, was 11 when she conceived and 12 when she gave birth.

And they could be higher still since the number of illegal abortions and miscarriages - more prevalent among very young women - are not known. Government statistics show 60 per cent of under-age pregnant girls have an abortion.

Around 300 girls aged 13 or under get pregnant every year in England and Wales.

Since 2002, there have been 63,487 pregnancies among under-15s - almost 23 every day. There were 268 pregnancies of 12 year-old girls, 2,527 of 13 year-olds, 14,777



AROUND 300 girls aged 13 or under get pregnant every year in England and Wales

of 14 year-olds and 45,861 of 15 year-olds.

It is not known how many of the pregnancies were carried to full term or aborted, nor how the girls became pregnant so young.

Nor are there figures available for how many underage boys have become fathers since it is often dif-

icult to prove paternity.

A recent study showed that the London boroughs of Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth had the highest under-age pregnancy rates in Britain.

Britain has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in western Europe, despite a series of Government campaigns aimed at cutting pregnancies. Experts said the latest figures proved children were becoming more sexualised and young girls were engaging in sex early to please older boyfriends.

Sociology Professor Frank Furedi, from the University of Kent, said the figures were "tragic".

"They show the consequences of the sexualisation of childhood," he told The Sun, which obtained the figures.

Norman Wells, of the Family Education Trust, blamed schools for allowing children to believe that it was acceptable to become sexually active at an early stage.

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

Soft drink consumption may increase risk of pancreatic cancer

DRINKING two or more soft drinks a week can double the risk of developing pancreatic cancer, a new study claims. Researchers found that there was a correlation between drinking sugary drinks and the cancer which affects around 7,000 people in the UK every year. They believe that the high sugar content increases the amount of insulin the pancreas produces which could be why they are more prone to cancer.

Dr Mark Pereira, co-author at the University of Minnesota, admitted that people who consume soft drinks on a regular basis, tend to have a poorer diets overall but he felt the drinks did have a real effect.

"The high levels of sugar in soft drinks may be increasing the level of insulin in the body, which we think contributes to pancreatic cancer cell growth," said Dr Pereira. Although relatively rare, pancreatic cancer remains one of the most deadly, and only five per cent of people who are diagnosed are alive five years later. For the current study, Dr Pereira and colleagues followed 60,524 men and women in the Singapore Chinese Health Study for 14 years. During that time, there were 140 pancreatic cancer cases. Those who consumed two or more soft drinks per week (averaging five per week) had an 87 per cent increased risk compared with individuals who did not. No association was seen between fruit juice consumption and pancreatic cancer.

Dr Pereira said that these results from Singapore are likely applicable to all western countries.

"Singapore is a wealthy country with excellent health care. Favourite pastimes are eating and shopping, so the findings should apply to other western countries," he said.

Sign Language



At least they're honest!

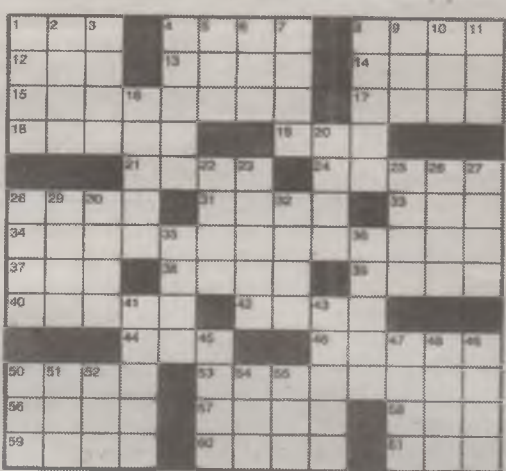
Photo location: Slite, Sweden, by Catherine Coyle

Culled from www.signspotting.com

EASY CROSSWORDS

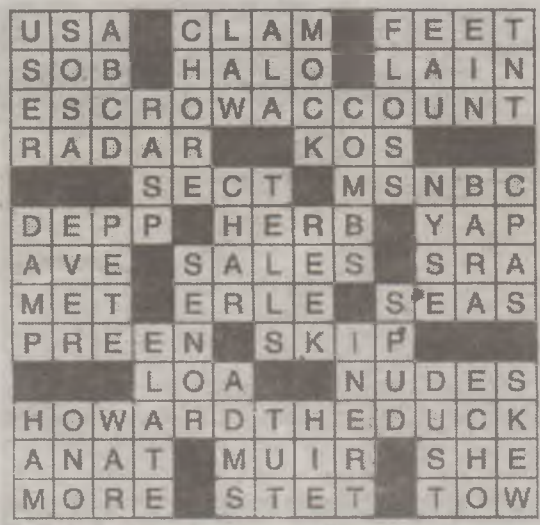
- ACROSS**
- Small leap
 - Onassis and namesakes
 - Kitchen vessels
 - From ___ Z (2 wds.)
 - Lisa of the Louvre
 - Sothorn and Miller
 - ___ stones
 - London gallery
 - Monopoly rent-increaser
 - Guess at a price (abbr.)
 - Pod dwellers
 - Faint-hearted
 - Bank machines (abbr.)
 - Hurdinger
 - NYC transit org.
 - "New Look" designer (2 wds.)
 - Shoe width
 - Wee ones
 - Skating place
 - ___ longlegs
 - 1965 Beatles concert site
 - Chopping instrument
 - Prepare to testify
 - Join
 - Superman's gal (2 wds.)
 - Evergreen tree
 - Inactive
 - British fliers'
- DOWN**
- Comed beef
 - Director Preminger
 - Pound, e.g.
 - Plentiful
 - French for "king"
 - Country motel
 - Stuffing herb
 - Tony winner LuPone
 - Stop ___ dime (2 wds.)
 - Explosive trio
 - Opposite of
 - gp.
 - Aroma
 - Eve's garden
 - Holy ones (abbr.)
 - RC competition
 - Overwhelm
 - Choir singer
 - Business attire
 - 2002, to Brutus
 - "Bring ___" (2 wds.)
 - Ill-lit
 - Served perfectly
 - "Take ___ Train" (2 wds.)
 - TV's talking horse (2 wds.)
 - Whip
 - Mythical river
 - Belle's speech
 - feature
 - Librarian's gadget
 - German city
 - "Night" author Wiesel
 - Jumbo's features
 - Med. sch. course
 - Umps' counterparts
 - GI's address (abbr.)
 - EBay action
 - One, in Mexico
 - Weird
 - ___ de France

70



Solution to Easy Crosswords

69



SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given"- these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

82

	4	7			1			
					5	2		9
			6		9		7	
	1	2				5	6	
	5		1	6	3		2	
	6	4				3	9	
	9		3		4			
1		6	5					
			7			8	1	

Solution to Sudoku 81

6	5	9	7	4	2	8	3	1
2	7	3	6	1	8	4	5	9
1	8	4	3	9	5	2	7	6
5	1	2	8	6	7	3	9	4
5	4	7	2	5	9	1	6	8
9	6	8	4	3	1	7	2	5
4	9	5	1	2	3	6	8	7
7	2	1	5	8	6	9	4	3
8	3	6	9	7	4	5	1	2

News Extra

All the president's emails

In a unique experiment in democratic transparency, Barack Obama – a BlackBerry owner, and the first American president to use email while in office – has agreed to copy G2 in on his otherwise highly confidential electronic communications. Each week, we present a selection from recent days

To: Malia Obama <hypoallergenic_puppies_are_cute@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Massachusetts – WTF just happened Dad??

You know, I'm feeling pretty depressed, and kind of sick of thinking about it. But if it's for your Modern American Politics class, I guess I have no choice! I'll try to explain, though I'm not always sure I understand it myself.

Here's how it works: when times are tough in this country, people want an outsider to come and shake things up. But as soon as he's elected, he's an insider, not an outsider, and if he can't make everything perfect instantly, people figure that what they need is a new outsider, so they elect a bunch of people who basically want to stop the first outsider – the one who's now an insider – from doing what it was they wanted him to do in the first place. So the first outsider usually only has a few months to do anything significant. But it turns out the voters don't really want anything too significant – they wanted an outsider, it's true, but they don't want the outsider to do anything controversial, because (as well as liking outsiders) they dislike partisanship.

When the Republicans are in that situation, they go for broke, launch a few wars, get their lawyers to draft a few memos saying that whatever they feel like doing is legal, etcetera, and they figure that it doesn't matter if people hate them for it, because in the natural cycle of events, they'll get to pose as the outsiders again in a few years' time. Whereas the Democrats remain bipartisan, which makes my leftwing supporters furious, because they think I should act more like a Republican and use the power we've got, except that too many Democrats in Congress think they need to stay bipartisan in order to keep their seats, when a new bunch of Republicans posing as outsiders challenge them next November, and without those Democrats, I don't really have much power, so it all turns into a catastrophic death-spiral in which nobody can afford to spend the political capital that's required to make the first move towards acting confident and seizing the reins.

So then the only thing left is to find a way to look like an outsider again, which helps explain why I'm now getting angry and proposing to overhaul the banks. While that's happening, I'll get Rahm to headbutt the House Democrats for a week or two behind the scenes, and then maybe – just maybe – we'll end up with a slightly less terrible healthcare system, before the next presidential election, when a new Republican challenger, posing as an outsider, will have billions in campaign money from multinational corporations, thanks to the conservatives on the Supreme Court having just ruled that companies are persons, even though, when you think about it, they're kinda not.

Don't worry, I'll be upbeat and inexplicably calm again by next week. I am, after all, Barack Obama. xxDad

To: Gordon Brown <g.brown@



PRESIDENT Barack Obama checking on his BlackBerry on his way to the Oval Office

parliament.uk>

Subject: Re: New campaign slogan idea – “I’m Gordon Brown, I come from Govan, and I drive a truck” – what do you reckon?

It sounds ridiculous to me. But on the evidence of recent events, maybe it'll work...

Barack

To: George W Bush <george@georgewbush-library.gov>

Subject: Re: Fantastic performance! Well done!!

Uh . . . thanks, I guess! I'm kinda surprised to hear that, since I felt like I spent a good portion of the speech criticising your administration for getting us into this mess. Still, I'm glad you thought my vision for the country was “incredibly forward-thinking”, “super-clever” and “totally cool”, and that you're going to get one of the 64GB models as soon as it's . . . Oh, wait. You were watching the iPad launch, not the State of the Union, weren't you? Yeah. OK. Thanks anyway.

Barack

PS. Glad you liked the focus on Jobs though!

To: George W Bush <george@georgewbush-library.gov>

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Fantastic performance! Well done!!

It was a joke. Steve Jobs. He's the CEO of – look, forget it. BHO

To: David Axelrod <davidaxelrod@barackobama.com>, Jon Favreau <speechwriter@aol.com>

Subject: SOTU post-mortem

Guys, I think we just about did it – I think we pulled off the “pivot” from healthcare to jobs. The low-voltage electric shock system on Joe and Nancy's chairs was particularly inspired, by the way – they just leapt to their feet behind me every time Reggie pressed the button, which must have looked great on TV.

Gratefully, Barack

PS. But what the hell was Justice Alito doing mouthing the words “not true” when I criticised the supreme court? I swear, when I passed him on the way out, I heard him say “loser” while pretending to cough. Asshole.

To: VPOTUS <joe.biden@whitehouse.gov>

Subject: Re: AHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

I really wish you hadn't sent me this, Joe. I know it's just a link to a news story on NBC's website, but now that I've thought about the phrase “John Edwards Sex Tape”, I can't unthink it. If you ever get sent a link to this video, I don't want you to send it along. All that floppy shiny hair, and – oh, God. See what you've done? Barack

To: Russ Feingold <russ_feingold@senate.gov>

Subject: Re: Healthcare reform – very concerned

Healthcare? Hmm. I'm not sure I follow what you're talking about here. “Healthcare reform” . . . no, it's not ringing any bells. Is it something to do with jobs? I'm very focused on jobs at the moment. Shall we talk about jobs? Warmly, Barack

To: All White House Staff
Subject: Republican outreach initiatives

By now you'll be aware of my non-partisan attempts to include our friends across the aisle in the day-to-day business of governing America, including my high-profile Q&A session with House Republicans. Some have suggested that by purporting to welcome new ideas from the GOP, I hope to expose them as kneejerk oppositionalists with nothing constructive to contribute, thus salvaging the Democratic vote in the midterm elections and beyond. I'm appalled at the notion that I'm trying to humiliate Republicans in public, so I'd like to ask you all to a televised session at the White House tomorrow

for the House and Senate minority leaders, John Boehner and Mitch McConnell. They think it's a brainstorming session on the deficit, but to surprise them – and show they're real friends and colleagues – it's actually going to be a basketball match! Should be lots of fun. Barack

To: Rahm Emanuel <rahm.emanuel3@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Summit with disability rights activists at the White House? What the fucking fuck?

You do have to do this, yes. And you know why. You used a really offensive word, and we need to make a grand, public gesture of contrition. Just do it – and PLEASE try not to hit anyone. Barack

PS. Given that the point of this is to teach you not to alienate entire groups, dismissing it in your email as a “fucking Canadian idea” doesn't bode well. Shape up, please.

To: All White House Staff
Subject: Re: SUPERBOWL PARTY IN THE OVAL OFFICE!!! COME N GET WASTED!!!

At the risk of sounding uptight, I'm overruling this. Use of the Oval Office is controlled by the social secretary, and bona fide invitations, while they may allow you to attend with one guest pre-screened by the Secret Service, will not say “BRING UR BUDDIES! ALSO ANY HOT CHICKS!!!”. In light of this incident, Joe's email privileges are being reviewed. Warmly, Barack

To: Nicolas Sarkozy <sarkozy@elysee.fr>

Subject: Politico.com: Sarko goes negative on Obama

WTF? Says here you've been insulting me in the French press for months. Sorry to disappoint you, but . . . I don't read the French press. I make my coffee in one. I think you call it a cafetiere. Sorry to disappoint, little guy. A bientot, Barack
Culled from theguardian.co.uk

News Extra



LAURA Silsby, left, and Charisa Coulter, pictured after they were arrested trying to cross into the Dominican Republic with a busload of 33 children

The child snatchers

... U.S. missionaries accused of 'stealing orphans' from Haiti



BENATIDE Poulime, 12, is one of the Haiti 'orphans' taken by a group of Baptists

We found Benatide's mother high up a mountain in a tiny house with half the roof ripped off by the earthquake and scrawny chickens pecking in the dust under a fierce Haitian sun.

For longer than she cares to remember, it has been a struggle to keep her three children on the few pounds a week she makes from selling vegetables which grow on the scrap of land surrounding her home.

But now Adrienne Poulime has one less mouth to feed.

Ten days ago she gave away her youngest daughter, 12-year-old Benatide, to a group of American Baptists who promised to give her a better life abroad by finding a Christian family to adopt her.

'There was nothing left for the girl here after the earthquake last month,' says Adrienne simply as she sits on a pile of rubble, overlooking the country's devastated capital, Port-au-Prince, below in the valley. 'Benatide's school has shut down.'

'We didn't have enough food to put on the table for everyone. It was bad in Haiti before the earthquake - now it's far worse. I let her go because I hoped that one day she would do well and come back and help the family.'

She clasps the hands of her other children, Alain, 18, and daughter, Carline, 21, as we talk of Benatide, who is now living at the international SOS children's refuge 20 miles away from her

family's village of Calebasse.

She was taken there by Haitian police the Friday before last, just after she and 32 other children - including 19 from her village - were discovered being spirited out of the country by the Baptists from churches in Idaho, Utah and Texas.

On Thursday, the five men and five women Baptists, led by a 40-year-old Idaho businesswoman called Laura Silsby, were charged with child abduction and criminal conspiracy. If convicted, they face lengthy terms in a Haitian prison.

Meanwhile, the children remain at the refuge - and have not been returned to their homes while an investigation goes on into their parents' decision to give them up.

The authorities, growing increasingly alarmed at the numbers of Haitian children disappearing overseas, want to find out if they were coerced into handing them over or did so willingly.

Since the earthquake on January 12, 300 children have been given to new families in the U.S., Canada and the Netherlands. More adoptions are in the pipeline, many arranged by orphanages in Haiti. It is estimated that 7,000 children could leave the country over the next year.

In many of the cases, the adoptive parents have not met the children before choosing them - they have simply picked them from photographs.

To speed up the adoptions, the White House has approved a fast-tracking system to relieve Haiti's orphanages, which are overflowing with parentless and lost children since the earthquake.

Once children arrive in America and are introduced to their family at the airport, they are taken to special centres where lawyers are on hand to complete adoption papers in a process that can take just half an hour.

And, of course, there is no shortage of youngsters available. It is estimated that 300,000 children in Haiti lost one parent, or both, in the earthquake.

A large number of Haiti orphanages were also destroyed, leaving a shortage of beds for orphans who now wander the streets in the devastated city, adding pressure to ramp up the foreign adoptions. To increase the problem, plenty of parents like Adrienne believe sending their children abroad from one of poorest countries in the world is the best gift they can give.

Meanwhile, child traffickers have begun to operate in Port-au-Prince. They are plucking children from the streets or smuggling them out of orphanages, before offering them to foreigners for as little as £65.

Haitian social workers and international aid organisations fear that many will be sold into paedophile rings in Europe and America, or be traded into domestic slavery in the Third World.

The result of all this is that Haiti is haemorrhaging its young. It is a sad postscript to the tragedy, in which 200,000 people were

Aid organisations fear that many will be sold into paedophile rings in Europe and America

killed as houses, supermarkets and entire shopping streets crumbled to the ground.

Thousands upon thousands of those made homeless are still living in tented towns in the city, including one in the garden of the presidential palace.

Yet despite the new vulnerability of these children, Heather Paul, the international head of the charity SOS Children's Villages, which runs the refuge now caring for Benatide, says foreign adoptions should be only a last resort when 'every effort has been made to reunite a child with relatives or provide suitable care in Haiti'.

Contd on page 40

News Extra



A trainer gets up close and personal with her tiger at Dalian Forest Zoo, China



SHE plants a smacker on the big cat's nose

Delivering a loving nip to the tip of a tiger's nose, this woman proves the big feline is just a pussy cat as she prepares him for his performance in the upcoming Chinese Lunar Year festivities.

The trainer nuzzled with the animal at Dalian Forest Zoo, in Dalian, Liaoning province, where the troupe are putting in practice ahead of the celebrations, which start on February 14.

China has an estimated 50 or fewer tigers left living in the wild, but efforts to stabilise one population in the bleak northeast are starting to pay off, it was claimed yesterday.

Woman bites tiger!

Tigers once roamed huge swathes of China, right up to the now booming east coast. Their population has collapsed due to habitat destruction on the back of rapid economic development and poaching for tiger products to use in traditional medicine.

About 10 still live in the southwestern province of Yunnan, some 15 in Tibet, and 20 or so in northwestern Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, said Xie

Yan, China Country Programme Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The South China Tiger is probably already extinct, she told the Foreign Correspondents Club of China.

'The number of wild tigers left in China is very depressing,' Xie said. 'We have less than 50 individuals in the wild. The populations in Tibet and in the south are still dropping.'

'The northeast tiger is now stable, and maybe increasing a little, but the number is still very small,' she added.

Conservationists say the trade in skin and bones is booming in countries such as China, which has banned the use of tiger parts in medicine but where everything from fur and whiskers to eyeballs and bones are still used.

Skins sell as rugs and cloaks on

the black market, fetching up to \$20,000 for a single pelt.

Activists say tough laws and occasional well-publicised clampdowns cannot compensate for a crucial problem - the lack of strong and consistent enforcement.

Barely 3,500 tigers are estimated to be roaming wild across 12 Asian countries and Russia, compared with about 100,000 a century ago, conservationists say.

U.S. missionaries accused of 'stealing orphans' from Haiti

Contd from page 39

She added: 'Sometimes Americans think that children are better off in a middle-class environment than being with their own family because they are impoverished. I don't believe that. Children love their own families.'

That is certainly the case with Benatide. When I met her at the refuge, she whispered to me: 'I want to go home. Please tell them to come and get me.' After all, this family has been through a lot together.

When the earthquake struck, they ran in horror from their house and scrambled up the steep path to the main road that leads to Port-au-Prince. There, they watched as buildings all over Calebasse began to crumble.

Only later, when it had got dark, did the Poulime family dare walk back down to see the damage. The kitchen and the bedrooms had all disappeared. A crack six inches wide snaked down the wall at the front. The tin roof had lifted off and only one room was left intact.

However, Benatide's family got on with their lives. That was until ten days later when the U.S. Baptists arrived at Calebasse and began knocking on doors. They handed out flyers saying they

wanted to 'help children who have lost their mother and father in the earthquake or have no one to love and care for them.'

The flyers said, inaccurately, that the group had the Haitian government's permission to take 100 children abroad to the Dominican Republic, which shares a border with Haiti.

They said they had an orphanage in a former seaside hotel where the children would have a school, football pitch and even a swimming pool.

Laura Silsby, who set up a U.S. charity called New Life Children's Refuge to help Haitian children the instant the disaster struck, has said from her prison cell in Haiti that adoption was not in her mind when she trawled the earthquake zone for children.

She says she intended to help 'only those children that needed us most, that had lost either both their mother and father, or had lost one of their parents and the other had abandoned them.'

But, revealingly, the mission statement of her New Life organisation specifically says its purpose was to get Haitian children for adoption in the U.S.. Some parents of the 33 children were told that living in the Dominican Republic would be a first step towards their offspring going to new families in America.

Furthermore, far from being orphans, the Mail has been told that none of the 33 children, are parentless or abandoned. All of them have a mother or father - often both, including Benatide, whose farmer father is working elsewhere in Haiti, but returns home to visit the family.

Whatever the Baptist group's exact motives, one of their persuasive flyers ended up with Adrienne Poulime.

'It made me want the best for the children. Alain and Carline were too old to go - that meant it had to be Benatide. We talked about it in the family for about a week. Then I told the Baptists I wanted her name put on their list. I explained it to Benatide and she was very excited.'

So on the Thursday before last, she walked to the waiting bus with her daughter. Benatide had only the clothes she was wearing. Her seven-year-old cousin Alantina was also on the bus. With her hand in her pocket, Benatide held on to a piece of paper on which her brother Alain had written his mobile phone number.

In front of Benatide on the bus were the daughters of Lely Laurentus - Soraya, four, and Leila, five, who had grown up in Calebasse, too.

The earthquake had left the family homeless, and Lely thought this was a chance to give them a new start. He admits the two girls were too young to understand what was happening.

But, he says, solemnly: 'I didn't want them to suffer anymore. I didn't pack any of their things, not even their teddy bears. The American woman said she had enough clothes, toys and snacks for the children. I trusted her because she said they were going to a better place. My last words to my children were: "Please remember me."'

As the bus moved away, one little girl, ten-year-old Loundiny Jovan, was near to tears. She called out to her mother Melanie through the window: 'Bye-bye and please pray for me.' Then they were gone.

It was 24 hours later, the Friday before last, that the Poulime family heard on the radio that a busload of Haitian children had been stopped at the border. It turned out the Baptists had no documentation for the children and had breached an order that children going overseas for adoption must receive written permission from the prime minister.

Next morning, Benatide rang her brother Alain. She said three police vans had picked the children up from the border and

driven them back to Port-au-Prince, where she had spent the night at the SOS village.

This week Georg Willeit, an SOS worker who welcomed the children there, said they are emotionally traumatised from their experience.

One boy has told staff he will never go back to his mother because she gave him away. Another girl talks repeatedly about the bus journey, before bursting into tears. As for Benatide, a lot of the time she stays silent and deep in thought. Every day, she begs to make a call to her brother.

How long it will take her and the others to recover, no one knows. As Mr Willeit says: 'The children must be made to feel safe again. They need a routine with care and attention given to them. They know they were given away by their mothers or fathers.'

'They will not forget that for a long time, if ever. They should grow up in Haiti knowing their own roots and customs with family members around. They ought not to be sent to live in another country.'

Of course, not everyone would agree with him. The arrested Baptists refuse to admit they did anything wrong.

HEALTH REPORT

Stop cancer, because you can

By Ruby Rabi

The saying *Prevention is better than cure* is an old truth. A truth said and heard so often that it has become a worn cliché. But doesn't help? Rarely. No one appears to pay any attention to it. This could be why the IHVN brought it into the front burner in line with the theme of this year's version of World Cancer Day.

Last Thursday, officials of Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) met with media representatives in Abuja. The main message the officials preached ran along this line: Prevention, especially in reference to cancer, is better than cure.

Thursday February 4 was the day on which the institute joined the rest of the world to mark the 2010 World Cancer Day on the theme Cancer can be prevented too, the idea being to raise awareness on the possibilities that, with the right attitudes, cancer-related infections are as easily prevented as other afflictions.

Dr Patrick Dakum, the Chief of Party & Project Director of the Institute who said the institute was working at expanding prevention and treatment of cancer in the country maintained that conscious efforts of individuals at regular self-examination tailored at being familiar with one's body is a cost-free culture that help keep cancer away.

Dakum mentioned safe sex as a vital way to prevent cancer. Cancer is linked to AIDS in instances where AIDS-causing human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) breaks down the immunity and renders it unable to fight off viruses, including the viruses that cause the different cancers that afflict different parts of the body.

Dr Dakum stated, "As part of the observation for World Cancer Day, we continue to urge people to stay safe by practising safe sex so as to prevent HIV and so reduce cancers."

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) initiated the World Cancer Campaign in 2005 in response to the Charter of Paris of 2000 which chose 4th February of every year as World Cancer Day. Since 2006, the Union has coordinated World Cancer Day activities, supported by related bodies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

A highlight of the IHVN event in Abuja included a review of the fight against cancer in Nigeria by Dr. William Blattner, a specialist described by IHVN as being "involved in developing Nigeria's capacity to implement the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in the country." The US-based Blattner participated in the event through video conferencing. He said treatment of cancer remained costly and that, especially in Nigeria which lacks the infrastructure that help healthcare services, prevention and early detection of cancer remain the only



DR. William Blattner



DR. Patrick Dakum

cheap ways to tackle the disease.

How to prevent cancer

• Avoid Smoking and Exposure to Smoke

Smoking is responsible for not only lung cancer, but many other types of cancer. One of the best ways to prevent cancer is to quit smoking or never start. As soon as you quit, and it's never too late, your body reaps the benefits of being tobacco-free. Avoiding second-hand smoke, the smoke exhaled from a smoker or a lit cigarette, pipe or cigar, is also a way to prevent cancer. This smoke contains more than 60 known carcinogens. These carcinogens interrupt normal cell development. This interference is what ignites cancer development.

• Eat Your Fruits and Veggies

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables greatly reduces your risk of developing cancer and many other conditions. Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants, which help repair our damaged cells. Green, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables are your best bet to help prevent cancer. Studies also show that dark fruits, like blueberries and grapes, may also have anti-cancer properties.

• Limit Red Meat and Animal Fat

Numerous studies show that a diet high in animal fat increases the risk for several types of cancer, particularly colon cancer. Red meat contains much more fat than poultry and fish, so reducing the amount of red meat in your diet may help to prevent cancer. A diet high in fat also is major cause of obesity, which is a risk factor for many types of cancer.

• Limit Your Alcohol Intake

Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol regularly increases your risk factor for many types of cancer. Studies suggest that men who consume 2 alcoholic drinks per day and women who have 1 alcoholic drink per day significantly increase their risk factors for certain types of cancer.

• Exercise for Cancer Prevention

When you are exercise, you are reducing your risk for many types of cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends exercising 30 minutes, at least 5 days a week for cancer prevention.

• Know Your Personal and Family Medical History

Knowing your family history of cancer is important to properly assess your risk factor for certain types of cancer. Cancers like breast, colon, ovarian, and possibly other types can be hereditary. If you know that a certain type of cancer runs in your family, let your doctor know. Together, you can determine a proper screening plan and assess your

true risk.

• Practice Safe Sex

Unsafe sex can result in the infection of the human papillomavirus (HPV), a known cause for cervical cancer and a risk factor for many other types of cancer. HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection that is spread through sexual, skin-to-skin contact. A vaccine, Gardasil, to prevent HPV was approved by the FDA in 2006 and protects against four strains of HPV that are associated with cervical cancer and other types. HIV/AIDS is also associated with some types of cancers.

• Get Screened for Cancer Regularly

Cancer screening tests can be useful not only in detecting cancer, but also helping prevent it. Screening tests like the colonoscopy and Pap smear can detect abnormal cellular changes before they turn cancerous. The key to their effectiveness, however, is that they are done regularly. Other cancer screening tests are available and may be useful for early detection, but not necessarily cancer prevention. Prostate cancer screening through digital rectal exams and PSA tests can help detect prostate cancer early. Mammograms and other imaging tools are also recommended to detect breast cancer in women.

How to prevent cancer courtesy of About.com: Cancer

Kwara trado-medical council rises against fakers

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

KWARA State Traditional Medicine Practitioners Council (KWTMPC) has inaugurated a taskforce to check activities of

quack traditional medicine practitioners around the state.

The KWTMPC chairman, Chief Ibrahim Idowu who spoke at the inauguration ceremony in Ilorin said the taskforce was

established to complement the services of the state Ministry of Health and the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

"Today is the first time in his-

tory that traditional medicine practitioners will have their own taskforce and inaugurate it in order to check people of questionable character who hide under our association to do unwholesome

things," Idowu said.

The taskforce chairman, Chief Muritala Muhammad said in his address that the taskforce would work tirelessly at bringing erring individuals to book.

ENVIRONMENT

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PIC: FEMI AKINOLA

THE newly acquired flood control equipment in Lagos

Harmattan haze: NIMET cautions motorists

THE Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) has advised motorists to adhere strictly to traffic regulations following the presence of Harmattan dust haze over the northern part of the country.

A statement issued on Sunday in Abuja by Mrs Theresa Ushie, the Information Officer of the agency, said the dust haze had led to the cancellations and diversion of flights in some airports.

According to the statement, the dust haze is in conformity with the expected weather pattern during this

period.

"NIMET is monitoring and tracking the lifting of dust particles at the source regions and their likely trajectories. Our observation has indicated increased and continuous raising of dust particles in the past two days.

"This is coupled with the increase in the speed of the northern winds which favours the transport of substantial amount of the dust particles into the northern parts of the country.

"Drivers are advised to be cautious and adhere strictly to road traffic reg-

ulations. This may also affect flight operations and other economic and human activities," the statement said.

According to the statement, the current transport of significant dust haze into the country has reduced horizontal visibility in the northern parts to between 200-800 millimetres.

The development had led to the cancellations and diversion of flights at Maiduguri, Kano and Kaduna, it said, adding that the dust haze would gradually move southwards and reduce horizontal visibility in the next 24 hours. (NAN)

Petrol pipelines pollute water boreholes in Lagos community

By Nasir Imam

AN environmental group, Environmental Rights Action and Friends of the Earth, Nigeria ERA/FoEN fact-finding team visited an estate in Lagos on two occasions, was reliably informed by affected residents of the discovery of petrol gushing from the taps powered by water pumping machines since October 2008.

A statement from ERA/FoEN said monitors visited Diamond Estate, a prototype housing property with about 550 houses located along Iyana Iba-Igando Expressway in Idimu-Isheri Olofin Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos on

February 4 and 5, 2010 in response to a Save Our Soul (SOS) received on ERA's dedicated green lines.

The occupants had initially thought the petrol which was in small quantity but very visible in the water would finally stop. But alas, it did not. Rather, the quantity increased significantly and posed a grave danger to the owners of the plots as they feared any careless spark may ignite an explosion.

It was learnt that several complaints to the PPMC on the dangers posed by the incidences of petrol coming from the taps were not acknowledged by the agency. When the complaints continued to pour

in, what had seemed like a response from the agency by way of sending its officials to sample the polluted boreholes from their individual boreholes and tanks which they were subsequently told to stop using.

Jemima Ayangba, wife of one of the affected homeowners told ERA/FoEN that before the Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC) asked affected plots to stop using their boreholes in January this year, anytime the household pumped water, the smell of petrol hung so thick that a young man that visited the family and struck a match to light his cigarette actually triggered a minor incident.

Water hyacinth worries riverine community in Epe

RIVERINE communities in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State on Saturday lamented the menace of water hyacinth which has hampered fishing and water transportation in the area.

Chief Taiwo Yusuf-Gbadamosi, the traditional head of Ito-Omu, a creek community in the area, described water hyacinth as a recurring challenge which has made life miserable for the residents.

Yusuf-Gbadamosi told newsmen that the weeds had hindered fishing and water transportation, two major occupations of the people of the community in the past two months.

The community leader explained that movement from Ito-Omu to neighbouring Oriba and Orepete, which ordinarily took not more than 15 minutes, now took not less than two hours because of the hyacinth.

"It has not been a pleasant experience for us in this community since these weeds resurfaced on our waters. People can no longer carry out their daily economic activities to sustain themselves.

"The inability to engage in their traditional fishing and water transportation businesses has compounded the rate of poverty amongst our people," he said.

Yusuf-Gbadamosi said that unlike in the past when sophisticated equipment was used to clear the hyacinth, the residents are currently removing the weeds manually, using canoes to evacuate them.

Efforts to get reactions from the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) were unsuccessful as its Area Manager, Mr Joseph Ororo, was not available. (NAN)

Lagos battle flood with new equipment

From Femi Akinola, Lagos

AS another round of rainy season approaches, Lagos State Government has procured and commissioned flood fighting equipments which would be deployed to all flood prone areas in the city.

The equipment, which includes D'Siltman machine, a self loading machine used for the removal of silts and debris from blocked manholes; suction machine, useful for evacuating slurry and pools of water from blocked manholes and inlets were shown to journalists at weekend.

Other flood fighting equipment commissioned are the flushing machine which is used to clear blocked conduits; Dual Suction and Flushing machine which combines the functions of suction and flushing machines in dislodging slurry and water and Nalahman machine, which is most effective in cleaning drains and evacuating the debris simultaneously, without leaving it on the road.

During the commis-

sioning ceremony, the State Commissioner for the Environment, Dr. Muiz Banire, said that the procurement of the equipment was in the government's promise to battle all the flood prone areas in the state to ensure Lagos become a flood free state.

He stated further that the equipment are primarily to clear tertiary drains noting that they would complement various on-going drainage projects embarked upon to ensure free flow of water from various collectors to the lagoon.

The commissioner assured that the era of leaving debris and silts on road is gone in Lagos stressing that the Emergency Flood Abatement Directorate of his ministry has been empowered more than ever to tame the menace of flood this rainy session. Banire added that the new equipment would enhance efficiency in flood control operations as machine would now replace the previous manual labour, which he observed was time consuming, slow and dangerous.



Emirs, Obas and Chiefs tasked on environment

By Nasir Imam

TRADITIONAL rulers and district heads in Nigeria have been called upon to take active interest in confronting environmental challenges in their domains in order to sustain quality environment for living.

A statement from the SA (Media) to the Minister of Environment, Rotimi Ajayi, said the Minister of Environment, John Odey made this call in Gashua, Yobe State

weekend when he inaugurated projects executed by the North East Zone Arid Development Program in Yobe State.

The Minister pointed out that the solutions to the most crucial Environmental Challenges in the country lie in the villages and rural communities.

He noted that since traditional rulers and district heads are in close contact with the people living at the grassroots, they should encourage them on issues of envi-

ronmental sustainability and preservation.

He said "Only through the active collaboration with the communities at the grassroots can our development projects be meaningfully implemented.

"It is no longer news today that climate change is the most serious environment problem facing humanity. This phenomenon is giving rise to desertification and drought.

"What is however news is the fact

that combating desertification is synonymous with combating the impacts of climate change in the dry areas. The two phenomena also have their roots in unsustainable socio-economic development practices.

"As the effects of both desertification and climate change are being felt, particularly by the poor and vulnerable groups, revolutionary adaptation solutions are urgently needed.

Ondo to partner NESREA on environment

Leye Adewumi, Akure

THE Ondo State Ministry of Environment last week in Akure expressed its readiness to partner with National Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) to improve quality of the environment.

The Commissioner for Environment, Mr Lebi Adepiti, stated that the ministry would also endeavor to "protect our natural resources and ensure sustainable development".

Adepiti made this known while declaring open an in-house Technical Training Workshop on Environmental Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement organized by NESREA to sensitize the staff.

According to the Commissioner, managing the environment on a sustainable basis to provide a good standard of living for the people has become the major challenges facing mankind.

"With the pattern or model of development, our daily activities have been shown to be wasteful in the use of natural resources which are exhaustible and quite often have been harmful to the environment.

Earlier, NESREA Director-General, Dr. Njeris Benebo, said that the vision of the agency was to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for Nigerians.

According to Benebo, who was represented by NESREA Deputy-Director (Environmental Education and Awareness), Mrs Oti Florence, the agency was principally established by the Federal Government to inspire personal and collective responsibility in building an environmentally conscious society.

Oxford don lauds Cross River forest

From Muhammad Bello, Port Harcourt

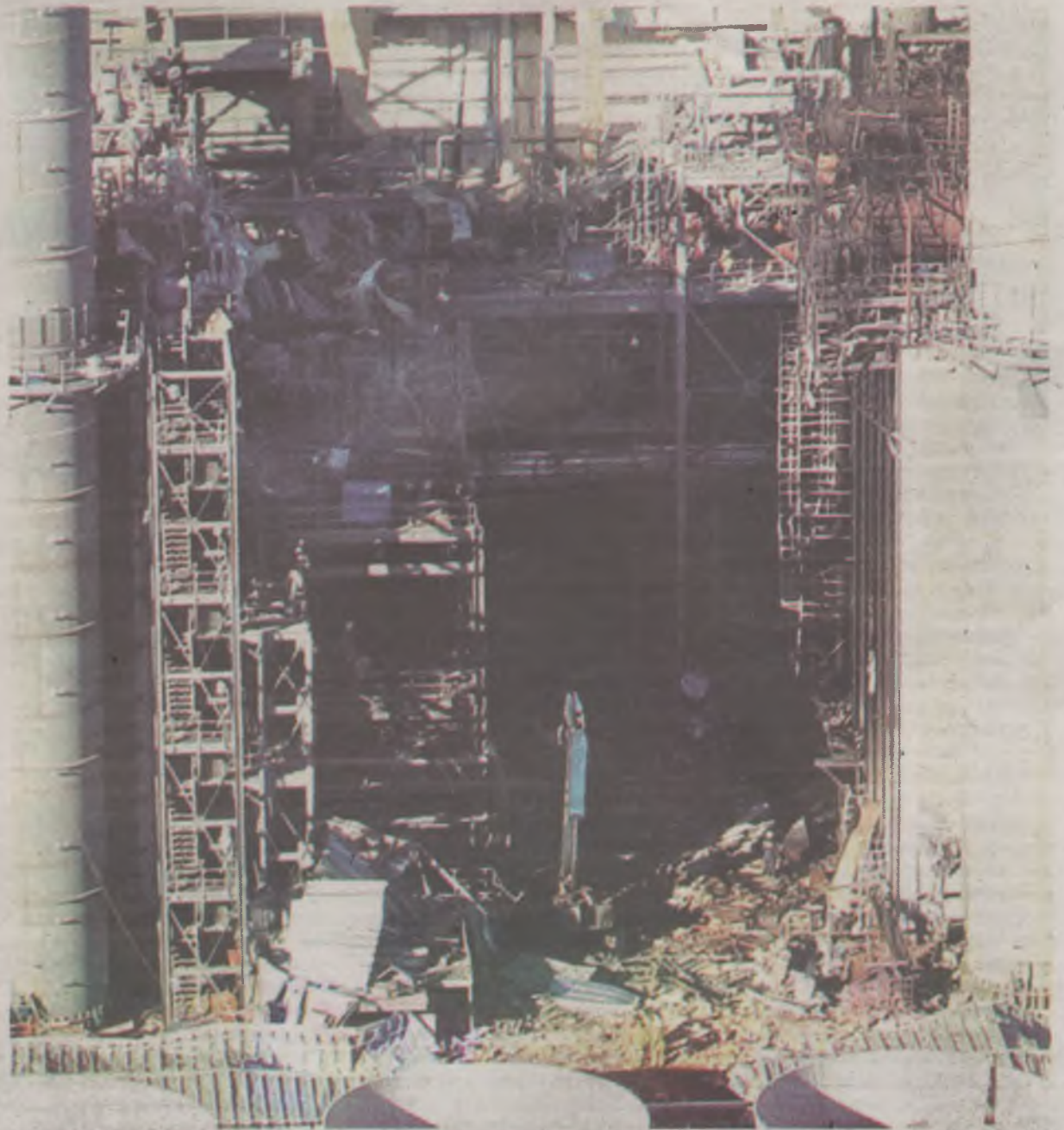
THE forest in Cross River is magnificent and the richest in Africa which makes it a treasure to the continent while the human resources in the forest sector is a pride to work with and they make the state a pleasant place an Oxford University don has disclosed.

Professor Yabinder Malhi, an expert in tropical forest, who was part of a team from the Nature Conservation and Resource Centre (NCRC), Ghana, which visited the state, said two prominent resources of the state include the forest and human resources.

The state's forest has 2000 hectares at Afi with a 11.3 million carbon emission in the forest, Ekuri 11.9 million carbon emission. This has a million dollar potentials and the capacity of generating 3 million jobs annually.

This potentials are what drew the NCRC to the state making the former to conduct a work plan with the Forestry Commission with a view to undertaking a pilot project in the state. The NCRC had come up with two draft reports and believed they are viable and attractive to foreign financiers.

Leader of the NCRC delegation, Mr John Mason submitted two draft reports of an eleven day study on the carbon stock of some forest projects in the state, said the state has achieved some progress within a short period following the meeting which was held in Ghana on September 11, 2009 and culminated in the team from Katoomba REDD Plus Group Project coming to the state, adding that they had gathered a lot of information during the 11 days they spent in the state in collaboration with the Forestry Commission.



MASSIVE explosion that rocked the Kleen Energy Systems plant in Middletown, Connecticut on Sunday, killing at least five people

Army environmental institute matriculates 280

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

THE Institute of Technology and Environmental Studies (ITES) of the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering (NASME), has continued to wax stronger with six courses accredited by the National Board for Technical Education, the Rector, Major General A.A. Olaniyi has said.

Also, the institute, at the weekend, matriculated 280 fresh students for the 2009/2010 academic session at a ceremony which the rector who is also the Commandant of NASME,

described as the starting journey for a strict discipline.

General Olaniyi who was flanked by Professor Saint Gbilekaa, the Chief of Staff to Governor Gabriel Suswam of Benue State and management staffs of the institute including the Director of Studies, Brig. General P.O. Reis, the Registrar, Colonel J.S. Malu as well as the Heads of Departments, at the institute's campus in Makurdi, said the six courses at ITES will afford the students an excellent future.

He named the courses as Architectural Technology, Building Technology,

Civil Engineering, Computer Science, Quantity Surveying and Surveying and Geo-informatics which have been duly accredited to both National Diploma and Higher national Diploma certificates. It was the 5th matriculation since the institute was established in 2002.

The Nigerian Army Council approved the restructuring of the former Institute of Technology and Environmental Studies to become Army Institute of Technology and Environmental Studies (NAITES) which goal is to serve as a "Think Tank" outfit of the force.



Space technology and sustainable environment

By Umar Kadiri Afegbua

FROM flat earth, to round the earth and oblate earths, people's understanding of the shape of our planet and its landscapes has changed dramatically over the course of history. National hazard mitigation, the effects of global warming, and optimum use of water resources and environmental preservation are areas of major concern for humankind today.

The implication of space geology when applied to natural hazards associated with earthquakes and volcanoes are well known in the geoscience community, but space geodesy also has an impact beyond these traditional solid earth hazards.

One of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century is securing fresh water for increasing worldwide population and for sustaining our natural environment. In an effort to secure fresh water however, man often creates more problems to the environment he lives as presently witnessed in Port-Harcourt, rivers state where the quest for underground water results in subsidence along the coast. Geoscience helps us to strike a balance between acceptable living standard and environmental preservation. Our existence is dependent on our ability to understand, utilize, manage and maintain the environment we live in. Geoscience is the science that seeks to achieve these goals.

As the population continues to grow we must learn to manage our resources effectively and our environment wisely. This forms the underlying consideration for the organization of the conference: "Preserving the environment: the role of geoscientist", which will soon take place at the CGG observatory site, Toro, Bauchi State. The theme of the conference which is put together by the Nigeria Union of Planetary and Radio science (NUPRS) in collaboration with the centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics (CGG) is very apt especially now there is increasing awareness on the imperative of studying the laws governing the world around us. Securing our environment and mitigating the impacts of major disasters confronting the human race, as witnessed recently in the Haiti January 12, 2010 earthquake with magnitude that killed almost 200,000 people, is very pertinent to sustainable environment today.

In the same vein, disasters that besieged the human race across the globe couple with

the current questions being asked by many Nigerians about our safety in this part of world make this conference very crucial. The geosciences, which comprise of scientists in the various fields of earth and space science, will inevitable play an increasingly important role in this process in Nigeria.

The conference therefore hopes to discuss and make useful recommendations on issues like; "space technology in the environment", the role of GNSS in preserving the earth environment, the role of hydrological sciences in the environmental preservation and sustainability", etc.

Therefore, there is a need



MR. John Odey, Minister of environment

to determine precise ground locations for use in variety of innovative and emerging applications such as earth observation mobile-phone technology and rescue application. Location information is pertinent to a large number of remote sensing applications. Some of which support strategic tasks such as disaster management, earth monitoring, protecting the environment, management of natural resources, and food production. These can be achieved through the global navigation satellite system (GNSS).

Geoscientists take measurements on the surface of the earth to make inferences about the physical state of the interior, from the earth crust, through the mantle right to the earth's core. During the last decade much improved models have been obtained on how the crust, mantle and core interact along mid-ocean ridges, ocean trenches and in the transition zone between mantle and core.

Coincidentally, as geoscientists gather in Toro to brainstorm on better technologies for effective and efficient management and sustenance of our environment, the observatory site of the centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics located in Toro, Bauchi state would be commissioned. The site that would house the monitoring equipment (Global positioning system network, very long baseline Interferometry, satellite laser ranging etc.), is mandatorily established for

the studies of earth structures and earth movement. Or simply put, the equipments are needed to tell us how safe is our plate (The world is actually made up of plate-like structures.)

The commissioning of the observatory would therefore offer new challenges to our space and environmental scientists. This is so because Geodesy and Geodynamics form an integral parts of the nation's participation in all international co-operative programmes and projects for applied space Geodesy consistent with the goals for national security, economic development and environmental hazards monitoring and management.

The Nigerian space programmes and policy have been defined to consist of six activity centres distributed geographically within the context of the national territorial boundaries. The centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics Toro is one of the activity centres, dedicated to the study of crustal movements within the context of the Nigerian older basement complex as well as the West African craton using telemetric space satellite applications.

Since inception in 2002, CGG has established and operating network of seismographic stations in three geographic regions of Nigeria, with plans to cover other regions soon, for geo-hazard monitoring and presently installing GPS for monitoring of slightest movement of the earth, for weather or climatic change monitoring etc. the centre has also produced a preliminary Geo-hazard map of Nigeria showing some areas susceptible to natural disasters like subsidence, landslides, volcanic eruption etc.

Advanced countries of the world have fully capitalized on this and have continued to develop their nations through intensive research in space science technology. Nigeria therefore has no alternative but struggle to join the world space race, because it is observed that space activities have so much enabled unprecedented exploration in the environment around earth and extending even deeper into our universe and its origin.

Umar Kadiri Afegbua, is with Centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics, Toro-Bauchi State



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One dies as truck plunges into river

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

ONE person died while eight others sustained serious injuries Sunday morning when a truck fell into a river at Abaji, along the Abuja-Lokoja highway.

An eyewitness said the accident occurred when the truck without number plate veered off the road while on top speed and plunged inside the river, leaving one person dead.

Our reporter learnt that the

truck driver was over speeding on a sloppy road while approaching the bridge at Abaji, when he suddenly lost control.

The Abaji Unit Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Mr. Joseph Ojerinde,

attributed the accident cause to speed violation, saying the corpse has been deposited at the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital's Morgue, while the injured passengers are receiving treatment at Abaji General Hospital.



PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH

AN accident scene where one person died on Sunday at Abaji.

Aleiro denies calling for return of 'okada'

By Nasir Imam

THE FCT Minister, Senator Adamu Aliero has denied newspaper reports that he will soon re-introduce commercial motorcycles (okadas) operation in the city centre.

Senator Aliero's office called the report as baseless and unfounded, adding that the minister never contemplated such action.

He said commercial motorcycles are still restricted to the satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory and any cyclist caught would have his motorcycle impounded and the rider will be prosecuted.

"The Ministerial Task Force constituted December last year revealed that it has apprehended 2,664 commercial motorcycles in the Federal Capital City to date," the minister added.

He said the taskforce further reported that 2,696 unpainted taxis were also impounded; while 232 vehicle plate numbers belonging to motorists involved in various road traffic/environmental laws offences were confiscated.

According to him, illegal motor parks at Apo, Garki, Area One, and Car Marts were removed with 18 vehicles impounded and moved to the headquarters of the FCT Directorate of Road Traffic Services.

The FCT minister therefore advised journalists to always cross their facts before going to press and reiterated that no responsible government would allow the use of commercial motorcycles return to the Abuja metropolis.

Man loses N.2m to ATM fraud

By Lami Sadiq & Maureen Onochie

ONE Ojomo Olorunrokan recently fell victim of ATM fraud which cost him over N200,000 that was withdrawn from his account.

Olorunrokan told City News that he had gone to the bank to withdraw money on December 31, 2009, but was surprised when the cash-

ier told him that his balance was N500 contrary to the N214,000 account balance he had.

"When I reported to the customer care unit of the bank, they checked their system and told me that my money was withdrawn using an ATM card at Festac 1st Avenue in batches of N20,000 and N60,000 while the sum

of N150,000 was used to purchase an item from a company," he lamented.

He said after hearing from the bank, he ran home, collected his ATM card and took it to the bank where he was directed to the control officer, who asked him a few questions to confirm if he had been careless with his debit card.

Olorunrokan explained

that he was asked to fill a form and was told that the bank will not be liable for his loss as he had used the card and pin before but failed to protect it.

"They promised to investigate and said it will take a few days as the machine used did not belong to the bank but it is a month now and I have not heard anything from the bank," he lamented further.

Abuja livestock sellers decry neglect

By Misbahu Bashir

LIVESTOCK sellers in the Abuja Livestock Market in Dei-Dei have accused government of not providing basic amenities that will enhance smooth business in the market.

Speaking on behalf of the livestock sellers, Alhaji Mohammed Sada Kusada said government has not provided safe water, offices and shops in the market.

He said government has also not provided land close to the market where livestock owners can live. "This is supposed to be the largest livestock market in Nigeria but government has not provided stalls for the sellers as well as houses close to the market to live and monitor their animals.

The government has allocated about 3,000 plots very close to the markets but less than 50 genuine livestock sellers benefited from it," he said. He said the absence of a bank in the market has discouraged a lot of people from doing business in the market because of absence of places where they can keep money.

According to him, the recent demolition of illegal structures in the market has further left people doing business in open spaces.

He urged the FCT Minister, Senator Adamu Aliero to provide basic amenities in the market.

19-year-old jailed three months for theft

By Lami Sadiq

AN Abuja Upper Area Court has sentenced a 19-year-old, Mamuda Yahaya of Panteka, Jabi to three months imprisonment for stealing toilet facilities at a garden belonging to one Onyebuchi Samuel.

Police prosecutor, Ayuba Ambi, told the court that

the accused committed the offence on January 24, 2010 at 'Recharge Point Garden', Area 10, Abuja.

He said that one Onyebuchi Samuel, owner of the garden, reported that the accused trespassed into the said garden and forcefully broke into the toilet and stole some toilet facilities.

The prosecutor further added that during investigations, one of the facilities, a wash hand basin was recovered from the accused.

When the content of the First Information Report (FIR) was read to the accused, he pleaded guilty and begged the court to temper justice with mercy, promising not to

engage in such acts again.

The prosecutor then urged the court to try the accused summarily under Section 157 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC).

The presiding judge, Umar Kagarko, sentenced the accused to three months imprisonment or to pay N6,000 as fine.

Sokale chief clarify issue on transformer's ownership

By Usman A. Bello & Romoke W. Ahmad

THE Chief of Sokale community in Dutsen Alhaji, Abuja, Chief Timothy-Ishaku, at the weekend

denied allegations that individuals own the transformer in the area.

Chief Timothy, who was reacting to allegations by some residents that protested at the Power Holding Company of

Nigeria (PHCN) at Dutsen Alhaji recently, explained that the only transformer in the area is overloaded; hence residents taxed themselves to buy a transformer. The traditional head disclosed

that some residents refused to pay the money; hence it was resolved that whoever wants to be connected to the new transformer must show evidence that he/she paid the money.

He said that those that protested at the PHCN office are those who refused to contribute money to buy the new transformer, adding that community effort is needed to compliment government's effort.

Man charged with criminal intimidation

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

A middle-aged man recently appeared before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly threatening to kill one Mallam Salisu and burn down his shop.

Mr. Emmanuel Jegede of Kashim Ibrahim way, Abuja, was accused of committing the offence on February 2, 2010.

Prosecutor Monday Akor informed the court that on February 2, 2010, one Mallam Salisu Umar of Maitama General Hospital, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused threatened to kill him and burn down his shop.

"During police investigations, confessed to the crime and committed an offence punishable under Section 397 of the Penal Code Law,"

the prosecutor added.

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and asked for bail.

Chief Magistrate Josephine Obannor granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reliable surety in like sum, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to February 22 for hearing.

Truck driver charged with dangerous driving

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

THE police have arraigned a 27-year-old truck driver before an Abuja magistrate court for alleged dangerous driving, driving without vehicle particulars and for failing to obey police order.

The driver, Ahmed David Yusuf, was accused of driving his Mitsubishi van with registration number DF347EXY in a dangerous manner along the Airport road.

Prosecutor Yilkudi Dungji told the court that

the accused was arrested by a team of policemen for driving along one-way.

"A team of policemen led by one Corporal Abdullahi Tanko arrested the accused at Pyakassa junction, along Airport road, Abuja, for driving along one-way," the prosecutor added.

He went further to state that when the accused was ordered to stop, he refused, thereby committing offences punishable under sections 28(1) CAP 548, 36 (F) CAP 548 and 14 (1) CAP 548 of the Road Traffic Act.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and requested for bail, which was not objected by the prosecutor.

In her ruling, Magistrate Idayat Akanni granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reliable surety in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to February 25 for hearing.

Two remanded over forged army discharge letters

By Usman A. Bello

TWO persons, Columbus Ekale and Francis Raphael have been remanded in prison custody by an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly forging army discharge letters.

Prosecutor Adamu Abdullahi told the court that Columbus Ekale with army number 63NA/360760 and Francis Raphael with army number 63NA/2086602 were caught with forged letters on January 28, 2010 at the Military Pensions Board office in Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.

He said the accused persons were trying to use the letters to include their names on

the pensioners' payroll while they were not due for pension.

When the charges were read to the accused persons, they pleaded not guilty and requested for bail, which was objected to by the prosecutor.

The prosecutor told the court that the one count charge is punishable under Section 95 of the Penal Code Law.

Chief Magistrate O.O. Oyewumi remanded the accused person in prison custody and urged their counsel to formally apply to the court for their bail applications.

The case was adjourned to February 24 for hearing.

Security guards in court over stolen chairs

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

TWO security guards recently in court denied stealing some executive chairs belonging to the Nigeria National Merit Award establishment.

Mejibe Medubuike and John James Bernard, both security guards attached to the Nigeria National Merit Award premises, were arrested by the police for jointly stealing the said chairs.

Police prosecutor, Mohammed Ahmed, stated in court that on January 5, 2010, one Timothy Dickson of No 17, Yakubu Gowon Street, Asokoro, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused persons jointly stole


10 executive chairs valued at N750,000.

He further told the court that the accused persons committed offences punishable under Sections 79 and 287 of the Penal Code Law.

When the two-count charge was read to the accused, he denied them and requested for bail, which was not objected to by the prosecutor.


Magistrate Omolola Oladipo granted each of the accused persons bail in the sum of N100,000 with a reasonable surety in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to February 23 for hearing.



ITF - NECA TECHNICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TSDP)

INVITATION TO AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR



Preamble

The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) and the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) are collaborating, in the spirit of Public Private Partnership (PPP), to promote Vocational and Technical Skills Education in Nigeria. This initiative is borne out of the outcome of a joint survey of Contemporary Manpower Requirements in the Nigerian Economy undertaken between 2005 and 2007.

Currently, NECA and ITF are working on the following two projects:

- **Project I:** Training of technically skilled manpower through the Training Centres of four (4) NECA-Member Companies and two (2) Industrial Skills Training Centres of the ITF.
- **Project II:** Establishment of Technical Skills Centres of Excellences in six (6) Geo-Political zones of the country, but starting with two initially

In the light of the centrality of the Telecommunications Sectors to the development of the Nigerian Economy, we have considered it expedient to interact with the operators in the sector with a view to establishing a Sector-Specific Skills Development Programme.

For Whom — Operators in the Telecommunications Sector

Date — 18th February 2010

Time — 2.00 p.m.

Venue — Industrial Training Fund Corporate Headquarters, Plot No. 440, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Maitama District, Abuja

For Further Details Please Contact:

Project Director, TVET

- **NIGERIA EMPLOYERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION (NECA)**
NECA HOUSE, 5th Floor, Plot A2, Hakeem Balogun Way
Central Business District, Alausa, Ikeja.
P.O. Box 2231, Marina, Lagos.
Tel 01-774 2724, Fax 01-791 2941
Email: neca@necang.org
- **INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FUND (ITF)**
ITF Headquarters Complex, Miango Road, Jos
P.M.B. 2199, Jos
E-mail: info@itf-nigeria.com

Wife sues husband for turning home to brothel

By Romoke W. Ahmad

A middle-aged woman yesterday asked an Upper Area Court to dissolve her 21-year-old marriage because her husband has allegedly turned their matrimonial home into a brothel.

Mrs Roselyn Ifajokwu told the court that since she married her husband in 1989, she has not known peace.

"Initially, I thought he would change but he still the same person I married. 21 years ago as he still brings ladies into our matrimonial home without considering me as his wife and if I talk he would beat me," she disclosed.

She further told the court that there was a day her husband brought four different girls into their home and she moved into the children's room.

The woman also said her husband has

driven her out of their home for the past five years and refused to call her back.

"My relations and pastor have sent for him but he refused their calls and our children are grown ups with the first born in the university and I need to move on with my life," she said.

The husband, Ifejokwu Samuel, however pleaded with the court that he still loves his wife and they can settle their differences

without anybody's intervention.

Samuel denied taking ladies to their matrimonial home, adding that he has tried all he can to settle the matter but to no avail.

Presiding Judge, Alhaji Issa Yahaya dissolved the marriage and advised both parties to always see themselves as friends for the sake of their children and ordered the husband to allow his ex-wife access to her children whenever she wants to see them.



PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH

REPRESENTATIVE of the FCT PDP Chairman Alhaji Alhassan Gwagwa (right) presenting Mr. Danlami Saleh Yebu (centre) as the party's chairmanship flag-bearer in the forthcoming council election at Kwali ...last Saturday.

Kwali PDP denies councillors' defection to ANPP

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

THE Chairman of Kwali chapter of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Salihu M. Kolo, yesterday denied that two councillorship flag bearers of the party, Abdulrahman Jibrin and Salihu D. Usman, have decamped to the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

Kolo, who was addressing news men at the party's secretariat following a publication in a national daily, which stated that three PDP councillorships flag bearers have decamped to the ANPP in the council.

He said immediately after reading the report in the newspaper, he set up a committee to ascertain the true position of the matter, adding that he learnt of one Mamman Haruna from Wako ward decamping

to the ANPP from PDP.

According to him, he invited the party stakeholders / ward chairmen to deliberate on the need to feel the vacuum at Wako ward after receiving a letter from Haruna.

The PDP chairman said those behind the publication wanted to cause confusion and crises in the PDP, adding that they will never succeed.

"There are procedures for any person seeking elective positions and trying to cross over to another party, as they are to write formally to their former party to inform on their intention," he added.

He disclosed that the two PDP councillorship flag bearers, Abdulrahman Jibrin and Salihu D. Usman representing Ashara and Gumbo wards are still the party's flag bearers.

Mechanic denies breach of trust charge

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

A 22-year-old auto mechanic yesterday in court denied a two-count charge of criminal breach of trust and cheating.

Lucky Ayo of Zone 1, Lugbe, Abuja, was alleged to have received a vehicle with registration number MW 117 APP from one Mary Edward with the promise to help her sell it.

Police prosecutor Yilkudi Dungji told the court that on January 27, 2010, one Mary Edward of Federal Housing, Lugbe, Abuja, reported to the police that she entrusted her car in care of the accused person.

He said sometimes in May 2009, the complainant gave her vehicle to the accused to sell for her, but since then, he

was nowhere to be found, thereby committing offences punishable under Sections 312 and 322 of the Penal Code Law.

"The accused took the vehicle to Edo State without the consent of the complainant and damaged all the tyres valued at N46,000," the prosecutor said.

The accused denied the charge and requested for bail, which was not objected by the prosecutor.

Magistrate Emmanuel Iyanna granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reliable surety in like sum, who must produce evidence of payment of utility bill and reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to February 25 for hearing.

Civil servant accused of beating housewife

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

THE police yesterday arraigned a 36-year-old civil servant in court for allegedly assaulting a housewife, Mrs. Blessing Onuzulike of Karamajiji village, Abuja.

The civil servant, Mr. Sufyan Abdullahi of the same address, was accused of beating the woman on January 29, 2010.

Police prosecutor Yilkudi Dungji told the court that on January 29, one Mrs. Blessing Onuzu-

like reported to the police that the accused assaulted her.

"While in her room, the complainant heard a loud noise from outside and quickly rushed out to see what was happening, after which the accused came out of his room and slapped her as well as accused her of throwing stones on his door," the prosecutor narrated.

He said the accused was arrested by the police based on the woman's complaint, adding that the offence committed is punishable

under Section 265 of the Penal Code Law.

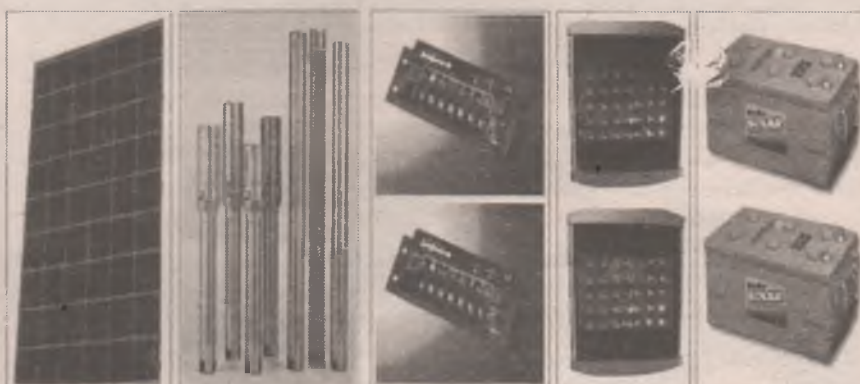
When the charge was read to the accused, he denied it and requested for bail, which was objected to by the prosecutor.

In her ruling, Magistrate Hadiza Shagari granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reasonable surety in like sum, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to February 12 for hearing.

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PIX: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH



THE Etsu of Karu, Pharmacist Panya Baba, administering polio vaccine to a child at Gadabuke, Nasarawa State ...recently.



FCT cultural group entertaining guests at the commissioning of an orphanage at Gwako village in Gwagwalada ...recently.



WIFE of the Chairman of Kwali Mrs. Laraba Danlami Saleh Yebu at a ceremony at Gwagwalada ...recently.

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

NIGERIA
MALARIA BOOSTER PROJECT
2,566,667 DOSES OF SULFADOXINE PYRIMETHAMINE TABLETS
CREDIT NO: 4250-UNI
PROCUREMENT OF 2,566,667 DOSES OF SULFADOXINE
PYRIMETHAMINE (SPs)
IFB NO: ICB/NMCBP/SP/003/09

1. This invitation for bid follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in the Development Business, issue no. GNP/001/06 of 13th September 2006
2. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has applied for a credit from the *international Development Association* toward the cost of Malaria Control Booster Program (MBCP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for procurement of Sulfadoxine Pyrimethamine Tablets
3. The National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for providing Sulfadoxine Pyrimethamine Tablets. Eligible bidders are invited to submit separate bids for one or more Lots described below; each Lot will be considered as a separate offer leading to a separate contract:

Lot	Description	States	Quantities (Doses)	Bid Security	Bid Validity	Delivery Period	PLACE OF DELIVERY
LOT 1	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Abia-Itom	295,500	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, State Secretariat Complex, Abak Road, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
LOT 2	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Anambra	115,235	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, (HSDP Store), Ikeme Anaka General Hospital, Maduka Street, Aruma Junction, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
LOT 3	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Bauchi	352,500	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, Ahmed Abdulkadir Road, By Bank Road, Behind Prof. Iya Abubakar Resource Centre/State Library Bauchi State, Nigeria
LOT 4	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Gombe	177,432	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, (Cold Store), Behind Railway Station, Gombe, Gombe State, Nigeria
LOT 5	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Jigawa	327,795	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, Primary Health Care agency, Old Secretariat, Jahun Local Government Area (LGA), Jigawa State, Nigeria
LOT 6	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Kano	707,320	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, Ibrahim Tawfiq Road, Off Radio Kano, Kofar Nassarawa Kano, Kano State, Nigeria
LOT 7	Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP) 1x3 tablets	Rivers	390,868	A bid security of at least 2.5% of bid price is required	120 days	Within 60 days	Central Medical Store, No 9B Industry Road, Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria

4. Bidding will be conducted through the international competitive bidding a procedure specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Guidelines.
5. A complete set of Bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non refundable fee **N 10,000:00 (Ten thousand naira only)**. The method of payment will be certified bank draft in favor of Nigeria Malaria Control Booster Project. The document will be collected by bidder's representative.
6. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from **0800 to 1600hrs, Monday to Friday, except on public holidays**.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before **11:00am 23rd March, 2010**. Electronic bidding will **not** be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at **11:00 am, 23rd March, 2010**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security as mentioned above, in USD or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency.

8. The address referred to above is:

CONFERENCE ROOM,
 NIGERIA MALARIA CONTROL BOOSTER PROJECT (NMCBP)
 NATIONAL MALARIA CONTROL PROGRAM (NMCP)
 FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH
 1ST FLOOR, ORJI UZOR KALU (ABIA) HOUSE,
 1ST AVENUE, OFF SHEHU SHAGARI WAY, CENTRAL AREA, ABUJA
 NIGERIA
 Tel: +2348067207067, 2348085143679
 Email: folakeayo@gmail.com, itorogodfrey@yahoo.com

Signed
 National Coordinator
 National Malaria Control Program

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH
NEW FEDERAL SECRETARIAT, PHASE III
AHMADU BELLO WAY, CENTRAL AREA, ABUJA

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Federal Government of Nigeria has provided funds in the 2009 Appropriation for the Ministry of Health and the Ministry intends to apply part of the funds for payment of services including Laboratory Service Provision Assessment (LSPA) of Health facilities in Nigeria.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ENGAGEMENT OF A CONSULTANT FOR THE LABORATORY SERVICE PROVISION ASSESSMENT (LSPA) OF HEALTH FACILITIES IN NIGERIA.

BACKGROUND

Medical Laboratory Services play a pivotal role in the provision of evidence based health care delivery. In Nigeria, Medical laboratory services are provided by the government and private sector (individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other non profit organizations). Though services provided often cover diagnostic, public health, teaching and research activities, there is paucity of systematic data on the capacity of laboratory services in terms of measurable support to clinical service delivery scale-up. In addition, previous contribution to health service provision assessment did not adequately capture the in depth situational analysis of medical laboratory services in the country.

To address this shortcoming, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) through the Hospital services department intends to conduct a laboratory service provision assessment (LSPA) of all cadres of public health facilities in Nigeria to provide an evidence based assessment of the infrastructure, staff capacities, diagnostic and prognostic capacity, as well as logistics and information technology compliance available to support clinical service delivery in Nigeria.

JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Presently, different categories of medical laboratory services are offered at the three tiers in the health care system. In general, minimal laboratory service is offered at the Primary Health Care (PHCs) centres, while basic laboratory tests are offered by the model/comprehensive health centers, clinics, maternities, and nursing homes. At the general hospitals, private hospitals and private laboratories, middle level laboratory services are offered. Specialist hospitals, Federal Medical centres and tertiary institutions including research institutes offer top level laboratory services. However, the current proliferation of medical laboratory services does not seem to keep pace with the ever increasing demand for evidence-based clinical support services, let alone provide a match to current trends and state of knowledge/practice in the industry.

Additionally, optimal contribution of the laboratory sector to evidence-based health care delivery is limited by the following factors:

- Lack of basic components necessary for effective medical laboratory function and efficient service delivery. These include basic physical infrastructure, laboratory supplies and basic utilities like electricity and water.
- Inadequacy of qualified laboratory personnel across the various levels of the health sector and the absence of an efficient capacity building system.
- The lack of national standards for establishment of medical laboratories, an inefficient accreditation policy and the absence of internal and external quality control and assurance systems.
- Inadequate local funding and insufficient political will.

Poor data integrity and data disaggregation per state, geopolitical zone and facility type have significantly compromised effective planning and decision making.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the assessment is to identify existing gaps and strengths in the capacity of these facilities to provide the basic and comprehensive laboratory services (diagnosis, prognosis and surveillance) required to support clinical services rendered to the general population.

SCOPE OF WORK AND EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to:

1. Visit all Federal Health Institutions (Teaching Hospitals, Federal Medical Centres, Orthopedic Hospitals, Psychiatric Hospitals, Specialist Hospitals, selected Primary Health Centres) in the country to collect laboratory information/data on the infrastructure, staff capacities, diagnostic and prognostic capacity, as well as logistics and information technology compliance, available to support clinical service delivery
2. Establish the current state of the laboratory knowledge and practice in each facility.
3. Determine the clinical utility of laboratory services in each facility.
4. Measure the impact of funding to laboratory services in each facility
5. Develop a real time Laboratory Management Information Systems (LMIS) template to measure the clinical utility of laboratory services.
6. Proffer solution(s) and give necessary advice on how to improve the clinical utility of laboratory services.

REPORTING AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

The consultant shall be engaged for a period of three calendar months at the end of which a final report will be submitted to the Federal Ministry of Health through the Deputy Director (Hospital services department) in both soft and hard copies.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

From the scope of work enumerated above data are expected from all facilities supported by FMOH

Report is expected to be in both hard and soft copy

BASIC INSTITUTIONAL EXPERTISE REQUIRED

The consultant MUST demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge of the Nigerian Health Care System
- Excellent working knowledge of routine and research Public Health laboratory practice
- Experience in health system template development by Epi Info, Excel software will be an advantage
- Good institutional memory in project/programme management
- Evidence of previous nation wide health facility based surveys implemented in collaboration with FMOH.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the provisions of the 2007 Public Procurement Act.

Interested Consulting firms may obtain further information at the address below from 9.00a.m to 3:00 pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays. Expressions of interest must be submitted in two (2) hard copies with one electronic on CD to the address below on or before Monday, February 22, 2010 with the inscription on the top left hand side of the envelope: **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR FMOH LSPA 2009**

DIRECTOR PROCUREMENT
Federal Ministry of Health
Room 1.1 -1.2, Podium G
1st Floor, Federal Secretariat Phase III
Ahmadu Bello Way, Central Area, Abuja



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PRE-INVESTITURE COLLOQUIUM

COMMUNIQUÉ

Introduction

The investiture of Engr. Chief Olumuyiwa Alade Ajibola, FNSE as the 27th President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers was preceded by a pre-investiture colloquium held on Friday the 15th January 2010, with the theme **Engineering Imperatives for National Development**. The Colloquium was addressed by six specialist resource persons and the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua, GCFR, represented by the Honourable Minister of State, Works, Housing and Urban Development, was the Special Guest of Honour. The Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman, gave the Key Note Address, while other eminent Nigerians and friends of Nigeria graced the occasion.

The colloquium identified:

1. The poor state of infrastructure as a major limiting factor in driving the Nigerian Economy effectively.
2. To enhance the achievement of **Vision 20:2020**, the process must be associated with a drastic up-scaling of Nigeria's physical and knowledge infrastructure.
3. The increasing lack of patronage of indigenous Engineers, especially on Government funded mega projects has stifled the desired infrastructural development and sustained growth of engineering practice in Nigeria.
4. Numerous projects and services are designed and built using foreign expertise with little opportunity for addition of value or acquisition of technology and associated skills, by the indigenous expertise.
5. It is the belief that the current sorry state of national infrastructure is as a result of the inability of the Nigerian economy to adapt or use available "engineering infrastructure base" to provide power, energy, and machines for its development
6. With the current focus on the 7-Point Agenda of the present administration, the time has come for Nigeria to review its strategy regarding the use of local expertise and minimize this unwholesome state of affairs for purposes of national interest as well as self-dignity and national pride.
7. Our country must borrow a leaf from other rapidly developing nations of South East Asia, and adopt a developmental policy that gives indigenous Engineers full participation in all Engineering projects, small or mega.
8. Appropriate framework should be adopted in the case of projects, where foreign expertise is required, for a structured and equitable partnership of Nigerian and the foreign experts, which will guarantee knowledge, technology, management and other skills acquisition by the Nigerian professionals involved. This process will limit capital flight and assure sustainability of the projects so procured. It will also provide a strong foundation for the knowledge infrastructure base which is a requisite condition for sustainable national development
9. The Colloquium posits that, our procurement process should incorporate the principles arising from the Colloquium, as a minimum condition for all engineering procurement in Nigeria.
10. When this has been done and the role of engineering put into proper perspective, the industrial and socio-economic national development envisaged in Vision 20; 2020, will be achieved within a shorter time frame and in a sustainable manner.

Engr. Ahmed. K. Amshi, FNSE
Executive Secretary.

Inside Politics

Edo: Loss of Fugar constituency a lesson to PDP

In this interview in Abuja, Kenneth Imansuangbon, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party in Edo State reacts to the recent state assembly constituency election which his party lost to Governor Adams Oshiomhole's Action Congress, saying AC will be the easiest to defeat if PDP conducts a free and fair primary election. Excerpts:

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

YOU rejoined the Peoples Democratic Party at a big rally in Edo State recently but how do you feel that the party keeps losing elections, the last one being the state assembly seat for Fugar constituency?

We did not lose that election, I think that was the tonic we needed to get focused, get determined and ready for 2012. Perhaps we need that kind of result in order to look inwards and strategise better. Let me congratulate the Action Congress even though there are claims that Oshiomhole intimidated the voters by going on the streets on the day of the election. That was for me, unacceptable. As a governor, you don't go about with your convoy to intimidate the opposition and the voters. So to that extent, I will say that there was an undue influence in the re-run.

But let's take it beyond that, we will meet again at the battle ground in 2010. I have always said that PDP must be ready; we must be determined and willing to fight the battle ahead. For too long, some people have claimed that they are members of PDP but they are dragging the party back. I think it is better made clear that you are either for or against the party. Some of us are leading the crusade of re-branding the PDP in Edo so that by 2010, Oshiomhole will be sent packing from the government house.

WITH the kind of determination Oshiomhole has shown in the two previous elections, do you think the PDP in Edo State can overcome its internal problems to face him squarely in future elections?

Oshiomhole is the easiest person to beat in any election. What he has is the power of the tongue, which even his enemies will concede to him. That is why PDP must begin to look toward very young and dynamic people. If I get Oshiomhole on the field, he will run for me. If PDP in 2012 allows a free and fair primary election, which I know they will, the party will certainly win the people's confidence back. Edo state is a traditional PDP state, therefore the moment there is fairness in our primaries, Oshiomhole will be the easiest to beat. After all, what does Oshiomhole stand for today in Edo State: bulldozing people's houses?

No Edo man wants his house to be bulldozed. An ideal administration would have made adequate arrangement for the people whose houses will be demolished before he does that. But I am glad that the PDP we are building today is a party of fairness, and anybody who thinks that there is going to be imposition should forget because it will not happen in Edo. The party is going to field a very capable person, somebody who will beat Oshiomhole any day, any time. Edo PDP is stronger and determined now. What happened in Fugar election was a blessing in disguise and I urge all our party faithful not to be bothered about the intimidation they suffered in Fugar. But let that election spur them for better political battle in future.

People like us will lead Edo people to victory against the Action Congress. The PDP we have now is not about any one leaders; the PDP we have is about the future of Edo people. The PDP we have today is about justice, that who so ever wins the primaries will take the party's nomination. The PDP we have today is concerned about the demolition of people's houses by Oshiomhole.

THERE has been controversy about the absence of the President, as a lawyer and a politician, what is your view on the matter?

I stand for the unity of the nation; I stand for what is good and just. First of all, I condemn the action of those who went on protest



KENNETH Imansuangbon, PDP chieftain, Edo State

against the absence of the President. The President is a human being and he has the right to be sick. If you are sick, we must show compassion. When that demonstration was staged, I asked myself: where is the love; where is the compassion that we are known for? The President is sick but the law is there for anybody to see, Sections 143 and section 144 of the 1999 constitution.

However, we must first exhaust the principle of exhaustion in law. We must exhaust the human angle, which to me has not exhausted. Of course if the President is on leave or he is sick, the Vice-President automatically steps in. The nation cannot collapse because the President is sick. Presidents come Presidents

go and the nation, Nigeria, remains. Our political leaders have over bloated this issue. But I will allow time to sort out this thing. Time is the perfect settler of such issues. If God says the President cannot come back, Jonathan becomes the President automatically. But I condemn the kind of tension that is being created by some persons. I think we should pray for the President and allow time to settle the problem we have found ourselves in. I felt sad when some Nigerians took to the streets to demonstrate about the ill health of the President. Why would anybody wish the President death? I think we should rather commensurate with the family of the President and continue to pray.

Katsina ANPP joins Buhari in CPC

By Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

HUNDREDS of members of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) including the leadership and prominent stalwarts of the party in General Muhammadu Buhari's home state of Katsina have denounced their membership of the party and crossed over to the newly registered Congress for Progressive Change (CPC).

Led by ANPP's 2007 gubernatorial candidate Senator Abu Ibrahim and representatives of the central working committee (CWC), the 34 local government chairmen and representative of the elders' wing, the decampers told newsmen in the state party secretariat that their defection was in compliance with the directive of their leader, General Buhari.

Senator Abu Ibrahim who equally directed all his followers to follow suit said all persons concerned have already notified the leadership of the party of their resignation, adding that they will subsequently remove items belonging to the ANPP and replace them with those of their new party.

Among the prominent persons that resigned their membership of the ANPP are Surveyor Murtala Ibrahim Safana, Hon Hadi Sirika, Hon Lawal Garba and Hon Yusuf Sule Maiyawa. Also among them was Hon Tukur Idris Nadabo who spoke for the elders at the occasion as well as Habibu Sule and Abashe Mashi who represented the State Working Committee and the 34 local chairmen respectively.

However, state deputy chairman of the ANPP Alhaji Gide Sabuwar Kasa said he and some other members were not consulted in the decision to defect from the ANPP, stressing that as one of the founding members of the party, he has never contemplated leaving it.

Alhaji Kasa who regretted the exit of General Buhari and some prominent party leaders from the ANPP, said others will join to rebuild the party in the state.

Anambra guber poll: PDP congratulates Obi, Soludo

By Muideen Olaniji

NATIONAL Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, yesterday congratulated Anambra State governor, Mr. Peter Obi, for his victory in last Saturday's gubernatorial election.

Ogbulafor, who spoke through PDP National Publicity Secretary, Prof Rufai Ahmed Alkali, urged Governor Obi to commence the process of genuine reconciliation by providing a platform where all citizens of Anambra would feel a sense of belonging.

He specifically congratulated PDP candidate in the election, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, for conducting a clean and issue based campaign as well as his display of sportsmanship in the aftermath of the elections.

He said: "Prof. Soludo's conduct before, dur-

ing and after the elections, his acceptance of the results in spite of the imperfections and his pledge to cooperate with the declared winner are qualities we recommend for all politicians as we move forward to advance the cause of democracy in Nigeria.

"By this heroic act and his resolve to spare the people of Anambra State the trauma of endless litigations, he has set a shining example of the quality of politics we practice in the PDP. We wish him well in all his future endeavours," Alkali further stated.

SPORT

Sporting may
lose Celtic
target Ibrahim

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Hiddink due in Nigeria

Six coaches shortlisted for the Super Eagles job will be interviewed in Abuja on February 26

By Ismaila Lere, with Agency reports

DUTCH coach Guus Hiddink and the other short listed coaches by Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to lead the Super Eagles

“The new foreign coach would choose his assistants

expected in the country “very soon”, according to a top official of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

Initially, NFF top chieftains were expected to drill the coaches in London, but it has now been agreed that they should fly into Abuja and see the country for themselves.

According to the official, three of the six foreign coaches being considered for the Eagles job would be interviewed in Abuja on February 26 and February 27.

“We plan that their visit will be a big media event, where they will meet the press, talk with officials about the job. We will also take them around Abuja and afterwards host them to a dinner

before their departure,” he said.

The NFF technical committee headed by Taiwo Ogunjobi have been mandated to recommend three of these coaches for immediate employment before the end of this month.

Already, Bayern Munich's coach Louis van Gaal was reported yesterday to have declined interest in the job, saying he had a contract till 2011 with his German club employers.

However, NFF officials have said that they are not losing sleep over reports that van Gaal, may not be available for the top Nigeria coaching job.

“He was never the choice of the board in the first place and so they were very hesitant to even include him on the short list,” a source said.

But, one of the short listed coaches, Hassan Shehata of Egypt, has already disclosed that if he is given the job, he will come along with his assistants.

He said he will be interested in the job, but his availability is subject to the approval of his employers, the Egypt Football Association (EFA).

Trustsports gathered that the new foreign coach would choose his assistants after he must have been appointed.



COMING to Nigeria... Dutch tactician, Guus Hiddink, is expected in the country very soon to open talks with the NFF for Super Eagles coaching job.

Lulu: Why we seek foreign coach

By Orkula Shaagee

PRESIDENT of the Nigeria Football Federation, Alhaji Sani Lulu Abdullahi yesterday shed light on the reason behind the Federation's decision to go for an expatriate Technical Adviser for the national football team, Super Eagles.

At a breakfast meeting with the President of African Business Round-table, Alhaji (Dr.) Bamanga Tukur in Abuja, Lulu insisted that the Federation was

sensitive to the demands of passionate Nigerians for a Technical Adviser who will drive the team to play professionally and with discipline at the FIFA World Cup final in South Africa this June.

Lulu and other members of the NFF management visited Bamanga Tukur, former civilian Governor of old Gongola State and a former presidential aspirant to show appreciation for the “Africa Star Excellence Award in Football Administration” conferred on the NFF President by

African Leadership magazine.

The magazine said that in arriving at this decision, their consultants took cognizance of “your strategic focus on performance of FIFA U-17 World Championship which was hosted successfully and Nigeria won silver while Nigeria senior team qualified for the Mundial (World Cup) against all odds”. The award will be presented at a ceremony in Paris, France between February 19 to February 22.

Speaking further, Lulu Abdul-

lahi said the NFF is determined to see the Super Eagles perform creditably at the first-ever World Cup finals to be staged on African soil, noting that “football is one of the instruments that nations now use to position themselves in the international sphere”.

Responding, Tukur acknowledged the power of football, saying that three things, sports, trade and tourism are the issues that unite a nation.

“Every time there is a foot-

ball match, whether in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Johannesburg or Douala, you feel it in the air. The cheapest and most effective way of showcasing a country these days is football.

“I urge you to forge ahead with the same confidence, character and courage. My belief is that wherever there's a challenge, there is always an opportunity. It is the opportunity that you should always look for to lead Nigeria football to the top,” he said.

Handball team departs for Nations Cup

COACH Baba Isa has assured Nigerians of victory as the national handball team departs for the 19th African Handball Nations Cup in Cairo, Egypt from Feb. 10 and Feb. 21.

The male team will departed Abuja yesterday night aboard Egypt Air.

Isa told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on telephone on Monday in Lagos that the team, that has been in camp since January, had trained well for the competition.

"We had a very busy programme at the camp and we made sure the players were taught the modern techniques of the game and ways of scoring.

"Although it is going to be tough, I am sure our players are in proper shape to beat teams in their group and qualify for the final stage," he said.

Chinedu Ezeala-Ogundare, Secretary, Nigeria Handball Federation (NHF), said 14 players were selected out of the 23 that were invited to camp.

She listed the players as Saka Salau, Tella Dada, Shehu Aliyu, Abdulahi Mohammed, Tope

Akande, Emma David, Philip Kalu and Udale Joseph.

Others are Emmanuel Amadi, Aliyu Usman, Samora Samuel, Femi Tunji, Babatunde Abdullahi and Chukwuemeka Ejike.

According to her, the coaches are France-based Rafiu Salami, Mike Tanghai and Baba Isa.

14 players were selected out of the 23 that were invited to camp

She said Nigeria, in Group A with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya and Tunisia, would play its first match on Feb. 11 against DRC.

"Our concentration for now is to win the group match before aiming for the final stage that would earn us the World Handball Cup and the London Olympic Games tickets in 2012."

The secretary urged fans of the sport and Nigerians to pray for the team to have a good outing.



Enefiok UDO-Obong has boasted that the country remains a force to be reckon with in track and field and will challenge for medals at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India

Delhi 2010: Iworima keeps faith in Team Nigeria

DESPITE National Sports Commission's failure to open preparatory camps ahead of this year's Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India, female athlete of the year 2007, Otonye Iworima is keeping faith in Team Nigeria to do well in October.

The former African women's triple jump champion bemoaned the situation, but said in a chat with brilafm.net that she believes Nigerian athletes are always personally determined to do well at international outings.

Similarly, former quarter-miler, Enefiok Udo-Obong has boasted that the country remains a force to be reckoned with in track and field.

The Akwa-Ibom State-born star said that the nation's athletes have what it takes to challenge for medals at the Games in Delhi, India and believes they will excel.

"Of course, we are a force to reckon with. Not that we are threatening. We are a force to reckon with within ourselves, we are a force to reckon with in the top region.

"We are a force to reckon with in Africa. We are a force to reckon with in the Commonwealth, and we are a force to reckon with worldwide," he eulogized.



SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

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PUBLIC NOTICE

COMPLAINTS AGAINST REGISTRARS AS AT DECEMBER 1, 2009

1. The Commission recently decided to compile data on all complaints against registrars in the capital market.
2. These complaints cover issues on non-receipt of share certificates, dividend warrants, return money, bonuses and miscellaneous.
3. A total of 794 complaints stand against Registrars in the capital market as at December 1, 2009, out of which First Registrars and Afribank Registrars led the pack with 206 and 146 complaints respectively.
4. In percentage terms, these figures translate to 25.99% (First Registrars) and 18.4% (Afribank Registrars) of the total complaints, thus the two jointly accounted for a total of 44.3%.
5. Following First and Afribank Registrars were Union and Zenith Registrars with respective total of 88 and 75 complaints or 11.08% and 9.44% respectively.
6. The four Registrars namely First, Afribank, Union and Zenith Registrars jointly account for 64.82% of total complaints against Registrars in the market.
7. Our analysis revealed that for both First Registrars and Afribank Registrars, the bulk of these complaints arose from their respective parent company public issues after the banking consolidation.

Pursuant to the above findings the Commission hereby directs all the four Registrars to respectively resolve all the outstanding issues against them preparatory to a meeting with the Commission in February 2010 to review the progress made in this respect.

Signed: Management

Rooney: I'm playing the best football of my career

FOLLOWING another match-day that saw Manchester United forward Wayne Rooney's name etched on the scoresheet, the goal-scorer has declared that he is enjoying the form of his life.

The departure of Cristiano Ronaldo in the summer was alleged to signal a period of strife for the reigning Premier League champions, a side thought likely to struggle to fill the goal-scoring void created by the former FIFA World Player of the Year's exit.

Rooney, though, has shouldered the responsibility with apparent

ease.

"I'm probably playing the best I've done in my career," he said in *The Sun* after the 5-0 hammering Sir Alex Ferguson masterminded over relegation-threatened and cash-strapped Portsmouth.

"But also I'm really enjoying my football because it's going well for me personally and the team."

He continued: "Hopefully, I can push on from this for the rest of the season. I haven't really set any targets, I just try and score when I play."

"If I do great but, if not, hopefully the team wins anyway."



WAYNE Rooney of Manchester United runs with the ball during their match against Arsenal last month. Rooney believes that he is playing the best football of his career.

Liverpool must continue winning run - Gerrard

SINCE the goal-less draw with Wolverhampton Wanderers, Liverpool have beaten Bolton Wanderers and Everton and captain Steven Gerrard has called on his Reds to extend that form on the road, as the club take on Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium on Wednesday evening.

And the spirit shown in the 1-0 derby win over Everton on Saturday had Gerrard smiling.

He told the *Liverpool Echo*: "You always enjoy beating your local rivals but it was the way we did it that was

really satisfying, particularly after losing a man after half an hour.

"I thought we showed fantastic character, a great attitude and I also thought we played some decent stuff at times. I thought it was a fully deserved win.

"You could see what it meant to everyone on the pitch at the end and it was the same again in the dressing room afterwards, everybody is still on a high. "Now we have got to take that high into the next game," the Englishman said.



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INNALILLAH WA INNA ILAIHI RAJI'UN

With submission to the will of the Almighty God, we announce with regrets the sudden passage of a dear friend and colleague.

Until his death, he was a senior manager with the Securities and Exchange Commission and has since been buried according to Islamic rites.

He is survived by a wife, children, siblings and aged parents.

MR MAIYARA MOHAMMED BELLO

September 1, 1963 - January 28, 2010

The entire management and staff of the Commission express our deepest sympathies with his family.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

Signed
Management

Eneramo keeps Esperance on top

NIGERIA international striker Michael Eneramo was on target for Tunisian champions Esperance as they picked up a hard-fought win away at Olympique Beja at the weekend.

It was Eneramo's ninth goal, making him the second highest scorer in the Tunisian championship as Etoile du Sahel's Ahmed Akaichi has bagged 10 goals.

Eneramo, who was dropped at the last minute from Nigeria's squad to the Nations Cup in Angola, netted the winner against Beja in stoppage time from the penalty spot after Esperance striker Khaled Ayari was fouled by Anis Matar Bacha.

Esperance thus stay atop of the championship with 33 points from 14 matches.

Closest rivals are Club Africain on 31 points, two points ahead of third-placed Etoile du Sahel, who won 1-0 at Stade Tunisien with a Mohamed Ali Nafkha goal.



ENERAMO

Adigun on loan to Tokyo Verdy

NIGERIAN youngster Bayo Adigun has moved to Japanese side Tokyo Verdy on a year's loan deal from another Japanese side Kash-iwa Reysol.

"This is a good move for a young player like me because I will have a good chance to play regularly in the Japanese second division," the young central defender told MTNFootball.com from his base in Japan.

"It was a bit difficult for me getting a place in the first team at Reysol because they have so many far more experienced defenders than me. That was why I only played friendly matches for them last year and was an unused substitute in a handful of league matches."

The former schoolboy international signed a three-year contract with Reysol last year.

He has already joined his new club for pre-season ahead of the new league season in Japan, which kicks off in March.

Eagles must change attitude - Lawal

By Ibraheem A. Fatai

EX-INTERNATIONAL, Garba Lawal, has called on players wearing the national colours to change their attitudes towards national assignments.

Apparently not satisfied with the manner in which the present crop of Eagles approach matches, especially at the just concluded Angola 2010 Nations Cup, Lawal described their lackadaisical attitudes of the players as unacceptable.

able.

Speaking to Trustsports yesterday in a telephone interview, Lawal said if the most competent coach in the World is employed to handle the Eagles, his level of success will, to a large extent, be determined by the players attitude during matches.

"The attitude of the players in the senior team is a source of worry to some of us who have played for the team in the past. The way they approach matches

sometimes makes the whole thing look as if there is nothing at stake. The urgency to score goals and make Nigerian fans happy seems to have disappeared.

"The players lack commitment. Even if the coach is not very sound, the extra power and commitment put into a match by players can hide the inefficiency and ineptitude of the coach. That is what is lacking today.

"In our own time, we played with all seriousness, determina-

tion and commitment to win laurels for ourselves and our country men. Even when we could not achieve our dreams and meet the expectations of Nigerians, people still appreciated our efforts. But today, even when we are winning, the fans seem not to be interested, because they cannot be assured that the opposing team is not going to equalise before the end of the match," he said.

On NFF's bid to recruit a foreign coach for the Super Eagles, former Roda JC midfielder described the move as praiseworthy, but cautioned that the new coach should be given a long period of time to rebuild the national team.

"The best coach in the World may struggle to make a mark in Nigeria, if the players don't change their attitudes towards matches. To ensure that this poor attitude changes, the new coach should be able to make Eagles jerseys competitive among the foreign and the home-based players. Once, the players know that nobody can lay claim to a permanent jersey in the team, their levels of commitment and approach to national assignments will change positively," Lawal said.



ALGERIA'S Abdelmalik Ziaya, left, vies for the ball with Nigeria's Daniel Shittu during their third place match at the African Nations Cup in Angola.

Amodu to lead Eagles for friendly

DESPITE being demoted to coaching the Super Eagles Team B, consisting of locally based players, Shuaibu Amodu will be in charge of the Super Eagles for a friendly game on March 3 with a yet to be determined opponent. A top NFF source said that the team would consist of a combination of local players and fringe foreign-based players.

"The Technical Committee are expected to provide a shortlist of three to the board by the end of February, but the time is too short for us to appoint him and let him take charge of the friendly on March 3.

"So Amodu will be in charge for that game. But the team will be some home-based players, and a few foreign-based players who will be given a chance to stake their claims for places in the team for the World Cup," the NFF official, who did not want to be named, said.

No opponent has yet been chosen for the March 3 date, the only FIFA window before the end of the season, after a proposed move to play Portugal fell through.

"The Technical Committee are working on some opponents and will report back to the board at the next meeting," our source said.

The current situation is bound to lead to further confusion as to the role of Shuaibu Amodu going forward.

Van Gaal rejects Nigeria

DUTCH coach Louis van Gaal has ruled himself out of the Nigeria job, saying he would see out his two-year contract with German club Bayern Munich.

It means that the former Barcelona coach, who joined Munich on July 1, 2009, will not be available until 2011.

Van Gaal was one of six candidates shortlisted by the

Nigeria Football Federation after a meeting last Friday which ended with Shuaibu Amodu being demoted to coach a team of locally-based players.

But the Dutchman, who has been linked with the Nigeria job since 2005, says he is unavailable at this time.

"I have a contract and I'll respect it. It's not the first time

that Nigeria show interest in me, but Bayern Munich represents a great challenge. I think that Bayern will be my last club, after that I'll go to Portugal and there I'll wait a nice offer to guide a great national team," Van Gaal said.

The Bayern coach is one of two high profile candidates shortlisted for the post.

Sporting may lose Celtic target Ibrahim

NIGERIA youth international Rabiu Ibrahim could well be on his way out of Portuguese club Sporting Lisbon after Scottish giants Celtic tabled an official offer for the promising playmaker.

A top source close to Ibrahim simply told MTNFootball.com: "Rabiu's days at Sporting are numbered. They have held out about giving him a professional contract by the end of last year and now Celtic have officially come into the picture as they want him to join them."

"Rabiu has made tremendous progress at Sporting so much so that he is now training fully with the first team, but they want to get the player for cheap and so they prefer to play a waiting game."

Ibrahim, who shone at last year's FIFA Under-20 World Cup in Egypt, joined the Eagles of Lisbon just before the 2007 Africa junior Championship in Togo on



NIGERIA'S Rabiu Ibrahim may soon dump Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon for Scottish giants Celtic

They have held out about giving him a professional contract by the end of last year

a minor contract, which will terminate in June.

Sporting Lisbon, who discovered the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Nani, are therefore at risk of losing out on the player as a free agent in the summer as Celtic are just one of over a dozen European clubs from Spain, England and Italy who have been monitoring the progress of the central midfielder in the past year or so.

FIFA to conduct World Cup assessment for referees

FIFA, the world's soccer governing body, said it will conduct the final assessment in May of the 30 referees named for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

A statement by FIFA said the selection was made at a meeting of the Referees Committee held in Zurich under the chairmanship of Spain's Ángel María Villar Llón.

The 30 referees from 28 countries will take part in a training seminar in March as part of their preparations for the Mundial.

The statement said the programme was designed to make sure that referees were at their peak before the World Cup kicks off on June 11.

FIFA said the selection process began with an initial group of 54 referees from all over the world in 2007 when its Executive Committee decided to create a Refereeing Assistance Programme (RAP).

"One of the key objectives was to prepare this group of prospective referees for the 2010 FIFA World Cup," it said.

The soccer ruling body said its Refereeing Department, headed by Spanish former interna-

The programme was designed to make sure that referees were at their peak before the World Cup kicks off on June 11

tional referee José María García-Aranda, was responsible for coordinating and organising all the activities involving the candidate referees.

"The RAP working group, a team of international experts in the fields of refereeing technique, fitness and psychology, was set up by FIFA to monitor and analyse all of the information on the candidate referees, involving those responsible for refereeing in each confederation," it said.

FIFA said the latest technology had been implemented in the preparation of the referees both within practical training and interactive sessions. It said the referees' performances at respective FIFA competitions were also analysed and evaluated.

"Theoretical tests undertaken exclusively in English, which has been the lingua franca for FIFA referees for many years, to ensure appropriate knowledge of the Laws of the Game, the regulations for FIFA competitions and the directives of the International Football Association Board were also a regular feature during the last three years," FIFA added.

Enyimba maintain pole position

ENYIMBA of Aba consolidated their leadership of the Nigeria Premier League after they defeated visiting Sunshine Stars of Akure 2-1 as Kano Pillars, Enugu Rangers and Warri Wolves remained in the chasing pack.

The 'People's elephant', as Enyimba are known by their fans, took an early lead through Valentine Nwabili after just seven minutes before Faud Salami drew Sunshine Stars level in the 45th minute through a penalty kick.

Enyimba winner came on the stroke of full time also via a penalty kick converted by league leading scorer Osas Idehen.

Enyimba now have 33 points

from 18 matches, two points clear of second-placed Kano Pillars, who also recorded a home win over Lobi Stars at the weekend.

"We can stay at the top till the end of the season," said Enyimba striker Junior Osagie, who rejoined the Aba club after a stint in Tunisia. "We did not start the season very well but we have since got our bearing and now it will be difficult to stop us."

Pillars won 2-0 courtesy of an own goal by defender James Okwosah and a late goal by the brilliant Ahmed Musa. It was Musa's ninth goal of the season.

Kwara United are third on 30 points after they shocked cham-

pions Bayelsa United 2-1 with Nasiru Ali grabbing the winner on 90 minutes.

Warri Wolves and Enugu Rangers are fourth and fifth, respectively, having recorded 29 points apiece. Wolves defeated struggling Shooting Stars 2-0, while Rangers stopped visiting Wikki Tourist of Bauchi 1-0 in Enugu.

There were also wins for Niger Tornados, Dolphins, Gombe United and Ranch Bees.

At the bottom of the standings are Shooting Stars, Kaduna United, Bayelsa and Sharks. All of them have recorded 20 points apiece.



CHINEDU Ezimorah of Enyimba

THE TUESDAY COLUMN

Sanusi Abubakar

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Jigawa: Keeping faith with the electorate

Some years ago, when Saminu Turaki was still the Governor of Jigawa State, a friend was expressing fears that given the way and manner the chap was dishing out money directly to his supporters at the constituency level, instead of budgeting such funds and embarking on concrete projects, no one would come to Jigawa and say he wants to execute any government project in future. The people, he insisted, would demand to be given the cash instead. Even the traditional rulers and the educated elite were not left out by Saminu who kept sending them to China, Malaysia, Singapore and elsewhere, with enough estacode to keep them happy even after they get back from their paid holidays. Governor Saminu scattered the state ministries away from Dutse, the State Capital, effectively ensuring even the top civil servants do not have a picture of what's going on in other ministries and agencies even as he espoused wild dreams of making Jigawa an international centre for the production and export of rice, sugar, sesame, edible frogs and what have you. Frankly, I never thought my friend Sule Lamido had a chance when he was elected the new Governor. Out of courtesy for the only PRP activist still willing to try, I made sure I was at his swearing-in. Without doubt he was taking over the least transparent, least accountable and one of the least developed states in the federation. Lest I forget, part of its' money, over N5billion we were told, was donated to OBJ's third-term project. I honestly did not envy my exuberant friend at all.

So, when about two weeks ago I saw Governor Sule Lamido at a wedding in Katsina and he insisted we follow him to Jigawa I told him I was not prepared then, but will be with him in a few days. I had wanted to see what he succeeded in doing with the little his State is being given from the Federation Account.

As Governor Lamido was busy with the forthcoming local government elections (due this weekend) his image maker, advisor and sounding board, and my close friend Adagbo Onoja, linked us up with the Director Press Kyari who took us round.

As an economist I was interested in how Governor Lamido's administration was able to recreate Dutse as a capital, how he handled the issues usually bothering Jigawa's essentially rural dwellers and so on. For what it is worth I must say I was impressed with his approach to water supply, road development, and health as well as skills creation. He has done in less than three years what Saminu Turaki could not do in eight. I did not visit any school so I cannot comment on them though in discussions with the governor and from public comments I became convinced that is top on his agenda. We went round four housing estates he was developing, with about 2000 housing units, some of which are already occupied. His 250 beds Specialist Hospital is world-class, and has already started skeletal services. I can go on but the point that really needs to be made is that Sule Lamido has proved, at least to me, that even with limited resources (and Jigawa has one of the lowest allocations from the Federation's Account), Governors can still keep faith with their promises to their constituents. Frankly I felt like packing my bags and moving to Jigawa, after all I have

been told that my great-grand parents came from Dutse. But I love Kano too, with all its refuse, lack of water, daredevil *achaba* riders, as well as arrogant and incompetent leaders who have little or no idea where they are taking us.

But it was not the physical transformation that really moved me. Throughout my stay, and in all the places I visited, I did not see a single poster, political or otherwise, that is pasted on public buildings, signposts or road signs. The Governor has banned them and offenders are prosecuted. This is in stark contrast to Kano or Kaduna, where every public building, monument or caution sign gets plastered with these irresponsible and offensive posters. People don't give a damn that these billboards were erected by companies advertising their products and services, and that these advertisers actually paid our local governments for erecting them. Nor do they care that public funds were expended in erecting signs warning motorists to stop, slow down, not to park or how to get to their respective destinations. Another thing, though not surprising, is the fact that nobody sits on the floor or removes his shoes before the Governor. For those who have witnessed the imperial arrogance of Governors, especially in Kwara, Kogi and Nassarawa, to name the most notorious at various times, where commissioners, permanent secretaries prostrate, sit on the floor or grovel before these elected "servants" of the people, Jigawa Government House is quite a relief. Again, anyone who has attended political rallies in Jigawa recently will testify to the fact they are peaceful and devoid of drugs or weapons. These attitudinal changes that the government wants to introduce are what impressed me.

Talking to Governor Lamido on the eve of our departure it became clear that his approach to development goes beyond providing infrastructure and enhancing service-delivery, both of which he is pursuing with admirable commitment and vigour.

ment goes beyond providing infrastructure and enhancing service-delivery, both of which he is pursuing with admirable commitment and vigour. In addition, he sees his job as that of developing the character, skills, self-worth and dignity of the average Jigawa person. He wants to empower them to develop themselves. Talking till well after midnight, we discussed his plans for higher education, for the *almajirai* and the *tsangaya* schools. We chatted on the future of the north, especially our obligations to the larger Nigerian polity. We urged him to showcase his activities so that others could learn from some of his achievements. In the end, Onoja had to suggest that we let him retire as the election campaign will take him to two more local government areas in the morning. I left with the distinct impression that he knows where he is going and he intends to restore public trust in their leaders and administrators.

These are a few of my impressions. Please I urge you not to simply take my words for it. Go to Jigawa if or when you have the chance, and let me hear from you. Finally, for those who knew Sule Lamido some years back, the greatest change may be in his attitude; he actually listens more now. That to me is perhaps the best sign of greater things to come. On the whole, the Late Aminu Kano would have been proud of what this *dan santsi* has achieved in such a short time. Maybe PDP would one day re-invent itself nationally. After all, Obi won in Anambra. Yeah, if only wishes were horses...

SPORTS REPORT



ROBIN Soderling

Soderling wins opener at Rotterdam

Robin Soderling has won his first match of the year, beating Florent Serra 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in the first round of the ABN Amro indoor tournament.

Top-seeded Novak Djokovic and Nikolay Davydenko play their first-round matches on Tuesday.

Third-seeded Soder-

ling was a finalist in Rotterdam, Netherlands, two years ago when he lost to Michael Llodra, who returned this year unseeded. Soderling lost in the first round of the Australian Open.

In other matches, Florian Mayer defeated Janko Tipsarevic 6-3, 6-7 (8), 7-6 (8) and Andreas Seppi beat qualifier Stephane Bohli 6-1, 7-5.



KAKA

Kaka improving by the day

Real Madrid's Brazilian playmaker Kaka believes he has shaken off a lingering groin injury and his form is improving with each match and training session.

"Last week it was said that (my injury) was something chronic and that's not true," Kaka, who scored in Saturday's 3-0 home win over Espanyol, said.

"I am improving in each training session and each match and I can do the things that I like on the pitch."

"Before I was not very good physically and it was affecting me a lot."

