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VOL. 13 NO. 19 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006 MUHARRAM 11, 1427 A. H. N80



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NEWS

Corruption:
Dariye
replies EFCC

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COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006
(21 - 25 March)
40 DAYS TO GO
ONLY PERSONS PHYSICALLY SEEN BY
ENUMERATORS WILL BE COUNTED



Courtesy: National Population Commission

Bird flu confirmed in Nigeria

Two tests conducted in Nigeria and abroad have confirmed the outbreak in the country of the deadly H5N1 virus or bird flu as exclusively reported on Monday by *Daily Trust*.

The tests were carried out

From Sani Babadoko, Joe Oroye & Isa Sanusi

at the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom in Jos and the Food and Agriculture Organisation Diagnostic Centre, Rome, Italy.

Daily Trust reported that the disease broke out over two weeks ago at poultry farms such as Sovet Nigeria Ltd, Kano, A.M.A. farms, Dankande and Sambawa farms on Kaduna-Zaria road leading to the death or

slaughter of 150,000 chickens.

The symptoms, according to poultry attendants are "swollen head, groin and feet which makes the infected birds wobble as they walk and collapse and die within minutes."

Following the confirmation of the disease, the government yesterday responded immediately, setting aside about N2 billion for the compensation to the poultry farmers.

The Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello, announced this to State House journalists while briefing them on the outcome of the Federal Executive Council meeting yesterday.

Cont. on Pg. 2



Some chickens at one of the poultry farms... yesterday.

Tafa Balogun released

The former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, yesterday walked out of the Kuje prison a freeman after a six-month jail sentence for misappropriating billions of naira police funds.

Balogun voluntarily entered a guilty plea to 56 count charge preferred against him and eight other companies by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The Nigerian prison spokesperson Mr. Kayode Odeyemi, told *Daily Trust* that the officer in charge of Kuje

By Ruby Rabin,
Senior Reporter

prisons confirmed the release of the former police boss.

According to Odeyemi, warrant of sentence allotted to Balogun also includes the

number of days the convict spent in detention before he was hospitalized.

He stressed that the prison authorities have released him based on the terms stipulated in his warrant.

Police sources told *Daily Trust*

Cont. on Pg. 2

Constitution Review: Hearings hold Feb 20

The National Assembly Joint Constitution Review Committee yesterday resolved to hold public hearings on the review process simultaneously in the six geo-political zones from Feb-

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

ruary 20 to 23.

Based on a new timetable approved for the exercise at a closed door meeting yester-

Senate okays sack of 160,000 workers

The Senate yesterday set its seal on the proposed purge in the federal civil service that may sweep off 160,000 workers.

This decision was taken following the adoption of the report of the Senator Felix Ibru-led committee on the establishment and service matters which probed the proposed mass sack.

The Senator Ibru committee had presented its report, November 22, last year endorsing retrenchment in the federal civil service.

Adopting the report with a few amendments, the Senate said it "recognises the need to inject new blood into the system but strongly advised the Federal Civil Service Commission and the Head of Service of the Federation, to ensure that they consult widely before implementing any reform programme."

The report, as adopted by the senate, indicated that the Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed, had in August last year, informed the committee that 160,000 civil servants would be affected by the purge.

day, the Senator Ibrahim Mantu-led committee is expected to complete its exercise and present its report to the Senate and the House of Representatives by the end of

Cont. on Pg. 2

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

"Having regard to the decay in the civil service, all

stakeholders appear to support the proposed exercise (sack) provided government is fair and just in its implementation.

Cont. on Pg. 2

NATIONAL POPULATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC NOTICE

QUALITY CHECK OF CENSUS 2006 ENUMERATOR
AREAS NATIONWIDE: INVITATION FOR
COMPLAINTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD) for the 2006 population and housing census has been completed. The EAD involves division of the entire country into small land areas that can be conveniently covered by a pair of enumerators during the census period.

The Commission is currently checking these areas for quality and correctness. Members of the public are requested to cooperate with the Quality Control Officers.

The general public is also requested to report to the Commission's State/FCT offices if either their houses have not been numbered or visited during the demarcation period (September, 2004 to December, 2005).

The reports, which are expected not later than 9th February 2006, should be forwarded through any of the following:

Physical contact - National Population Commission offices (Headquarters and all state capitals)

Telephone/SMS-09-5239450, 090700097, 08065300551, 08043158878
Fax: 08-5239450
E-mail - cccpnchq@yahoo.com



Reach for something speedy

in the

Horizon

News

Bird flu *Cont. from pg. 1*

According to the minister, the poultry respiratory disorder was confirmed on Tuesday, with the receipt of results of pathology tests carried out on some birds at Sambawa farms in Jaji, Kaduna state.

The government, the minister stated, took the action following the reported mass death of birds on the farm adding that investigations were going-on in some other poultry farms in some parts of the country.

Some states like Kano and Plateau where the incidence of suspected outbreak of the avian influenza has been reported, are still under investigations, he said.

At the federal executive council meeting yesterday, Alhaji Adamu Bello, stated the issue was thoroughly discussed to know its health implications.

To check its spread, the minister said that all the birds suspected to have been infected have been slaughtered and disposed appropriately. He said the FEC had approved the payment of N250 per bird as compensation estimated to cost about N2 billion, he said.

The Minister of Health, he added, has put in place a contingency plan to respond to the human health fallout of the outbreak of the disease.

However, the minister assured that the federal government was responding proactively to the disease in order to contain it effectively.

He advised Nigerians not to panic as those who might have cooked the infected poultry meat should not entertain any fear of infection.

Similarly in its report, the FAO said it has detected a highly pathogenic form of H5N1 after testing at a laboratory in the Italian city of Padua. Suspicions about the virus were raised after the deaths of thousands of birds in Nigeria.

Scientists fear that H5N1, which has killed at least 88 people in seven countries since it re-emerged in late 2003, could mutate into a form that passes easily from person to person, sparking a human influenza pandemic.

So far, victims have contracted the disease through close contact with infected birds. Cases of human infection are relatively few compared to the millions of birds that have

contracted the disease. The outbreak could have devastating consequences in Nigeria where millions keep chickens in their backyards, FAO said.

It would be difficult for authorities to know whether any person has been infected with the virus as mortality rates in impoverished Nigeria are among the highest in the world and people are often buried without any formal medical check, it added.

Agriculture Minister, Adamu Bello, said authorities would kill all chickens suspected to be infected with bird flu and quarantine all suspected farms.

"The outbreak affected a commercial unit kept in battery cages in Jaji Kaduna state, the OIE said.

Juan Lubroth, senior officer for infectious diseases with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation, said the

genetic composition of the virus found in Nigeria was similar to the strain detected in Asia and Turkey.

"The fact that the virus is able to spread very rapidly is of great concern," he said. A team of international experts will travel to Nigeria to provide advice to the local authorities.

Bello blamed illegal imports for the outbreak.

Migratory birds have been blamed for the spread of the virus westwards from Asia, but it is not clear how it reached West Africa after showing up most recently in Eastern Europe, Iraq and Turkey. Experts agreed it was important to act quickly to try to contain the virus.

"What is most important now is not how it got into Nigeria but how it can be prevented from leaving Nigeria," said Associate Professor, Phil Hockey, ornithologist at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology in Cape Town.

"The prospect of bird flu loose in sub-Saharan Africa is a scary one because of the way that human and domestic bird populations are so closely intermingled," he told Reuters.

Thousands of bird deaths have also been reported in Kano state, which borders Kaduna. The federal ministries of health and agriculture have not provided information on how many birds have died or in which areas exactly.

In Kano city, poultry farmers were trying to sell chickens at less than half the normal price, including from farms where birds have been dying.

"I am confused. I lost 10 birds yesterday in my little farm and I cannot afford to lose more, so I came to the market to dispose many of my birds at these ridiculous prices," said Ismail Musa.

He was sitting in a crowded Kano market with 10 baskets that each contained about 20 birds.

A Federal Health Ministry official said on Tuesday between 10,000 and 15,000 dead poultry have been destroyed and the standard procedure was to burn the carcasses.

Meanwhile, the federal government has quarantined the Sambawa Farms on the Kaduna-Zaria highway as a result of the confirmed outbreak of bird flu which *Daily Trust* reported exclusively last Monday before confirmation by the World Health Organisation (WHO), in Italy.

When *Daily Trust* visited the farm yesterday, there appeared to be no chickens in the farm as all might have been destroyed to prevent the spread of the dreaded avian flu.

All the farm attendants were seen sitting by the administrative block at the farm with none going near the evacuated poultry houses. Nobody was allowed to enter the farm.

The farm manager, Alhaji Sulaiman Ibrahim, said he still does not have his master's authority to speak to the press. His boss, Alhaji Samaila Sambawa, the sports minister, is currently in Egypt for the Nation's Cup tournament.

At other farms in Dankande, the situation re-

mained the same where the farm attendant continued to kill the afflicted birds but without protective gloves.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Nweke Jnr, told newsmen in Abuja that all affected birds will be destroyed and compensation paid on each, assuring that measures will be taken to prevent the spread to other parts of the country.

He also said medical teams have been sent to the affected farms but during our visit to Sambawa farms no federal officials were present.

It was gathered that the topic of the bird flu outbreak dominated discussions at the Kaduna State executive council meeting where Governor Ahmed Makarfi, directed that precautionary measures be taken to prevent any loss of lives.

Officials of the state ministries of agriculture have been to the affected farms on the Kaduna-Zaria highway to access the extent of the outbreak and hope to give assistance to affected commercial poultry farmers.

At Sambawa Farms where about 60,000 birds were said to have died, it was learnt that samples of the afflicted birds were taken abroad for laboratory tests.

Although there are no human casualty, the World Health Organisation (WHO) virologists warned that the deadly H5N1 virus that has ravaged Southeast Asian poultry flocks and infected over 100 people with over 60 deaths since 2003.

In Kano, an outbreak of a disease suspected to be Newcastle disease has claimed over 30,000 birds.

The Director of Veterinary Services, Kano State, Dr. Salihu Jibrin, who confirmed the outbreak, said samples have already been taken to the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom, for diagnosis.

The chairman, Kano State Chapter of Poultry Farmers, Alhaji Muhammed Aminu Adamu, while commenting on the outbreak, said that the unfortunate incident has led to heavy losses.

Trust that during their routine visit to the Kuje prisons, they had witnessed the release of Balogun, but could not provide information on who came to pick him from the prison yard.

When contacted, Tafa Balogun's lead counsel during his trial, Chief Adegboyega Awomolo (SAN), said that although he could not verify his client's release, the report could be true.

He said that he thought Balogun was due out of prison tomorrow (February 10), but added that he was not quite sure of the date because he was at the moment in Kaduna.

He however said that his release would have to do with the way and manner the Nigerian prisons counted their calendar which is quite different from the normal one.

He said he was not aware that his client is free.

Meanwhile, Tunji Abayomi, also counsel to Balogun, also told *Daily Trust*

We've not endorsed third term, says Governors' Forum

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
Special Correspondent

Chairman of the Governors' Forum and Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah said in Abuja yesterday night that the Forum did not endorse the third term agenda at its last meeting.

Speaking at the opening of the Forum's meeting, the second in about one week, Attah stated that "there was nowhere in our briefing in the last meeting where we said we endorsed the third term agenda".

He said that the media should exercise some restraints in the way they interpret events to suit their purpose, saying that "this time round, we would

endeavour to issue a duly signed statement of the outcome of today's meeting to forestall a misrepresentation of the decisions reached at this meeting".

The meeting, which was scheduled to start at 5 p.m., did not start until about 8.35 p.m. Attah, presided over the meeting, which had thirteen out of the thirty-six state governors in attendance as at the time it started.

He said that yesterday's meeting was convened to "review the assignments given to members of the Forum at the last meeting".

He did not give specific details of the assignments.

Recall that at the last meeting, the Forum significantly endorsed a comprehensive review and amendment of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

It also took a position against zonal or sectional meetings, which it said were capable of fanning the embers of disunity.

Those in attendance were Governors Chris Ngige (Anambra), Adamu Aliero (Kebbi), Lucky Igbinedion (Edo), James Ibori (Delta), Sam Egwu (Ebonyi), Olagunsoye Oyinlola (Osun), Bukar Abba Ibrahim (Yobe), Achike Udenwa (Imo), Ahmed Makarfi (Kaduna), Donald Duke (Cross River) and Peter Odili (Rivers).

Constitution review *Cont. from pg. 1*

March.

Daily Trust findings last night indicated that the 80-member committee will break into six groups to hold the public hearings concurrently in the six centres.

Venues of the hearings are Maiduguri (Northeast), Katsina (Northwest), Lafia (North-central), Osogbo (Southwest), Abakaliki (Southeast) and Port Harcourt (South-south).

Each of the six tour groups is to be led by one of the legislators.

The group chairmen, all of them senators of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), are Abubakar Sodangi (Nasarawa), Oserheimen Osunbor (Edo), Dalhatu Tafida (Kaduna), Iyabode Anisulowo (Ogun), Ifeanyi Araraume (Imo) and Jonathan Zwingina (Adamawa).

The new timetable as approved yesterday indicated that from today to February 19, the committee would embark on publicity, while public hearings would kick off simultaneously in the six centres on February 20.

After concluding the

hearings on February 23, the committee would consider reports of the tour groups and draft a final report for presentation to the two chambers by late March.

These decisions, a reliable *Daily Trust* source said, were announced by the committee

leadership and no vote was taken.

But there were pockets of protests, with Senator Mahmud Kanti Bello challenging the decision to appoint only PDP senators as group chairmen. He was, however, ignored.

Senate *Cont. from pg. 1*

tation," the senate resolved.

Other recommendation as approved by the Senate include: "that the Federal Civil Service Commission, in exercising its constitutional powers, should ensure that the extant rules are strictly observed.

"That in drawing the final list of officers to be affected, the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, in conjunction with the committee appointed for the exercise, should involve the Federal Character Commission, the Labour Union, the Civil Service Union, the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Council and any other body concerned with the recruitment of officers into the public service.

"That before the imple-

mentation of the downsizing/rightsizing policy of the federal government, a skill acquisition programme should be established to cater for the victims of the exercise.

"That the federal government should ensure that all the officers to be affected be paid their full entitlements; that the federal government's implementation committee in charge of the exercise should provide the Senate with a comprehensive list of affected officers including all relevant data and should be gazetted.

"Government as a matter of policy, re-establish farm settlements in every local government area in Nigeria to absorb some of the unemployed graduates and school leavers."

Tafa Balogun *Cont. from pg. 1*

that he was unable to reach his client because he is still in prison.

Abayomi stated that he could not confirm the release because he has been travelling around and was yet to get in touch with Balogun.

When contacted, the EFCC's Head of Media and Publicity, Mr. Osita Nwaja, told *Daily Trust*, that he does not have to be aware when Balogun is released from prison.

He said the commission has completed its case on the former IG and released him into the proper custody of the proper authority.

He added that if the prison felt he has finished his jail term, that sits well with the commission.

He however said that the commission still has a pending case against Balogun and was determined to follow it to its conclusion.

Balogun's initial 56 count charge was amended to eight count criminal charge of failing to comply with lawful en-

quiries by the EFCC into his acquisition of landed properties in Lagos and Abuja and his acquisition of large numbers of publicly quoted shares in blue chip companies.

He was convicted when he agreed that his conduct contravened section 38(2)(b) of the EFCC establishment Act, 2004.

He agreed that he misused his office to get rich.

Justice Binta Murtala Nyako, in her ruling during Balogun's trial, said that by virtue of Balogun's former post as the highest law enforcer in the country, he should have upheld all the laws of the land and be more co-operative with security agents as part of his constitutional duty.

She said, "bearing in mind the substance of the case and the fact that Balogun has shown remorse during the trial and saved the time of the court by pleading guilty, the judge will temper justice with mercy.

"This does not mean that punishment will not be preferred against him, as his case will be cited as an example to show that no one is above the law," the judge said.

Balogun was sentenced to six months in each of the eight count charges and ordered to pay a fine of N500,000 on each of the charges amounting to N4 million.

Nyako ordered that Balogun's sentence be counted from the day he was arrested, stressing that his detention which amount to 67 days, be included in his sentence, which she said should run concurrently.

Balogun will consequently serve a jail term of less than 4 months and pay back to the coffers of the federal government the sum of N4 million.

He is also to forfeit all interests in the case and turn over all his assets to the federal government.

News

We were trailed from Kaduna - Naja'atu

Hajiya Naja'atu Muhammad, wife of a renowned journalist, Dr. Saleh Halliru, has said that her husband was trailed and shot by unknown gunmen at Utako district in Abuja for unknown reasons.

Hajiya Naja'atu, a critic of President Obasanjo's administration, told this reporter in her Wuse residence, Abuja that a strange vehicle started trailing her and the husband from Kaduna when they were returning to Abuja on Sunday.

"When we realized that on several occasions the vehicle will over take us then slow down for us to pass, I told my husband to park at Suleja by the express and allow it go far. Thereafter, we drove into Abuja safely. He took me to Sami Wadata clinic where I was admitted. It was my ailment that brought me to Abuja for medication," she said.

Hajiya Naja'atu said the next day being Monday, Dr. Halliru brought food and other provisions to her in the morning and stayed up to 10:45am before he left for his office at Utako.

"After about one hour to one hour 30 minutes, the medical doctor came looking after me, came in and told me that something has happened to my husband but I shouldn't worry he will soon be alright. I asked if it was an accident, he said no.

"The doctor led me to where my husband was lying in the pool of his blood. It was then I was told that he was shot by gunmen at Utako on his way to his office. There and then, I recalled something that happened the previous night when he was with me in the hospital. Somebody came in and told us that some fierce looking people in a bus came into the hospital premises and parked near our

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

car. They looked round and left," she said.

Naja'atu said though she would not want to draw a conclusion on who did what or blame the attack on anybody, "I am still wondering why a man like Saleh should be attacked. He is on his own. He has no hands in anything and is not in politics. Why?" she asked.

When this reporter visited the scene of the attack at Solomon Lar way, Utako district, an eyewitness who simply identify himself as Ike, said the attackers who were in a green Peugeot 406 car, used their vehicle to hit Dr. Halliru's Honda, 2003 model from behind.

"I was sitting down beside the road when they hit his car from behind at the junction. Three people came out and went straight to his Honda and dragged him out while their Peugeot went about 100 meters ahead and parked.

"As they dragged him out, the next thing we heard was the sound of a gun. They entered the vehicle and zoomed off while theirs followed. Few meters after they zoomed off, the front bumper of their Peugeot which they used in hitting his car, fell off. Maybe they did not observe it. They went away and left it. We took the bumper which has the plate number of the vehicle on it and put it beside the road.

"The plate number on the bumper that fell from the Peugeot was FG 06 D20. Some people who came a few minutes later joined me in carrying him into a vehicle where a man and a woman followed him to a hospital. He tried severally to stand up, but he will fall back. I did not follow them to the hospital. But



Dr. Saleh Halliru

when later some people who claimed to be working with him in the same office came and we told them what happened, they went and brought policemen from Utako division who came and carried the bumper away with the plate number," he said.

At the National Hospital where Dr. Halliru was admitted into the intensive care unit (ICU), medical workers said he was successfully operated on and the bullet that was 4 centimeters away from his heart has been removed.

The operation which was said to have been carried out

the same Monday he was transferred from Sami Wadata clinic to the National Hospital, was administered by Professor Musa and one other doctor.

Though Dr. Halliru could not be reached for comments as he was said to be resting, medical personnel in the unit and numerous sympathizers who had earlier seen him, said he is fast responding to treatment.

When contacted for comments, FCT commissioner of police, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, said the matter is being investigated. He said no stone will



Hajiya Naja'atu Muhammad

be left un-turned to track the attackers and the vehicle they took away.

Reliable sources at the criminal investigation department of the command told this reporter that Mr. Alobi has actually given "a definite instruction" to do everything possible to track down the attackers.

The source said a signal has since been sent to all formations while a crack team of detectives from the command has been detailed to co-ordinate the hunt for the attackers.

Dr. Halliru who was de-

scribed by his friends and close associates as a very humble gentleman, was a London based staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) before he returned to Nigeria to take up appointment with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), as the Chief Executive of IT-based Digital Bridge Institute, Abuja.

At the ICU where Dr. Halliru is being admitted, it was observed that armed policemen in plainclothes have been stationed to provide security.



Armed policemen drafted to guard National Secretariat of the All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP), because of the disagreement between the National Chairman of the Party, Chief Awolowo and his Deputy, Gbemi Ademide Adebisi, at a press conference in Abuja ... yesterday.

"The plate number on the bumper that fell from the Peugeot was FG 06 D20. Some people who came a few minutes later joined me in carrying him into a vehicle where a man and a woman followed him to a hospital. He tried severally to stand up, but he will fall back. I did not follow them to the hospital. But when later some people who claimed to be working with him in the same office came and we told them what happened, they went and brought policemen from Utako division who came and carried the bumper away with the plate number," he said.

News

2007: NUF takes unity campaign to NASS

Some members of the House of Representatives in the National Unity Forum, yesterday began a nationwide mobilization of Nigerians toward political unity of the country in 2007.

The legislators who made this known in a communiqué made available to *Daily Trust* in Abuja, said that the forum, in collaboration with religious and traditional institutions, would work tirelessly towards a successful redemption of unity among Nigerians.

"The National Unity Forum is an assemblage of members of the House of Representatives from different parts of Nigeria who are vehemently united by the singular desire to ensure the reawakening of Nigerians to the need to shelve unwarranted crisis, distrust and disunity," the communiqué said.

The communiqué said that as representatives of the Nigerian peoples, the legislators would not sacrifice the credentials of a united Nigeria for the kind of disunity being canvassed by some selfish politicians.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga & Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Reporter

The five-page communiqué reads in part: Nigeria is not the only country in the world that was created with ethnic nationalities. It would be very wrong to think that any of the various ethnic groups would survive alone and surpass the greatness of a united Nigeria.

"Over the years, we have built human and physical assets together. How do we now share these assets if we choose to segregate without reverting to unending bloody inter-tribal wars? The human and developmental wounds sustained during the 1967-1970 civil wars are yet to heal."

Addressing a news conference at the National Assembly in Abuja yesterday, chairman of the forum, Hon David Idoko (PDP, Benue state), said the group was firmly behind the constitution amendment.

He, however, said the group would support all proposed constitution amendments including the "controversial one."

One of the leaders of the group, Hon. Chuma Nzeribe, said that the group has 250

growing membership.

He said the group would work for the expunging of the tenure limit for executive officers from the 1999 constitution so that popular leaders would not be restricted by what he called military "hang-over" of arbitrary frontiers on tenure.

Asked if the group wanted governors to also benefit from the third term agenda, the legislator said, "If a governor has performed well, and his party allows him to serve additional term, it's for the electorate to decide to return him for third term or not. We are saying that restriction on tenure should go to the party constitution and not the national constitution."



Members of National Unity Forum, Hon. John Agoda (left) and Hon. Usman Bappari during the conference of the Forum at the National Assembly Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbina

Non-payment of salaries bites hard on workers- Borno NLC

Workers in Borno state have cried out over the non payment of their January salaries even as the state government has assured that it is addressing the problem.

In a telephone chat with *Daily Trust* yesterday, Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), in the state, Comrade Bukar Ngamdu, explained that workers received their December salaries before Christmas and were expecting that their January salaries would come in good time before the end of January.

Ngamdu added that the workers were also expecting other allowances apart from the salaries, including annual salary increment, promotion merger of certain individually paid allowances with the main salaries as well as increment in the allowances of pensioners, among others, adding however, that the delay in making these payments has made workers unable to address their family responsibilities.

The situation is biting hard on workers. Many workers could not pay their children's school fees as the new school session begins while many others on in service training could not pay for their registration fees because they do not have money...Even marketers and traders are complaining because without the workers going to buy from the markets, no serious commercial activities can take place," the NLC chairman said.

Comrade Ngamdu therefore appealed to the state government to quickly address the situation even if by "taking a soft loan from the banks" in order to alleviate the suffering of those in its employ.

Daily Trust gathered that the state governor, Alhaji Ali Modu Sherrif, has cut short a visit to Abuja to return to Maiduguri in order to address the workers' salaries problem.

The state's Head of Service, Alhaji Bulama Mali Gubio, told our correspondent yesterday that the state government is looking for alternative means to pay the workers, including the possibility of obtaining a loan to pay the salaries, pending the release of funds to the state from the Federation.

From Abdullahi Bego, Assistant Editor Maiduguri

Gubio added that governor Sheriff is so concerned about the situation of the workers that he has ordered

a stop to all expenditures by government ministries and departments until the salaries issue is completely addressed.

"We know the situation is affecting workers. The governor is so concerned and he

has ordered a freeze on a spending, including travel allowances...he has even called his visit to Abuja to address the problem. If the federal account cannot be ready before the end of this week, we would look to the possibility of obtaining a loan to pay the salaries. Already, meeting on that are going on", the Head of Service explained.

Kano govt cancels contracts with Denmark

The Kano state government has cancelled its contract agreement with Denmark for the provision of Independent Power Supply System for the state.

The decision followed the adoption of the resolution of the State House of Assembly that called on the state government to sever all trade and business links with Denmark and Norway worldwide over the blasphemous cartoon publication by a Danish and Norway newspapers on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

A statement signed by the Director, Press and Media Affairs, Alhaji Sule Yau Sule, banned the importation of all Danish and Norwegian finished goods and products to Kano state. The ban also af-

fects electronics appliances and equipments made in Denmark and Norway.

Part of the statement reads, "The state government also wishes to draw the attention of the federal government to remind the United Nations on its charter of 1945, chapter 1, Articles 101 which emphasises respect for religious before and to punish culprits who are against such."

The statement also enjoined Moshim all over the country, especially Imam of Mosques to their prayers against the progress of Denmark and Norway for their support given to such degrading publication on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Fire guts Hadejia General Hospital

An overnight fire outbreak believed to have been started by electrical fault, has gutted the Hadejia General hospital destroying laboratory equipment worth over N15m.

The fire, according to witnesses, said the female ward of about 50 patients was razed although no life was lost.

The development, *Daily Trust* reports, forced epileptic services as the hospital runs on temporary site.

Additional reports says a mob capitalized on the inferno to break into the Hadejia market and cart away millions, of naira worth of properties.

Some residents who lost properties to the market fire outbreak, however, blamed the police who they accused

of capitalizing on the incident to steal from the market.

Confirming the incident, state's police commissioner, Abubakar Sardauna, said although four stalls were broken at the market, "it is not true that the police has anything to do with it," he said.

Meanwhile, officials of the state emergency relief agency led by the permanent secretary, Hadejia Ladi Dansura, are expected to visit the hospital to assess the damage and possible relief to the victims.

Already N8m has been approved today according to the state's Health commissioner, Muktar Birniwa for immediate renovation of the damaged hospital.

Apology not atonement for blasphemy - Zakzaky tells Denmark

Zaria-based Islamic scholar and leader of the Islamic movement in Nigeria, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, has described as ridiculous and totally unacceptable, the apology tendered by the Danish government for the blasphemous cartoon on the holy prophet of Islam.

Sheikh Zakzaky who called on global Muslims to rise against the blasphemy and reject the apology, argued that "in Islam, there is atonement for every sin committed by man and the atonement for blaspheming the prophet of Islam-Muhammad (SAWA) and indeed any other prophet of Allah including Jesus Christ, is not apology."

Leader of the Islamic movement who stated this yesterday while addressing hundreds of thousands of Muslims who converged in the ancient city of Zaria from different parts of the country to protest the blasphemous publication, stressed that, "If Denmark truly wants the Muslim world to forgive her for this grievous crime, she should apprehend and punish the culprits appropriately."

On the claim by Denmark and their collaborators that the cartoon was in line with the freedom of speech, Shaikh Zakzaky berated holders of such views pointing out that, "If the so called freedom of speech in Europe and the West means tolerating madness and blasphemy in everything including their religion, the reverse is the case in Islam."

"If Europe and the West take their religion, if they have any at all, for a joke, we (Muslims) take Islam seriously and that is why we do not always hesitate in coming out to con-

From Waziri Isa Gwantu, Correspondent, Zaria

prophet and the religion he brought to mankind-Islam", Zakzaky cautioned.

He regretted that the Western World has been devising different kinds of plots to ridicule Islam and its adherents, who are the only viable alternative to their soon-to-be old fashion system of governance.

"They have for long been disguising under the freedom of speech to mock Islam and Muslims. The time to check this mess has come and it is either Muslims ignore the trivial differences among them and unite to protect their faith or watch their enemies destroy them and their faith," he warned.

The demonstration which was organized under the auspices of the Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky-led Islamic movement in Nigeria, coincided with the movement's annual peaceful *Ashura* demonstration which is usually marked all over the world to mourn the brutal killing of the grandson of Holy of the prophet of Islam, Imam Hussain and his

followers at Karbala.

Sheikh Zakzaky who called on global Muslims to wake up from their long slumber and face the challenges of defending Islam which is today called terrorism and its followers terrorists, noted that this can only be done by emulating the spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by Imam Hussain and his followers.

"It is only by emulating the spirit of sacrifice of this grandson of the holy prophet of Islam that we can liberate ourselves and our religion from the attacks of the western world", he noted.

The demonstrators, who took over, for several hours, the ever busy and major roads in the ancient city, were chanting anti-Danish, anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans, took off from the Friday mosque of Sabongari through Tudun Wada to Kofan-Doka, Zaria, where the demonstration terminated peacefully.

"Death to Denmark! Death to Norway! Death to France! Death to Germany! Death to Italy! Death to Spain! Death to Netherlands! Death to America! Death to Israel!, were some of the slogans that were chanted by the demonstrators.

Obasanjo reshuffles cabinet

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday effected a minor cabinet reshuffle to accommodate newly-appointed minister, Dr. Grace Ogbeche.

Ogbeche was recently appointed to replace sacked Environment Minister Iyorchia Ayu. In the reshuffle, Obasanjo moved the minister of state for health, Mrs. Helen

portfolio replacing her with Ogbeche.

The President also moved the minister of state for education, Mrs. Halima Alao, to the ministry of health in the same capacity.

Ogbeche was sworn-in at the start of yesterday's federal executive council meet-

By Joe Oroye

News



L-R: Mrs. Chinwe Obaji, Minister of Education, Malam Nasiru Ahmed El-Rufai, FCDA Chairman, the new Minister of State Education, Dr. Mrs. Grace Oguche and the Senior Special Assistant to President Obasanjo on Media and Publicity, Mrs. Oluremi Oyo, after the swearing-in ceremony of the Minister held at the State House Abuja... yesterday

Third Term: Govs cannot stop Obasanjo -ANPP Chieftain

From Sani Babadoko,
Bureau Chief Kaduna.

A member of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero says governors are so intimidated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), that they cannot be relied on to stop Obasanjo third term bid.

Bayero told *Daily Trust* in Kaduna that most of the state governors have committed financial crimes in the past six years they have served and are afraid Obasanjo would send his EFCC after them, citing the turn around at the last Governors Forum meeting in Abuja where they endorsed constitutional amendment.

"The governors have marginal influence in the way the debates go so much so that they do not have the moral courage to stop the third term catastrophe," Bayero declared.

"They cannot disagree with Obasanjo on the third term monstrosity. They cannot stop the president from amending the constitution the way he likes, after all they expect to be beneficiaries."

The ANPP chieftain from Kebbi state said Nigerians should focus their strategy to stop the third term agenda on first the international community.

"Obasanjo is scared of condemnations from the international community of his third term agenda. So we should focus on exerting pressure on the United Nations, USA, European Community, African Union and the ECOWAS to pressurize him to stop the third term bid," Bayero said.

Secondly, he said the pressure by civil society organizations and patriotic Nigerian should be intensified to persuade Obasanjo on the fatality of the ill motivated agenda.

Another group who should be at the forefront of the fight against third term is the national and state legislators who are the representatives of the people and who have their mandate to defend the constitution.

The next, accordingly to the ANPP chieftain who was in the last constitutional reform conference, are the political parties (CNPP) and the elite who are courageous and patriotic enough to speak out against the bid.

He said the bid is being orchestrated by a clique in Aso Rock who do not want Obasanjo to go because, "after him investigations into their sordid deals could turn Abacha into a saint."

PLSC assures NLC of workers salary

Despite the current freezing of the accounts of the Plateau state government, the government has given its commitment to the NLC in the state that it would pay the January salary of workers immediately the federal government releases the January allocation to states. Chairman of the NLC in Plateau state, Comrade Yusuf Zambuk, who disclosed this while speaking with our correspondent in his office in Jos, said the assurance is

By **Akiya Mohammed & Anura Agbese, Jos**

partly why the NLC is not contemplating leading the workers on a general strike to demand their wages.

Zambuk who said he has it on good authority that only about four states in the federation have been able to redeem their responsibility to workers in terms of the January salary, said most of those that have been able to do so took loans from the banks to achieve that.

The NLC chairman said he has however been assured by the state's Accountant General that the state government is working towards the payment of the January salaries as soon as the January allocation are made available to the states.

Daily Trust learnt that the state government has been able to secure the commitment of the federal government to enable it withdraw enough to pay the monthly salaries from the frozen accounts.

The NLC chairman who explained why the congress asked its members to ignore rumours of an alleged intended strike by the union, said it is too early, going by the statutes of the NLC for such an action to be embarked upon as according to him, it is still not clear in whose interest such an action would be.

"I am telling you that from the interaction we have had with the workers, most of them are willing to make a sacrifice to see if the current investigation by the EFCC would solve the problem of the state. So am not sure in whose interest the purported strike would be. Is it the workers who are willing to make the sacrifice or the state government or who?" he stated.

The union chairman who said the union is cautious in the particular circumstance not to be seen to have taken sides, said he is not afraid of whatever interpretation may be given to the union's present stance saying as far they are concerned, they consulted widely with their members before arriving at the decision.

"If workers want to go on strike, I am telling you that

this place would have long been taken over by them. But since you came) did you notice any crowd or something like that? So I am telling you that they are prepared to wait," he stated.

He said at the moment the NLC is more concerned with pursuing the motor cycle loans promised workers by the current administration in the state which he says bears more relevance to improving the welfare of workers in the state as it helps them to be self sustaining.

Due to this, Zambuk noted

that it was better to tread cautiously so as to encourage the state government to stand as a guarantor for the loans than taking a hasty decision which it might regret later.

Since the freezing of the accounts of the Plateau state government last month on the request of the EFCC based on its current investigations of officials in the state, there have been mixed reactions as to the consequence of the action and what the workers who depend on the salaries may resolve to do,

Review waiver on textile materials - Walid Jibrin

Chairman, textile groups in the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Senator Walid Jibrin, has called on the federal government to review its waiver for the importation of certain textile materials to encourage local mills.

From Sani Babadoko,
Bureau Chief, Kaduna

of denim, viscose, filament yarn to Phoenix Garment Company, a foreign owned firm.

He said the policy should be reviewed so that it would adequately address the issue to ascertain the quantity of raw materials that can be imported and under a specified period so as not to turn the country into a dumping ground for sub-standard and fake textiles.

The textile group, he said, has been at the forefront of the country's effort to benefit from the United States policy of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), adding that inconsistent policies have been sabotaging the efforts.

He said the textiles sector has been suffering the effects of smuggling, commending the recent raid by the custom on China town in Lagos but added that its scope should be expanded to other entry border posts around the country.

He told the *Daily Trust*, Tuesday, in Kaduna that the waiver by the federal government for some industry operators to import viscose and filament yarn is going to undercut local industries that have invested in its production in Nigeria.

Walid said his company, the United Nigeria Textile, the only one still in production in Kaduna, has invested over N1.5 billion through a Bank of Industries (BOI) loan to produce denim products used in producing jeans materials after it was encouraged by the federal government that it would be protected.

However, he wondered why the federal government should turn around and give a waiver for the importation

Don't go on strike

-Minister pleads with police

By Shehu Abubakar,
Reporter

The Minister of Police Affairs, Mr. Alaonki Broderick Bozimo as appealed to policemen to shelve their planned nationwide strike because the action will embarrass President Obasanjo.

Mr. Bozimo who was speaking at the launching of posters and stickers for the Police Performance Monitoring Unit (PPMU), at the Garki police station in Abuja yesterday, said the strike is unnecessary since the complaints of the policemen are being addressed by government.

"I want to appeal to members of the police force that we have a unique opportunity in this country to prove the enemies of Nigeria wrong. Let us prove them wrong. Let us forget about all this trash about policemen going on strike and all that.

Of course, his Minister of Police Affairs, the Inspector

General and the Chairman, Police Service Commission, will be the first to recognize that despite all that we are doing to improve on your welfare, we have not done enough.

"We recognize that, but it will be a tragedy and an insult on our persons for you to go on strike. What will you achieve? Nothing! You will just go on strike and people will shout, that is all "we are already working very hard to get huge sums of money to address all your problems. I agree with you that we paid too much lip service to this police reforms and Mr. President recognizes that," he pleaded.

He said any strike by policemen will surely affect the smooth conduct of the 2006 census, exercise and the 2007 general election in which the police are expected to

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

INSIDE

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Apo-Six: Court admits Okiro panel report as evidence

Wife stones husband to death

A middle aged woman, Mrs. Monchen Commande is now in police net for allegedly hitting her husband to death with a stone.
Mrs. Commande who is a mother of 10 children and the third of five wives of the deceased was reported to have hit her late husband on the forehead with the object following a misunderstanding at their residence in Kogin Kasa, Wase local government area of

From Rakiya A. Mohammad
Ag. Bureau Chief in Jos
Plateau state.
Daily Trust learnt that immediately the incident occurred, some residents of the area reported the case at the 82 mechanised division of the Nigeria Army Rukuba barracks from where the case was transferred to the division police headquarter in Wase.
Confirming the story to our correspondent, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Plateau state com-

mand, Isah Adejoh a deputy superintendent of police disclosed that the case has been transferred to the criminal investigation department at the command headquarters in Jos and that Investigations were on-going.
Answering questions from our correspondent, the suspect who narrated as the incidence that led to the death of her husband occurred, said she had a misunderstanding with one of her co-wives the fourth

wife who she said called their husband to wade into the matter.
According to her, the husband blamed her (monchen) for not wanting a co-wives and started beating her, despite pleas that she was being wrongfully accused by her co-wives.
She added that her pleas fell on dead ears as her husband continued to beat her, pushing her to the ground.
Monchen said in the process she was able to

pick one of the sticks that her late husband was using to beat her and hit him on the forehead.
She however claimed that it was not her action that led to the death of her husband, as according to her, when she hit him on the forehead he went away only to come back to continue the beating but slipped and fell down.
She expressed remorse over the incidence saying they never had such grievous quarrel before now.



Former Inspector General of Police IGP, Mr Tafa Balogun (r), one of his counsel, Remi Aweosho (m) and the Asiwaju Musulumi fo Yorubaland, Chief Olatunde Badmus (l) High Court hearing on his bail application in Abuja...recently.
Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Jigawa murder: olice arrest eleven suspects

The Jigawa state police command has announced the arrest of eleven suspects in the murder of a woman in the state.

From Hassan A. Karoti
Correspondent in Daura
The Jigawa state police command has announced the arrest of eleven suspects in the murder of a woman in the state.

murder. The commissioner said the suspects will be arraigned in court after investigation was completed. He said the suspects were arrested in various parts of the state.

Dabaja, he added.
Daily Trust reported that the suspects were arrested in various parts of the state.

ity in the state.
He died as a result of multiple injuries sustained in the attack.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Apo Six: Court admits Okiro panel report as evidence

An Abuja high court has admitted into evidence, the report of the Mike Okiro panel set up by the police to investigate the alleged murder of six Apo traders in Abuja on June 18, 2005.

The presiding judge, Justice Ishaq Bello, admitting the document, said the report became desirable to clear doubts in the proceedings since previous witnesses in the case made reference to the report.

He however overruled the application of the federal government trying to stop the court from admitting the report because "it would jeopardize their case."

Justice Bello said he did not see the rationale in opposing the admission of the report as evidence.

He also refused to grant the prosecution leave to cross examine the person who tendered the report as he was neither a witness in the case for the defence or the prosecution.

The judge stressed that in the interest of justice, he would allow them to cross examine all their witnesses on the said document so as to clear all doubts in the matter.

Earlier the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Ibrahim, Bako came forward to present the report of the panel of inquiry headed by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro to the court.

But counsel to the prosecution, Chief Mammam Mike Osuman (SAN), had objected, saying that the action was "suo moto" as it was not applied for but raised by the court.

Chief Osuman (SAN) stated that if a witness must

By Ruby Rabiū,
Senior Reporter

produce an evidence, then the prosecution must be allowed to cross-examine him as allowed by the order to the court.

"We say this because the content of the report is likely

to be adverse to the interest of the prosecution's case," and cited Opayemi, versus state, 1986, to batters his case.

"We oppose the manner. The document was brought in. If the document should be admitted into evidence, then

the bringer must be sworn in and the prosecution allowed to cross-examine him," he argued.

Opposing the prosecution's application, counsel to the accused person, Mr. Ricky Tafa (SAN), said the objection the prosecution is raising has already been determined by the court and cannot be litigated again.

He added that the application brought by the prosecution

was an abuse of court processes and should not be allowed by the court.

He stated that it is at the discretion of the court to allow the bringer of a document to be put on oath and cross-examined where it becomes necessary.

"We are even surprised that the prosecution is objecting when we are still on their case; they should have been the ones to have made

the application to produce the document and made it available to the defence.

We submit that the only issue to be determined is, whether the court will admit the document as an exhibit or not since it is desirable in the case," he said.

Justice Bello admitted the document into evidence and marked it as exhibit 1 and adjourned the case to February 15 for hearing.



Mathew Mato; who was recently re-arrested for his alleged involvement in the robbery attack at Standard Chartered Bank in Abuja.

53 robbery suspects nabbed

The Zamfara state police command says it has arrested 53 suspected armed robbers, including a youth corps member. Parading the suspects before newsmen on Tuesday in

Gusau, state's police commissioner, Sale Abubakar, said the police apprehended 31, while the famous private detective, Ali Kwara, arrested 22. According to him, "the fa-

mous Ali Kwara was in the state on the invitation of the government to assist the command flush criminals out of the state".

He said the suspects who

were arrested within the past month in different parts of the state, have made confessional statements.

Abubakar lauded the state government for the pa-

trol vehicles it donated to the police. The commissioner also commended Ali Kwara "for the wonderful job he has been doing to track down criminals".

17 suspects, cultist in custody

The Anambra state police command has arrested 17 suspected armed robbers and one cultist. Parading the suspects before newsmen on Tuesday in Awka, the new commissioner of police, Mr Moses Anegbode, said they were arrested in Onitsha and Uli for various offences.

Also displayed were locally made pistols and other guns as well as expended bullet shells.

Anegbode also said some arrests have been made in connection with the robbery at the home of the father of the CBN governor, Charles

Soludo. The robbery, he said, took place at Isuofia, Ekwulobia, Anambra state.

"The robbery on the father of the CBN governor is not political and has nothing to do with the recapitalisation of banks," the police commissioner explained.

He said: "they are just a group of some local boys and we are doing everything possible to bring them to book."

Anegbode further announced the recovery of eight stolen vehicles adding that the command is making efforts to carry out an anti-corruption campaign for its officers and men.



This policewoman also joined the curious admirers of NLC President, Adams Oshiomhole who addressed workers in preparation for the June 9 strike, at the Federal Secretariat, Abuja...recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Murder: Woman's decomposed body found

A decomposing body of a 40 year old housewife, Mrs. Rhoda Shagaya, suspected to have been killed by her son, Solomon, was found by the police in Yelenguruza area of Gombe metropolis on Monday.

According to the Gombe state police public relations officer, Mr. Kingsley Omorigie, the police were invited by the neighbours of the deceased who complained of a strong stench from her room which had been closed for close to twenty days.

The PPRO told *Daily Trust* that when police broke into the room, they traced the stench to a bundle of blankets in which the rotten body of Mrs Rhoda Shagaya was hidden.

He said the police are on the trail of 36 year old Solomon, the only son of the deceased, who was reported to have entered the room few days to the discovery of his mother's body taking away her television set and was also known to be pestering his mother for money threatening to deal with her if she refused.

Rhoda's husband, Mr.

From Muhammad Abubakar, Gombe

Shagaya Muhammad, who works with the Union Bank in neighbouring Bauchi who rushed home on receiving the news, told our correspondent that his late wife was sick when he left her.

He said his wife, a businesswoman whom he married in 1991 was staying in their 3-bedroom Yelenguruza residence with a police woman as tenant while her son, Solomon who lives in Jos, visited her from time to time.

Mr. Shagaya told our correspondent that his late wife told him that Solomon was a child she bore with her mother in the 1980s and refused to abort the pregnancy.

Neighbours of the deceased who spoke with *Daily Trust*, said they did not suspect that the stench coming from Mrs Rhoda's room was that of her body because about 23 days ago, she had told them she was travelling to her home town.

They said they thought all along that the smell was that of a meat she kept until it became unbearable and they had to consult the woman

police staying in the house who afterwards, called in the police to investigate the matter.

The neighbours also told our correspondent that they did not suspect foul play when her son Solomon, got into the room and took out her television set just some few days ago.

They also confirmed reports that the son was also pestering his mother for money and sometimes threatened to kill her if she refused to comply.

Armed robbers raided the Hadejia main market in Jigawa state carting away N10million as well as goods worth millions of naira.

Confirming the incident, the state's police commissioner, Abubakar Sardauna said the police have since drafted officers to unravel the people behind the robbery.

Daily Trust reports that several stalls were broken into and various amounts carted away.

However, the police chief said only four stalls were broken into, adding that over N10m was looted.

Reports, from Hadejia said the police were accused of aiding the robbery as a result of

Robbers raid Hadejia market, cart away N10m

From Hassan A. Karofi, Dutse

reports on their alleged participation in the robbery.

Some of the businessmen from the marked told newsmen that the police became suspects because they prevented vigilante members from working on the day of the robbery.

According to one of the businessmen who spoke un-

der anonymity, the police were cited looting as the time of the robbery coincided with the incident of fire inferno at the Hadejia main market.

Meanwhile the police have assured those affected that a vigorous investigation is on to unravel those behind the robbery.

"I want to call on any person with any information that could help to come forward to assist," he added.

Five jailed for vandalising NNPC pipeline

An Abuja chief magistrate, yesterday sentenced five men to two years imprisonment each with an option of N15,000 fine for breaking NNPC pipelines and theft of petroleum products.

The convicts, Happiness Ozojin, John Onwuegbu, Chibuike Nwagborongwu, Chidi Onwuegbu and Chidozie Onwuegbu, all residents of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, were found guilty under sections 97 and 287 of the penal code and section 7 subsection A and B of the miscellaneous offences Act cap 410.

Reading the First Information Report (FIR), to the court, the prosecuting police officer, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), Joseph Onu, said that the convicts were arrested by security agents as they siphoned petroleum products from the vandalised pipeline at Abaji/Abuja axis.

The accused, according to the prosecution, were brought before the court on a three-count charge of criminal conspiracy, theft and illegal tampering with Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC) pipelines.

The accused pleaded guilty to the charges and asked for leniency.

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi

Pleading on behalf of the convicts, the defence counsel, Barrister Nnaemeka Chukwu, prayed the court to temper justice with mercy, adding that they are first offenders while two of them are married with children.

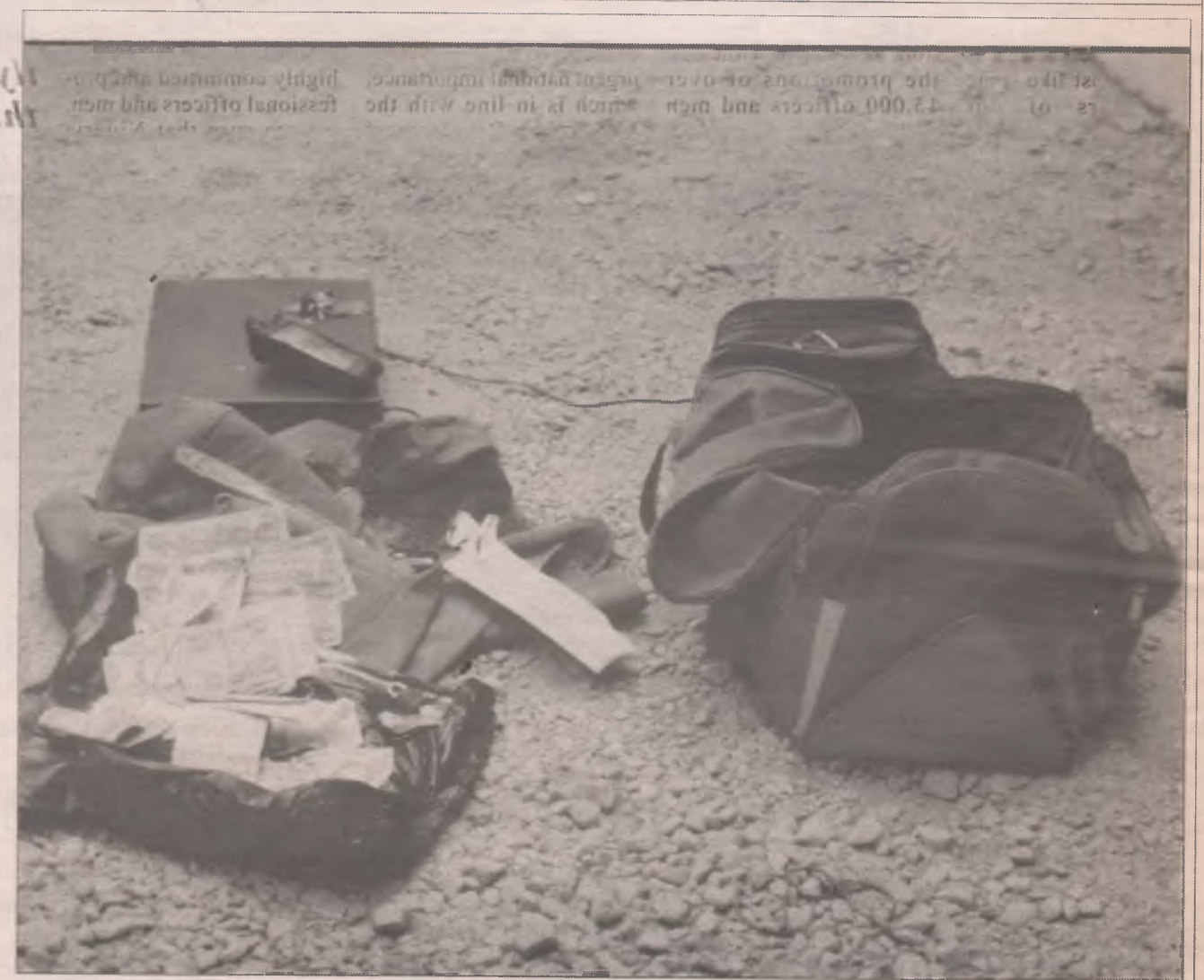
However, the presiding chief magistrate, Usman Ahmed, who expressed concern about frequent vandalism of pipelines, said they would not go unpunished despite the plea by the defence counsel.

He sentenced them to two years imprisonment each with an option of N15,000 fine each also.

13 fraudsters jailed

Thirteen fraudsters nabbed last year during the raid on the notorious Oluwole area of Lagos by security-men have bagged prison sentences ranging between six months and four years.

Those sentenced by the federal high court, Kaduna, are Suleiman, Sesan Mustapha, Timothy Ayanuga, Ganiyu Arowolo, Ibrahim Sanni and Shola Adeyemi who were jailed



Cash, GSM handsets and laptop recovered from suspected armed robbers in Abuja...recently. Pix: Shehu Abubakar

Man in court for killing uncle

A middle aged man, Abubakar Adamu, has appeared before the Dutse chief magistrate court presided over by Magistrate Ado Yusuf, for allegedly killing his uncle.

The accused, according to the police first information report, had burgled his uncle's house in company of two others and attacked him while he was asleep.

The FIR cited section 226 of the penal code as the section under which the accused is being charged.

Drama however, ensued

in the case when the suspect during interrogation by the presiding magistrate, told the court that although he is innocent of the charges as read by the police, his entire family were killed by investigating police officials.

He told the court that both his son and wife were killed while he was under arrest adding that he was not aware of the murder of his uncle until one of his brothers, Baki Rabo, came to him to inform him that he killed their uncle.

When asked by the presiding judge whether he was aware of how his uncle was killed, he said he did not, as he was not around and could therefore not have known anything about it.

Earlier, the police pro-

secuting officer, Corporal, Aradu Usman, had said that the police were told of the incident by the son of the deceased, Salisu Abubakar, who alleged that the accused had personally led the assailants and that in his presence, they stabbed his late father on the chest and the neck. He said he was rushed to the hospital but died later.

He therefore asked the court not to release the suspect on bail as his release may hamper their investigations.

The court demanded for the immediate completion of investigations and ordered that the accused be remanded in prison custody until next Wednesday when hearing will continue.

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent, Lagos

four years each.

Others include Salami Mufutau, Kadiri Alabi, Yemi Ojumola, Olawuyi Tubi, Dabiri Abiola and Iyabo Reis.

Head of Media department of the EFCC, Mr. Osita Nwaja who disclosed this in an interview, said more convictions will be recorded in the coming weeks as the trial of the remaining suspects continues.

Opinion

Police strike: Officers should change mind

Please, permit me space in your widely-read and continuously-innovative independent newspaper to appeal to those members of the Nigeria Police Force (especially the unregistered Junior Police Officers Association of Nigeria) planning to go on strike to please have a change of heart and mind, and be more patriotic in the interest of the image of our great country.

By Abdulsalam S. Izuagbe

Force, especially the Rank and File. I also saw the same conditions of employees in other sectors of our economy who are of equivalent qualifications. The present living conditions are not peculiar to the Police Force alone. The present conditions can only be traced to the near total neglect of past administrations.

We have taken note of the fact that the present administration is already moving in to correct the situation, as we have witnessed the promotions of over 15,000 officers and men within the first ninety days of coming to office of the highly hardworking Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, CFR.

It is necessary to state here that the National Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission is already going round Ni-

geria to consider salaries and other welfare packages due to the economic realities in the country, and to ensure discipline.

At this juncture, we strongly appeal to His Excellency, the President, High Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR to please redouble and refocus the heart-warming reforms of this administration to ensure adequate funding of the Nigeria Police Force to enable them cope with the national assignment of the protection of lives and property. This should be considered as a matter of urgent national importance; which is in line with the Millennium Development Goals that calls for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Without dealing with the issue of hunger and extreme poverty in the land, all other targets of the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved.

The present war against corruption in Nigeria is nice, and can yield better results if our police force is adequately funded by the federal government. A hungry policeman on the highway is tempted and easily pushed into corruption, and this is causing insecurity on our highways. Insecurity will not encourage direct foreign investment which we urgently need to create jobs for our teeming youth.

In view of the tremendous efforts of the present Inspector General Sunday Ehindero, CFR and his highly committed and professional officers and men, we are sure that Nigeria Police Force will certainly turn around for the better to the glory of God and satisfaction of all Nigerians.

I want to sincerely appeal to all groups of police officers and men planning to go on any form of strike to have a re-think and know

that it is quite unwise, and that some maturity and superior reason will surely yield better results. Let us refuse to dance to the drumbeats of those who actually want to cause con-

fusion and total abandonment of the high responsibility given to the Nigeria Police Force, which motto is to Serve and Protect with Integrity high regards, please.

Chief Abdulsalam S. Izuagbe wrote in from Suite B3, Abuja Shopping Mall, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.

“The present war against corruption in Nigeria is nice, and can yield better results if our police force is adequately funded by the federal government. A hungry policeman on the highway is tempted and easily pushed into corruption, and this is causing insecurity on our highways. Insecurity will not encourage direct foreign investment which we urgently need to create jobs for our teeming youth.”

Like every actor that truly understands his stage, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, the executive governor of Bayelsa State, is taking seemingly tentative but measured steps to carve a niche for himself on the slippery political terrain of Bayelsa State. If there is one governor walking a tight, thin, slimy and delicate rope, it is this gentle but gutsy giant.

In his characteristic humility and self-abnegation,

Walking a tight rope on the Creek

By Femi Ajayi

Dr Jonathan has publicly described his fortuitous assumption of office as governor “as an intrusion into the political calendar of Bayelsa.” Whether he likes it or not, the burden of leadership has been thrust on him. Without doubt, his is definitely a precarious political existence for many reasons. So far, he has proved to have the politi-

cal prudence to cope with the unique challenges of being the governor of Bayelsa State in these trying times.

When the hawks among his political associates in Bayelsa State politics advocated the immediate takeover of power after the Alamiyeseigha debacle, he preferred to err on the side of caution. He did not want to be accused of indecent haste. It was important to convince Bayelsans of his loyalty, sympathy and compassion for his erstwhile boss while assuring the Presidency of his readiness to take the mantle of Bayelsa leadership as soon as the situation was right. Recent circumstances have proved him right.

In the same vein, when the gangster-like abduction of four foreign oil workers were followed by demands for ransom and political concessions by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), an organisation that claimed responsibility for the hostage-taking, resolving the situation called for patience, diplomacy, tact, and political brinksmanship. With the manner in which Dr Jonathan handled the negotiations, the horse-trading, the carrot-and-stick persuasions, as well as the logistic associated

political tactician and master-strategist. Whatever concessions he had made, getting the leadership of MEND to release the four foreign oil workers safely in a classic “no victor no vanquished” outcome amounts to a political master-stroke. In real terms, this “political settlement” provided a face-saving opportunity to all sides to the epic confrontation. The MEND members have had their say, the government and oil companies have had their workers freed “on humanitarian grounds.” The fact that the hostage crisis did not degenerate into another Odi affair (with all its loss of lives and environmental despoliation) is an eloquent testimony to the high conflict management capability of the Bayelsa State governor. Once again, the Bayelsa governor has shown that discretion remains the better part of valour.

However, there is no doubt that he must be prepared for the many challenges ahead. There is no doubt that the political settlement of the hostage crisis has only taken care of a symptom rather than address the disease that produced it. The festering sore of youth restiveness over human pauperisation and environmental degradation would not heal until the economic aspirations of the Niger Delta

people are protected and their basic needs are met. It is the kind of distraction that a state with the arrangement of Femi Ajayi is an obnoxious based political analysis.

The ecologist, turned politician also needs political sophistication to handle the new calibre of youth activists emerging in the Niger Delta. The youth militia in the Niger Delta are not the rag-tag army or crude bandits of yesteryears. These modern-day activists in the creek are IT-savvy youths who negotiate and demand political concessions via emails. While one can appeal to their intellect and sense of responsibility, it might be suicidal to insult their intelligence or take them for a ride.

Moreover, given the increasing atomisation of pressure groups in the Niger Delta, each with claims of various areas of control (influence) and differing territorial jurisdictions, identifying credible leaderships to negotiate with is a Herculean task. Having to negotiate with a rash of youth warlords and militia certainly does not make the assignment of the Bayelsa governor enviable.

like Bayelsa does not need at this time.

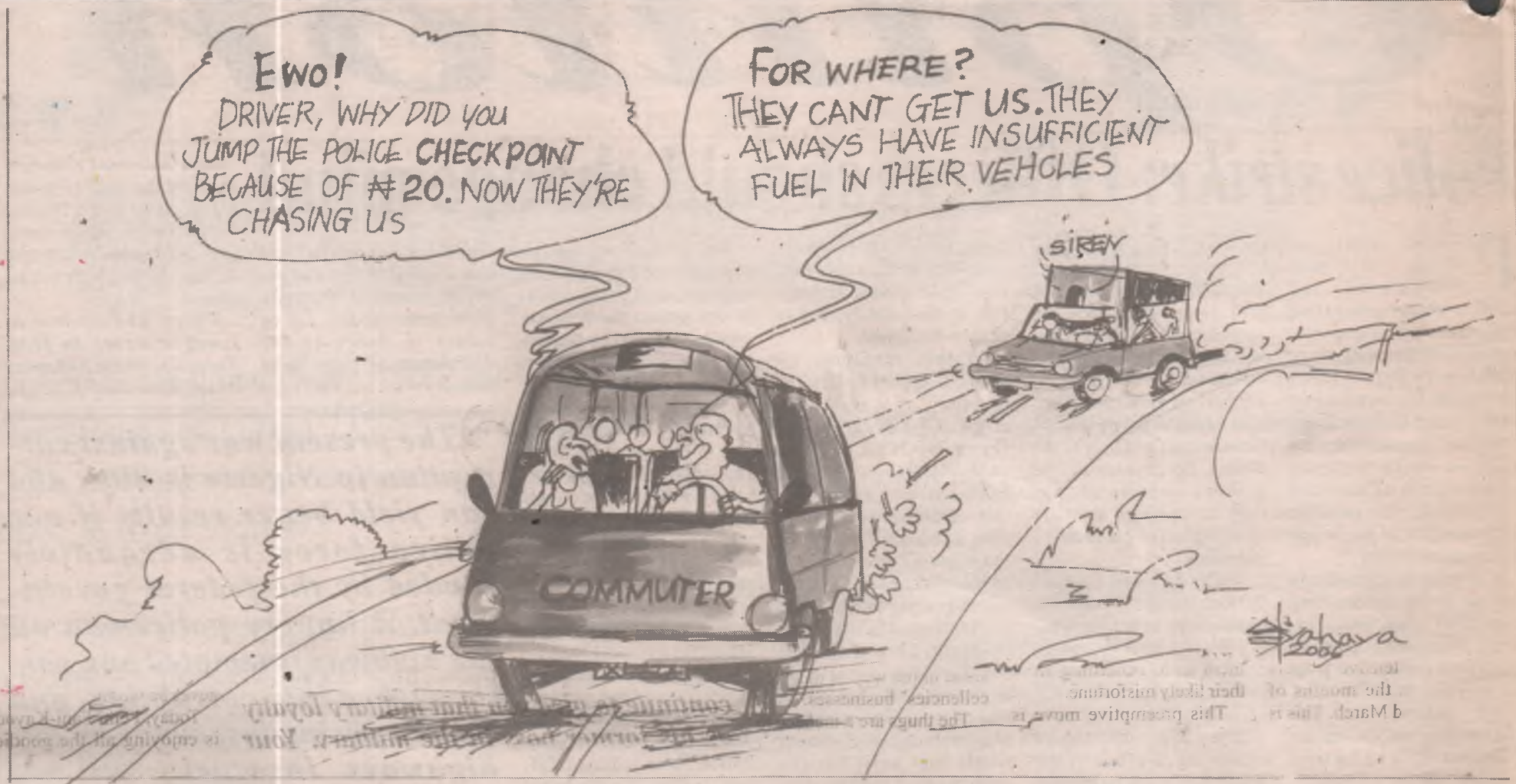
Nonetheless, it is heart-warming that Dr Jonathan has shown deft touches in facilitating dialogues and consensus-building toward arriving at solutions that would guarantee the greatest good of the greatest number of Bayelsans. He would have to continue to maintain the delicate balance of pleasing the war-mongering Ijaw youths and assuring the seemingly paranoiac Presidency that over there, everything is under control and there is no cause for concern in Bayelsa creeks.

Fortunately, Dr Jonathan, a man of prodigious talent and strength, seemed to have learnt the magic of putting a 36-hour work in a 24-hour day! So, he is well-equipped to handle both his peacekeeping assignments as well as the crucial development programmes to move Bayelsa State forward.

Given the enormity of its developmental challenges as well as the complexity of its environmental crises, there is no denying the place of constant dialogue, consultation, tact and diplomacy in the management of the affairs of Bayelsa State. Governor Goodluck Jonathan is certainly walking a precarious tight rope. I dare say he has demonstrated that he has what it takes to safely get to the

“In the same vein, when the gangster-like abduction of four foreign oil workers were followed by demands for ransom and political concessions by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), an organisation that claimed responsibility for the hostage-taking, resolving the situation called for patience, diplomacy, tact, and political brinksmanship. With the manner in which Dr Jonathan handled the negotiations, the horse-trading, the carrot-and-stick persuasions, as well as the logistic associated with getting these “rebels-with-a-cause” to see reason, he has proved to be a political tactician and master-strategist.”

Asked for comment, the police press officer said that the police will continue to work with the state government to ensure the safety of the people and the stability of the state.



YOUR LETTERS

Leave el-Rufai alone

No man undertakes a trade he has not learnt but everyone considers themselves sufficiently qualified to pontificate on the most delicate of all trades, that of political governance."

The above statement on the proclivity of every Tom, Dick and Harry to assume the role of self-appointed and all-knowing critics of government is most probably truer of Nigerians than citizens of any other country. Quite often, most Nigerians consider themselves experts in every endeavour they choose to comment on. Recall that was why the blunt Clemens Westerhof, the former Super Eagles coach, sarcastically described Nigeria as a country of 120 million coaches!

So when you have a firm, hard-headed and uncompromising state actor like Malam Nasir el-Rufai contending with entrenched interests (property racketeers and land mafias) in order to restore sanity and decency to Nigeria's new capital city, the result is a titanic war of attrition.

Not ever ready to meet people halfway once he is sure of the correctness of his position and action, he tends to push his advantage to the very extreme, pulverising the opponent in the process. He always has his goals dogmatically stated and fanatically pursued. Not being a politician but a hardnosed technocrat, he does not believe in the politics of accommodation. Not for him political trade-offs for the sake of survival. Hence, the fanatical zeal with which he is pursuing his mission. His ugly reputation is therefore the lot and just dessert of a committed reformist.

Buildings constructed under high tension wires, on top of water pipes, over sewage lines, in green areas and designated parks; illegal structures on recreational sites; mushrooming of corner-shops; mini-factories; kiosks; mechanic workshops and maxi-markets

in residential areas, Abuja was on the perilous path to perdition. The dangerous trend had to be halted so that the FCT does not become the bedlam of activities, the confusion and environmental nightmare that Lagos has become. Malam el-Rufai was saddled with the difficult and dirty job of restoring the badly distorted Abuja master-plan. Not one to shy away from a challenge, he picked up the gauntlet. The rest is history.

el-Rufai's bulldozer approach, his ruthless efficiency and apparent success in an assignment that they had self-righteously and impudently declared impossible are particularly annoying and galling to the old soldiers, careerist politicians and cocktail intellectuals who hold sway in Nigeria's political space. This is the reason the FCT leader has attracted so much vitriolic attacks and vociferous vituperations. Malam el-Rufai, being a man who does not believe in half-measures, has put his precious life, popularity and goodwill on the line. Little wonder that he is the minister most Nigerians love to hate.

Quite often, he treats Nigerians like spoilt brats and adult delinquents. He has a disdain for the culture of impunity and compulsive law-breaking of the average Nigerian elite in the craze to achieve selfish ends. It would have been a political miracle if el-Rufai were to enjoy the adulation of the same people he is dispossessing of ill-gotten gains, unfair benefits and unmerited privileges.

If el-Rufai had been a paddy-paddy and I-chop-u-chop minister rather than a reformist with a suicidal mentality, he would not have been such an endangered and embattled species. el-Rufai in his bid to save the soul of Abuja courts political darts like sweet-smelling flowers attract butterflies.

Malam el-Rufai's utopia is the prize he has received for succeeding so well in a national

assignment where many chronologically-older ministers of the FCT

Re: Kudos to Suleja Local Government chairman

I was shocked when I read the article entitled "Kudos to Suleja Local Government Chairman", published in *Daily Trust* of November 28th 2005 accredited to one Ibrahim Kwaji living in Abuja.

For one, going by the write-up, I am certain that the writer is neither a resident/indigene of Suleja Local Government nor is he an indigene of Niger State. So one wonders how he came up with the suicidal, embarrassing and ensuing article. It is not only a disorder to the present generations of Suleja people, but even the future generations yet unborn. The article seemed like a sponsored write-up.

Generally-speaking, the writer did not only murder reality for falsehood to the helpless people of Suleja Local Government living and non-living, but succeeded in sending traumatic condition into their brains. Ibrahim really proved his ignorance of what Suleja people are passing through under the present leadership of Dr A. A. Suleiman.

Unfortunately, of all said, he failed to mention at least one project either commissioned, executed or even under construction by his so-called dynamic chairman.

It may interest the reader to know that out of the 774 local government councils we have in Nigeria, it is only the chairman of Suleja Local Government who is hardly seen in his office. He is rarely on seat as the secretary of the local government now single-handedly oversees the whole affairs of the council and not the chairman. He is not even assessable on phone as the nations providers of the telecommunication networks (GSM) have since put an embargo on all his mobile phone lines with the usual characteristic manner of "This line you are calling cannot be reached, please try again later" or "this line you are calling is

switched off" to prevent him from taking calls from people.

Surprising too, you mentioned that respected leaders undertakes pilgrimage to the local government to see project been executed which they described as democracy dividends. Well, whatever might have informed your decision to write all these, we know basically that there is only one acceptable parameter for measuring achievement of any political leader today in Nigeria, and that is infrastructural development.

These may include the provision of potable drinking water either through taps or the construction of bore-holes. Provision of basic primary healthcare, provision of an enabling environment for our children to learn, the provision of electricity through the purchase and sup-

A.A. Tafida deserves Adamawa North senatorial seat

This presentation is not intended to be a marketing strategy to sell Alhaji A.A. Tafida, who is the Tafidan Mubi and currently a Director in the Federal Civil Service Commission to the good people of Adamawa North Senatorial zone and Adamawa State in general; but the reality on ground indicates that while others may be trying to build bridges of understanding and association among the people of the state, Alhaji A.A. Tafida stands out as the bridge itself, having cemented and networked a strong and purposeful relationship among the various ethnic groups in the state through his large-heartedness.

His vision for the state is driven by the motto: 'one state, one people and one destiny,' and this underpins his long-held principle that guides his relationship with the joy and mighty in the state.

commitment and perseverance are cherished values.

From the above, which one of these have the people of Suleja Local Government Area enjoyed under the present leadership of the chairman as you claimed? And who were those respected leaders of the state that take pilgrimage to the local government as you mentioned?

However, I pray your assertion will not attract the attention of Nuhu Ribadu of the EFCC to put his searchlight on the ways and manners local government allocations from federation accounts are utilised in the state; because if he does, many heads will roll.

Finally, Ibrahim should take note that services rendered by leaders are worthy of mention and should be visible for them to be praised so that they could do more and not blind praise or sycophancy as you are doing.

Meanwhile, I wish to appeal to the people of Suleja Local Government to be calm and patient and keep their fingers crossed as the year 2007 is around the corner. This time, by the special grace of God, we shall have a very good person that will take us to the Promised Land; a man with the fear of God in him, not pretenders.

To the writer, Ibrahim Kwaji, the people of Suleja deserve unreserved apologies from you.

Yusuf Shuaibu Mami, behind Suleja Emir's palace (shuaibuyusuf@yahoo.com)

Whoever comes close to him is in for a shock from receiving huge doses of these rare qualities from a man of high social standing and generosity.

While in service, Alhaji Tafida distinguished himself as a worthy ambassador of Adamawa State. He facilitated the employment of several Adamawa State indigenes into the Federal Civil Service, Armed Forces, Customs, Police, Immigration, etc. Finally, I am advising the good people of Adamawa North Senatorial Zone and Adamawa State in particular to persuade this gentleman to contest for the senator representing Adamawa North Senatorial district, so that we will have a positive and fair representation in the National Assembly come 2007.

J.E. Mohammed, wrote in from Lokuwa, Mubi, Adamawa State.

Ephraim Abalaja is an Abuja-based development monitor.

Idang Alibi on Thursday

idangabili@yahoo.com

More predictions for the year 2006

Because of a great enthusiastic reception of the first batch of my predictions for the year 2006 which was published earlier in this column of January 6th, I am encouraged to release this next batch of prophecies.

If this second list proves as accurate as the first one, we will be further encouraged to become a prophet-in-residence for the papers in the Media Trust Limited. Here we go:

Three governors should fast and pray throughout February and March

Three governors, one each from the North-West, North-Central and North-East geo-political zones, should fast and pray intensive prayers through out the months of February and March. This is to enable them to avert de-thronement which I can see clearly on my special mirror.

The chief executive from the North-West is a tall, dark and handsome man in his early 50s with intricate but beautifully executed tribal marks. His counterpart from the North-Central is a boyish-looking man in his late 40s. And the other from the North-East is a fragile-looking man who suffers from a terminal disease call *Atikulariasis*.

From my crystal ball, I saw these gentlemen united in one grief. Each of them had, at one time or another, seen in their dream a tall, lanky and handsome man in his mid-40s who bears a striking resemblance to the president of Rwanda, Mr Paul Kagame.

This man, who looked to them like a ghost, had in his entourage, force looking accomplices with leg chains and manacles.

Each time minions of this gentleman visited any state on any mission, it was sufficient notice that trouble was afoot for the chief of that

state. Since they have seen this man in their dream, the governors have no option but to fast and pray to avert sure disaster.

Three deputy governors will be kidnapped

Since it has become common knowledge that once impeachment proceedings are commenced against a governor, his deputy immediately goes into hiding only to re-surface at a convenient date when his principal has lost his job to be sworn-in in his stead, the three governors we have mentioned earlier are going to adopt an unusual insurance cover. They will sponsor thugs to kidnap their deputies and prevent them from benefiting from their likely misfortune.

This preemptive move is going to generate not a minor constitutional crisis with regards to the order of succession as the speakers of the states' Houses of Assembly, as well as their deputies will similarly be kidnapped to prevent them from taking part in the impeachment proceedings.

Five EFCC operatives to be prosecuted for accepting a three-million-dollar bribe

When Saturn turns to Mars, five EFCC officials who will be dispatched to a North-Western state to quiz the governor over suspected money laundering offence will fall to temptation. The governor is going to set them up with a bribe of three million dollars. This will be a classic case of the biter being bitten. The media is going to play this news with gusto. Attempts are going to be made to hush up the news from getting to the public. Desperate efforts will be made to bribe some top media executives to kill this great story but they will be futile.

From my crystal ball, the five-man team will consist of

three men and two women.

Two governors' thugs will turn against them

Like the current AU chairman who used to own and equip a group of musclemen called the "Cobra Militia," there are many governors in Nigeria who have recruited and equipped some thugs to pursue their political and other objectives.

These thugs harass, intimidate and drive the fear of God into the hearts of the governors' sundry enemies - those who desire to contest against their excellencies in future elections; those who are suspected to be consorting with the excellencies' girlfriends or mistresses and those who stand in the way of their excellencies' businesses.

The thugs are a menace to everybody except to their masters. They take dangerous mind-bending substances and drive in the most reckless of manners. At parties, they behave as they please because they know their atrocities will not be challenged by anyone. They are a complete law unto themselves.

From what I can see, looking at my crystal ball, two governors from the North-East geo-political zone whose thugs are notorious for their rascality are going to suffer in the hands of their boys.

Following an outcry by the people over the misbehaviour of the thugs, the two governors will take steps to disband the outfits. When they get wind of this move, the thugs will turn against their masters. This will send shock waves across the country.

Other governors who have similar outfits will realise that they have been riding on a tiger's back. That it is not easy to dismount from the back of the tiger or to remain on its back forever.

One governor will face sex scandal

In the month of June, I predict that one South-South governor who is notorious for his sexcapades with mostly university girls is going to face severe sex scandal that will threaten his seat.

He is going to be involved with a 22-year-old kiss-and-tell girl who will give *City People* and other magazines in the soft-sell genre a blow-by-blow account of her times with His Excellency.

The First Lady of that state is going to raise a storm because hell hath no fury like a woman spurned. Since people generally love salacious gossips and scandal, the attention of the entire nation will be riveted on this scandal. To avert this sure danger, I advise this governor who knows himself to go on a dry fast for one month and vow a vow of celibacy for one and a half months. I have spoken!

Opinion

General Gowon must read this

By Jacob Bankole

I am writing to you Sir, as our one-time Commander-in-Chief.

As President Obasanjo said, his personal staff and subordinates should give him military loyalty, which means total and unquestionable loyalty.

The military loyalty is ei-

'debilitating character flaw'. The truth is that it appears that of late, our President has cultivated what we in Pentecostal circles have come to recognise as a 'Saulian anointing'. He started well

criticism (even where such is constructive) and he has cultivated an obvious and relentless contempt for intellectual discourse."

Femi Fani-Kayode did not stop at all these. He went further to tell the world that President Obasanjo was never a Yoruba presidential candidate. He said: "In any case, Obasanjo was never the Yoruba candidate so he must stop taking the Yoruba support that he has recently cultivated for granted." He added, "Mr President's attitude is further worsened and compounded by the fact that he, for some reason, actually sees himself as not only an intellectual but also a 'messiah'. He believes that he can never be wrong."

Today, Femi Fani-Kayode is enjoying all the goodies and the paraphernalia attached to his present office in the Presidency. If Femi Fani-Kayode can abuse Obasanjo the way he did, and then turn around to work for him, then you should know that he is not a man to be taken seriously. He has been exhibiting signs of pluralism ever since he came into public limelight.

Nigerians across the country look up to you as an elder statesman. You should never be bothered by what Femi Fani-Kayode has said or may even say in future about you or any other eminent Nigerian who in one way or the other try to provide constructive advice to President Obasanjo. My appeal to you Sir, including Col. Abubakar D. Umar (Rtd), and Professor Wole Soyinka is that you should pray for Femi Fani-Kayode to reform his ways and utterances.

Captain Jacob Bankole (rtd.) wrote in from No. 3, Lamingo Street, Nyanya, Abuja-Keffi Road, Abuja (jacobbankole@yahoo.co.uk).

"The military loyalty is either one hundred per cent (100%) or one is accused of insubordination. When you were Commander-in-Chief and a four-star General as far back as 1971, President Obasanjo then was just a Colonel whom I served under in the Third Marine Commando. One would expect President Obasanjo to continue to give you that military loyalty as his former boss in the military. Your army number is senior to his; you were a former Commander-in-Chief before him, a four-star General before he even became a one-star General. If he had that military loyalty for you which he expects others to give him, then he should have called Femi Fani-Kayode to order."

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Femi Fani-Kayode is not even old enough to be Ibrahim's (your son) age, yet President Obasanjo allowed him to try to insult you on the pages of newspapers. There is this Yoruba adage that says: whoever abuses/insults an old man who is of his father's age, ultimately abuses/insults his own father (whether dead or alive).

Your Excellency Sir, do not be bothered for one second about what Femi Fani-Kayode may have said about you. This is the same Femi Fani-Kayode who insulted, abused, and said so many foul words against President Obasanjo in 2001. It was published by the *Comet* newspaper of 18th March, 2001. Hear him Sir, and I quote: "The President now seems to be gradually relapsing to his old, pre-1995 dictatorial self and there can be little doubt that the man suffers from what the British would describe as a

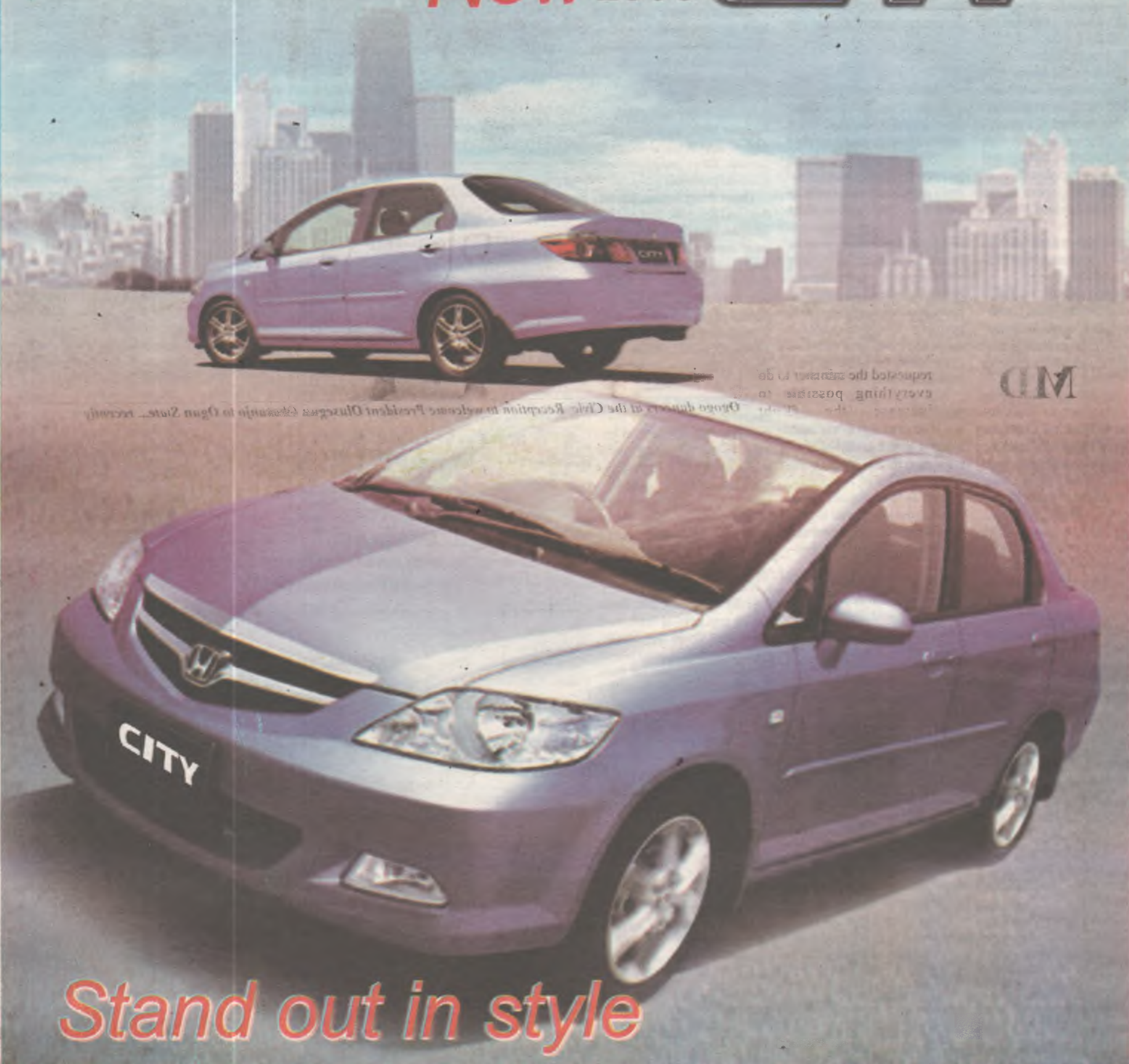
but he is progressively deteriorating. And if he is not careful like the Biblical Saul, he will end in utter disaster and shame." Your Excellency, this is the description of President Obasanjo by Femi Fani-Kayode in 2001.

Again Sir, let me quote another of his insults on President Obasanjo: "It is clear that Mr President feels unduly threatened by everyone and everything. He does not listen. He does not care and he appears to growl with a deep and dissembling rage whenever anyone looks at things from a different perspective to his own. He finds it difficult to tolerate any form of

"Again Sir, let me quote another of his insults on President Obasanjo: "It is clear that Mr President feels unduly threatened by everyone and everything. He does not listen. He does not care and he appears to growl with a deep and dissembling rage whenever anyone looks at things from a different perspective to his own. He finds it difficult to tolerate any form of criticism (even where such is constructive) and he has cultivated an obvious and relentless contempt for intellectual discourse."

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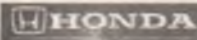
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World Report

Tortured soldier flown to Moscow

A Russian conscript who was badly beaten and tortured by fellow soldiers has been flown to an intensive care unit at a military hospital in Moscow.

At least six men were involved in the attack on Private Andrei Sychyov, whose injuries were so severe his legs and genitals had to be amputated.

The incident took place at the Chelyabinsk Tank Academy in the Ural Mountains on New Year's Eve.

More than 6,000 soldiers were victims of abuse last year, the military said.

The 18-year-old is in a "serious but stable" condition, hospital authorities said. His family has accused local military officials of trying to hush up the attack.

"They sent him to the army a healthy kid. They've given us back only half of my brother," Pte Sychyov's sister told Russian TV.

The BBC's Steve Rosenberg in Moscow says the case has shocked the nation, which is growing used to stories of bullying in the Russian army.

The affair has deeply embarrassed the defence ministry and outraged the president, our correspondent said.

Pte Sychyov contracted gangrene after he was forced to squat for several hours on New Year's Eve, then tied to chairs and beaten, according to investigators.

Investigators said more senior soldiers carried out the beatings, with the co-operation of commanding officers.

Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov has ordered a public inquiry.

Russia's defence minister ordered a military commission to look into the attack and said the findings would be made public.



Luther king and family

Jamaican honour for Marley home

The Jamaican home of reggae legend Bob Marley is to be declared a national monument, 25 years after his death.

Musician Marley, who died of cancer in 1981, would have turned 61 this week.

His home has become the Tuff Gong International music studio, but remains a major tourist attraction in the Jamaican capital Kingston.

Officials said the tribute will recognise Marley's work in promoting his home country overseas. No official date has been set for the ceremony.

The singer was born in St Ann, Jamaica in 1945, but despite his global fame, government officials have repeatedly ignored calls to name the reggae star a national hero.

Only seven Jamaicans have been bestowed the title national hero, including civil rights leader Marcus Garvey and former Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante.

Marley, who was behind songs such as Get Up Stand Up and One Love, was given the Order of Merit, Jamaica's third-highest honour, a month before his death in Miami, aged 36.

A peacemaker and champion of Africa throughout his life, Marley's 60th birthday saw thousands converge on the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa for a celebration concert last year.

Organised by the Bob Marley Foundation and the African Union, among others, it marked the first time his birthday had been celebrated outside his native Jamaica.

Ethiopia is the spiritual home of Rastafarianism, a religion with which Marley was closely associated.



Bob Marley

US presidents honour King widow

Four US presidents were among thousands of mourners who attended the funeral of Coretta Scott King, widow of US civil rights leader Martin Luther King.

President George W Bush paid tribute to Mrs King, describing her as "one of the most admired Americans of our time".

"I've come today to offer the sympathy of our entire nation at the passing of a woman who worked to make our nation whole," President Bush said. "Coretta Scott

King not only secured her husband's legacy, she built her own."

The writer, Maya Angelou, also spoke of Mrs King's legacy.

"Those of us who have gathered here, we owe something from this minute on, so this gathering is not just another footnote on the pages of history," she said.

Flags are being flown at half-mast at all US government buildings, military posts and diplomatic missions abroad.

Mrs King - who died on

30 January - had carried on her husband's work for racial equality after he was assassinated in 1968.

"She leaves us all a better America than the America of her childhood," TV personality Oprah Winfrey said on Monday.

Others who paid their respects to Martin Luther King's widow included the civil rights leaders Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

Waiting outside the Ebenezer Baptist Church where her casket was lying in honour on Monday, Navy sailor

Dwight MacMutay said: "She was a great woman. We pray that we have someone to fill her shoes."

He was one of the estimated 100,000 mourners to brave the rain to pay their last respects on Monday.

Thousands more had already filed past her open casket in the state Capitol building over the weekend.

Mrs King died in her sleep, after experiencing poor health in recent years.

She met her husband in Boston, married him in 1953, and supported him in his civil rights work.

After his death, she raised their children while working to secure his legacy.

In 1969 she founded the Martin Luther King Jr Centre for Non-violent Social Change in Atlanta.

She saw the establishment of a national holiday to mark her husband's January birthday, from 1986.

World figures deplore cartoon row

Key figures from the UN, the EU and a prominent pan-Islamic body have jointly called for calm in the wake of outrage over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and his counterparts called the drawings offensive, but expressed alarm at the violent worldwide reaction to them.

The prime minister of Denmark, where the cartoons were first published, said they had led to a "global crisis".

Several people have been killed in angry protests, mostly in Afghanistan.

In France, a court threw out on technical grounds an application for an injunction against a satirical publication that planned to print the 12 caricatures in its Wednesday edition.

The editor of Charlie-Hebdo welcomed the ruling. "Criticising religion is

legitimate in a state of law and must remain so," Philippe Val said.

But the Union of Islamic Organisations of France, one of the groups that applied for the injunction, said "one cannot insult a religion".

"To defend the dignity of

one's religion does not mean one is radical," Fouad Alaoui said.

The statement by Mr Annan, the EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, and the head of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmelettin Ihsanoglu,

N.Korea says US must drop sanctions before talks

North Korea will resume six-party talks on its nuclear activities only if the United States drops threatened sanctions against it, a North Korean official said on Wednesday as talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang ended in rancour.

"The condition is to remove the financial sanctions," said Song Il Ho, North Korea's ambassador to bilateral talks with Japan in Beijing. "If the Japanese tell the U.S., they will actually listen to

them more carefully."

Song made the comments at a press briefing after five days of meetings between Japan and North Korea ended with both sides far apart over abductions of Japanese citizens — and no sign of agreement on resuming the nuclear negotiations.

North Korea has said more than once it will not return to the six-party talks, which include the two Koreas, Japan, Russia, the United States and host China, unless

called for restraint from all sides.

"We believe freedom of the press entails responsibility and discretion, and should respect the beliefs and tenets of all religions. But we also believe the recent violent acts surpass the limits of peaceful protest," it said.

Washington drops the sanctions threat.

The United States in recent months has cracked down on firms suspected of colluding with North Korea in counterfeiting and laundering money from drug trafficking. It also threatened sanctions against Pyongyang, which is believed to earn as much as \$1 billion annually from these activities.

At the bilateral talks, Japan said North Korea must fully explain the fate of Jap-

anese citizens secretly spirited to North Korea, and it demanded Pyongyang hand over agents involved in the abductions.

North Korea has admitted kidnapping 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s to help train spies and says 8 of the 13 are dead, but Japan wants more information about the eight and another three it says were abducted.

Song said Japan was exploiting the issue and placed the onus on Tokyo to prove Pyongyang was hiding anything.

Trust International

Africa

Rwanda genocide court frees pair

A UN-backed tribunal has confirmed the acquittal of two senior Rwandan officials charged with genocide.

The two men were found not guilty two years ago due to lack of evidence but prosecutors appealed the verdict, saying the court had made errors.

Ex-transport minister Andre Ntagerura and ex-governor of Cyangugu province Emmanuel Bagambiki were accused of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Mr Ntagerura is the first former minister to be acquitted by the court.

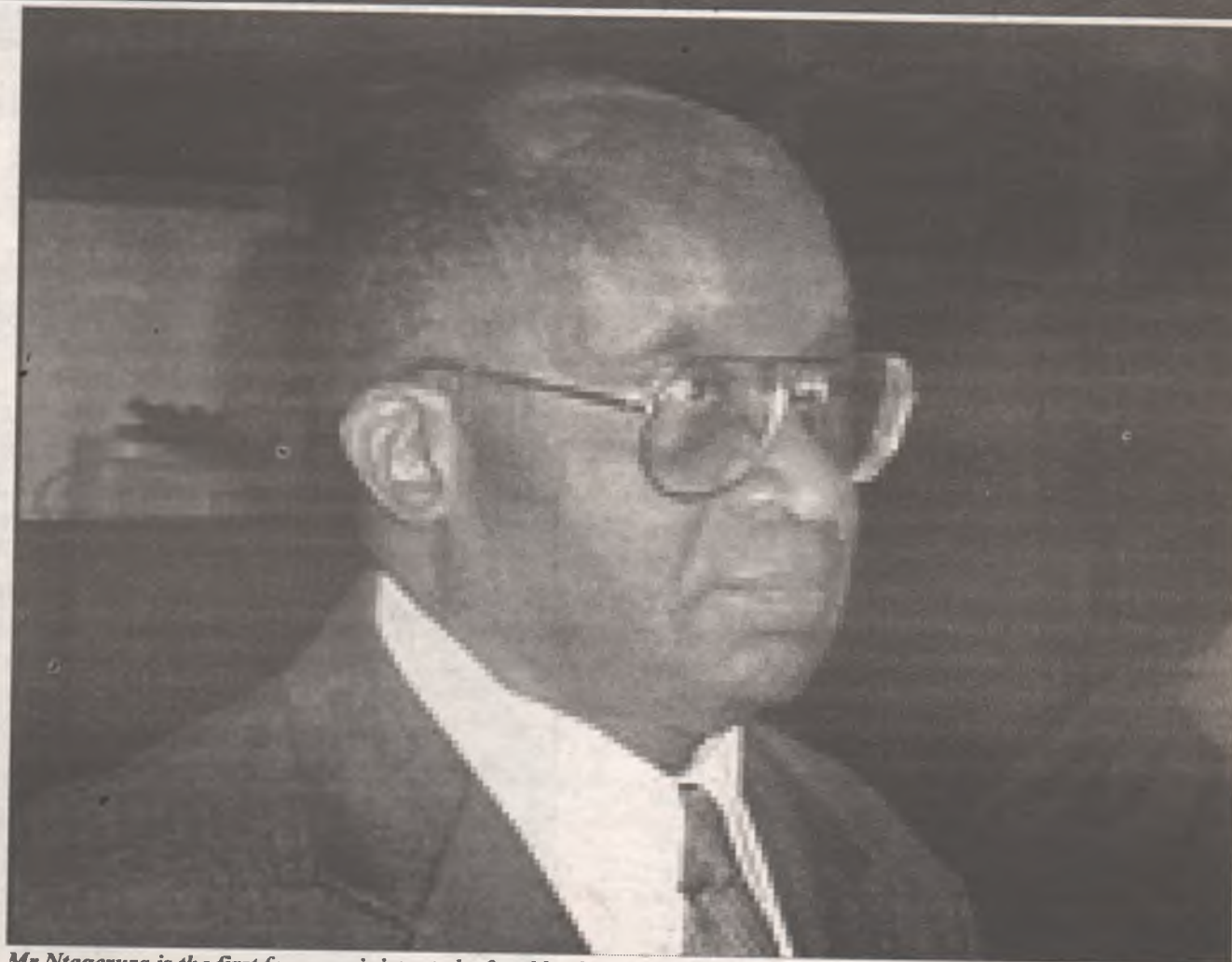
Italian judge Fausto Pocar

of the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTR) for Rwanda rejected the prosecution's call for a new trial.

In February 2004 the court found that the prosecution had failed to prove that the two men had actively participated in the genocide in Cyangugu, in the south-west.

More than 800,000 people, mostly minority Tutsis, were killed in a 100-day wave of ethnic violence that swept through Rwanda in 1994.

The Tanzania-based ICTR has convicted more than 20 people and acquitted three since it was established in 1994. More cases are awaiting trial.



Mr Ntagerura is the first former minister to be freed by the court

Sudan, Chad to discuss tension

The leaders of Chad and Sudan are due to meet in Libya at a regional mini-summit to try to defuse rising tensions between the states. The Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, will host the discussions, which also include three other African states.

Chad and Sudan have accused each other of carrying out cross-border attacks where Chad meets Sudan's Darfur region.

The meeting comes after a recent report by Human Rights Watch blamed Sudan for the upsurge in conflict.

Chad declared a state of war with Sudan last year following a deadly attack launched from Darfur by Chadian rebels.

Chad says the rebels are trying to overthrow its president, Idriss Deby.

Sudan has repeatedly denied allegations made by Chad that it is backing the rebels and sending Arab militias in support.

Sudan has in turn accused the Chadians of shelling across the border.

The presidents of the two countries will meet to try to find a way to end the escalating crisis, under the brotherly gaze of Colonel Gaddafi, says the BBC's Jonah Fisher in Khartoum.

"We are meeting... to go beyond the tension between Chad and Sudan and reach practical solutions to overcome the negative issues between the two countries," Libyan Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdel-Rahman Shalgam said.

One proposal on the table is thought to be joint border

patrols, including forces from the Central African Republic.

With over two million displaced people still in camps in Darfur and Chad, the United Nations warned last week that the three-year-long conflict was in danger of assuming an international dimension.

SA 'dry-cleaner' murder case row

Uproar erupted in a South African court on Tuesday as six people accused of killing three workers were given bail.

The "dry-cleaner" killings have acquired racial overtones and attracted intense attention in South Africa.

The white owner of a dry-cleaning business is among those accused of murdering three black employees.

Four of the accused were earlier denied bail. On Thursday, the magistrate said the state's case was not strong enough to withhold bail.

The bail announcement was greeted with shouting and jeering from a packed courtroom at the Vereeniging Magistrate's Court, about 60km south of Johannesburg.

"There is still apartheid and racism and I will teach my children to hate white people," said Dorothy Moeletsi, whose daughter, Constance, was among the victims.

Gruesome details of the killings published in the media have heightened public interest in the case.

The victims were allegedly placed in a large washing machine with cleaning chemicals, and later tied up and str-

angled at Protea Dry Cleaners in Vereeniging, on the night of 3 January.

Charl Colyn, the owner of Protea Dry Cleaners, his daughter Isabel, his son-in-law Jacques Smit, and a friend, Ruan Swanepoel, were each released on 5000 rand (\$900) bail.

They had earlier been denied bail, and have been in custody for almost a month.

The other two accused, employees Samuel Mzizi and Jacob Dlamini, were released on R2000 bail each.

The case has been postponed until 7 March for further investigation.

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The institute director general who welcomed the team, which he called valuable partners said that the institute which last year hosted a high level meeting on mainstreaming peace building capacity as a critical challenge and component of the national development said that the current National Economic and Empowerment Development plans (NEEDS) incorporated the essential and basic elements of the institute's work on its framework. Dr. Ochuche further remarked that the institute in collaboration with partners like the United Nations would continue to make critical inputs in the nation's development strategy, especially developing paradigm for conflict management and mainstreaming peace building capacities in major state organs.

By Charles Onunaiju, Senior Reporter (Foreign Desk)

United Nations team comprising delegations from the headquarters in New York and its agency based in Nigeria were guests to the Institute for peace and conflict resolution, in Abuja where they promised to collaborate with the institute to build capacities for peace and development in Nigeria. The UN team which included Ms Marie Pace and Mr. Chetan Kumal of the UNDP, Tapico Kanninen of the department of political affairs, New York and Ms Gay Rosenblum-Kumar of the department of Economic and Social Affairs said that their visit to the institute is to further explore areas of co-operation and collaboration to strengthen research work on peace and conflict resolution.

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UN pledges co-operation with peace institute

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Owner of Kenya building arrested

Kenyan police have arrested the owner of a building that collapsed in the capital, Nairobi, last month.

At least 20 people were killed in the building, which was under construction.

The arrest came after police placed notices in newspapers seeking help in finding businessman Nganga Kihonge, who disappeared shortly after the collapse.

Mr Kihonge could be charged with negligence, Criminal Investigation Department spokesman Gideon Kibunja told the BBC Network Africa programme.

He was arrested as he left

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VACANCY! VACANCY!! VACANCY!!!

A newspaper company with its headquarters in Abuja requires applications from suitable and qualified candidates to fill the following vacancies.

(1) MARKETING EXECUTIVES

Location: Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt

Qualifications: The duties and responsibilities of the Marketing Executives will be to expand readership of the newspaper in their zones and report daily activities of their operation to the Marketing Manager in Abuja. The qualifications required for the job are as follows:

- B.Sc/HND in Economics, Business Admin, Marketing or related field obtained from a reputable University/Polytechnic
- Honesty, dedication to duty and readiness to work at any location in Nigeria at all times.
- At least 3 years post-qualification experience preferably acquired from Newspaper Company.
- Candidates with a Second Class Upper Division degree will have an upper hand in the final selection.
- Residency and good knowledge of Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Ibadan metropolis will be an added advantage.

(2) ADVERT EXECUTIVES

Location: Kano, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja.

Duties:

Successful candidates are expected to deepen the existing advert market and source new clientele for patronage.

Qualifications:

- Same qualifications as above.
- In addition to (1) above candidates who have obtained an MBA or minimum of 5 years requisite experience will be given first consideration.
- Successful candidates must be aggressive, smart, honest and be willing to meet expected sales targets.

(3) ADVERT CANVASSERS

Location: Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Lagos and Port Harcourt.

Duties:

Advert Canvassers and Freelancers are required to secure new advertisements for the newspaper.

Qualifications:

B.Sc. graduate or OND/NCE with minimum of 2 years experience may apply for this position.

Remuneration:

The remuneration for the positions of Advert Executives and Canvassers are very generous. They include very competitive salary and bonuses. They also include good commissions that are promptly paid to deserving earners.

Method of Application:

Interested candidates should send in their applications with CV's and relevant credentials as well as daytime contact telephone numbers within 2 weeks from the date of this advertisement to:-

The Advertiser
P.O. Box 6873
Wuse Zone 3,
Abuja.

NB: Candidates for the post of Advert Canvassers outside Abuja can personally submit their applications to the Bureau Chiefs and Regional Editors of the Daily Trust offices in Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Jos, Lagos and Port Harcourt.

SALE OF NEW SHOPS IN WUSE MARKET:

OPEN APPEAL TO THE FEDERAL

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Once again, we wish to thank the Federal Executive Council and in particular the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory for their innovative policies, in Wuse Market. We feel the pains of some of the policies, but we are very much appreciative of the foresight and vision behind the entire exercise. There can never be gain without pain. We also appreciate the effort of the market managers and the Implementation Committee. We commend their zeal and hard work. However, we believe that the implementation of the government policies in the market has to be reviewed to fall in line with the government contemplation and vision, which is to re-position the Abuja trader for effective and decent performance.

We are appealing therefore, that the sale of new shops built in Wuse Market be suspended until the construction is completed and the shops numbered. Issuance of letters of offer for shops without specifying their location is wrong. Traders need shops for different purposes of trading. It is only logical that one should physically examine the shop you are giving him before committing himself. In the last bidding exercise, each bidder was specifically required to physically examine the shop he is bidding for to ensure he is bidding for it as it is. That is the normal thing to do. It should be appreciated that the traders displaced from the construction site were only given a little time to vacate their shops, and for twelve months on, have been idle. Their case should not be compounded by issuance of blind offers. One should not be led to take the first step in a 50-year lease blindly.

We are in support of an early release of the offers as soon as construction is completed and the shops numbered so that one knows which shop he is applying for. Traders that deal on light items will prefer to take shops in the upper floor, while those that deal on heavy items such as bags of sugar and rice or other heavy commodities will invariably prefer the more expensive shops on the ground floor. There is no logic behind a uniform price for shops in a third floor and one on a ground floor. After all, a two-bedroom apartment in Asokoro costs more than a seven bedroom duplex in Gwagwalada.

Equally of concern to us, is this issue of giving deadlines for a process that has not started. The traders have only two weeks to express their right of first refusal starting from the 3rd of February. Unfortunately, the notice in AMML is that 'inquiries' should start on Thursday the 9th of February, six days into the deadline. We appeal that in future, such a deadline should commence with the issuance of the offers.

We also wish to join the appeal for the cessation of demolition of shops in Wuse Market for the purpose of rebuilding. We understand only the Federal Executive Council can alter any decision regarding the exercise. The shops should be sold to the traders. These shops were built by F.C.D.A. only eight years ago and could easily yield about one hundred and eighty million (180,000,000) naira to the federal government. Moreover, we suppose that they were among the shops approved for sale by the Federal Executive Council.

We also wish to remind the committee of the need to publish for sales, all other shops in the market not yet taken care of in the extension.

Finally, our thumbs are up for this administration in the areas of transparency and due process. May the remaining exercise in Wuse Market be guided by this same passion.

Thank you and long live the Federal Republic.

HARUNA YAKUBU

For: The concerned traders.

Wuse Modern Market

Trust International

Middle East

Hamas 'ready to talk to Israel'

The political leader of Palestinian militant group Hamas has said the group is willing to take a serious step towards peace if Israel does the same.

Khaled Meshaal told the BBC that Hamas would not renounce violence, saying resisting an occupation was legal.

But he said a long-term truce would be possible if Israel accepted conditions including a return to its 1967 borders.

Israel's acting PM said if he won next month's poll, Israel would retain West Bank settlement blocs and Jerusalem.

However, Ehud Olmert said Israel would be prepared to give up parts of the West Bank where most Palestinians were living.

His interview on Israel television was his first since taking power a month ago following Ariel Sharon's massive stroke.

Mr Meshaal said he wanted to send a message to the next Israeli government that Hamas would be ready to talk if Israel met certain strict conditions.

Now it's time for Israel to do what they said they would never do and enter dialogue with Hamas

The most important of these was that Israel must withdraw to the boundaries it had until the 1967 Middle East war, Mr Meshaal told the BBC's Middle East editor Jeremy Bowen.

Hamas would then "possibly give a long-term truce with Israel", he said.

"This is a position that Hamas could take, but not now, only after Israel recognises the rights of the Palestinians, to show and confirm its willingness to withdraw to the 1967 borders," he said.

Mr Meshaal said such a move by Israel could create conditions for the international community to find a solution for all of the region's problems.

Our correspondent says that by putting the onus on the international community, the Hamas leader seems to be displaying a willingness to accept international mediation.

But Mr Meshaal, who lives in exile in the Syrian capital, Damascus, also warned that the militant group was capable of leading the Palestinians in a long fight that they would be bet-

He and other Hamas leaders are in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, to discuss the next step after their 25 January election win over rivals Fatah.

Hamas has largely observed a truce in its fight with Israel for the past year.

However, Israel believes offers like the latest by Mr Meshaal are a ruse to allow Hamas to gather its strength, since its charter calls for the destruction of the Jewish state, our correspondent says.

Speaking on Channel 2 TV, Mr Olmert said Israel would retain "united Jerusalem", which would include occupied East Jerusalem, if his Kadima party won Israel's general election on 28 March.

But he said Israel would disengage from parts of the West Bank where the population is mostly Palestinian, at the same time as retaining its three main settlement blocs.

Israel has occupied East Jerusalem since 1967. It annexed the area in 1981 and sees it as its exclusive domain.

Under international law the area is considered to be occupied territory.

East Jerusalem is often called Arab East Jerusalem because the majority of its residents are Palestinian, and Palestinians hope to establish their future capital there.



Khaled Meshaal leads Hamas from exile in Damascus

Japan PM cools on succession bill

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has indicated he may no longer speed a bill through parliament to allow female royal succession. Mr Koizumi's slower approach came one day after the news that Princess Kiko was pregnant, raising hopes a male heir may yet be born into the royal family.

"I want to proceed cautiously so as not to make this a political tool," Mr Koizumi said of the controversial bill.

The bill was first proposed because no male royal has been born for 40 years.

But the imperial agency announced on Tuesday that Princess Kiko, the wife of Emperor Akihito's second son Prince Akishino, was pregnant.

If she has a son, it could dramatically alter the current situation in the imperial family, where there has been increasing concern over who will succeed the throne after Crown Prince Naruhito.

Naruhito, first in line to the throne after his father Akihito, has just one daughter with his wife, Crown Princess Masako.

Princess Kiko and Prince Akishino currently have two daughters.

Moves to allow female

fierce debate in Japan.

Many Japanese support the idea, but conservatives oppose any change to the country's male-only imperial law.

Mr Koizumi had earlier pledged to propose the bill to parliament by June.

Asked on Wednesday whether he was keeping to this timescale, Mr Koizumi reportedly avoided a clear-cut answer.

"The issue does not involve a question of whether I stick to [the timing] or not," Mr Koizumi said.

"It's desirable that the legislation be enacted when everyone can support it," Mr Koizumi told parliament.

"Now public opinion is split, and I would like to deal with the issue carefully."



Mr Koizumi initially pledged

British police said Wednesday they had no evidence that the July 7 London suicide bombers attended a mosque headed by a preacher sentenced to seven years in prison for inciting followers to kill non-Muslims.

The Times and Daily Mail newspapers reported Wednesday that Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer — two of the four men who blew themselves up on three subway trains and a bus — had attended north London's Finsbury Park mosque.

Abu Hamza al-Masri, the mosque's chief imam between 1997 and 2003, was sentenced to seven years in prison Tuesday for promoting the slaying of non-Muslims as a "religious duty."

A Metropolitan Police spokeswoman said police had "no evidence at this stage that any of those involved (in the July 7 attacks) had connections with Abu Hamza and anyone who has any relevant information should contact us." The spokeswoman, speaking anonymously in keeping with police practice, said the investigation was continuing.

The blasts killed 52 commuters and the bombers. No one has been arrested in connection that attacks, the

No evidence bombers attended London Mosque

worst bombings in London since World War II.

The mosque — described by anti-terrorist police chief Peter Clarke as a "honeypot for extremists" — was attended by both Sept. 11 plotter Zacarias Moussaoui and failed "shoe bomber" Richard Reid, and has been linked to several other terrorist suspects.

The one-eyed, hook-handed Al-Masri, 47, also faces extradition to the United States on charges of trying to establish a terrorist training camp in Oregon, conspiring to take hostages in Yemen and facilitating terror training in Afghanistan.

Authorities in Britain and the United States accuse al-Masri of being at the center of a web of terrorist activities from the 1990s until police raided the Finsbury Park mosque in 2003.

He had faced a maximum of life in prison in the British case.


Judge Anthony Hughes sentenced al-Masri to seven

years on the most serious charge of soliciting murder and allowed him to serve his sentences on the other charges concurrently, including fomenting racial hatred, possessing a terrorist document and possessing abusive recordings.

Defense attorneys said al-Masri planned to appeal. Defense lawyer Muddassar Arani said al-Masri believed he was "a prisoner of faith, and this is a slow martyrdom for him."




Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri has been jailed for seven years after he was found guilty of inciting murder and race hate.



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ENQUIRIES:

Trust International

Odd World

25m condoms? Who's watching Carnival?

The Brazilian government will distribute 25 million free condoms to promote safe sex during the country's Carnival holidays, the Health Ministry said Monday.

The condoms, provided under the government's acclaimed anti-AIDS program, will be given out at health clinics and in sites like public squares and dances.

"It's that time of year when we boost distribution because of the increase in demand," an official from the Health Ministry's anti-AIDS

program said.

Carnival kicks off across the nation on February 25, heralding several days of parades, parties, revelry and, for some people, sexual abandon. The Rio de Janeiro carnival is the best known worldwide but every big city has its own celebrations.

The Health Ministry said the purpose of the handout was to prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Last year, it announced a plan to distribute more than 1 billion free condoms nationwide in 2006.

The Roman Catholic Church in Brazil — the world's largest Catholic country — routinely denounces such programs as encouraging sex and contravening its stand against contraception.



Drivers in an antique Jeep head toward in Armenia, Colombia, some 110 miles west of Bogota, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2006. About 450 cars arrived to the event to try break a Guinness Record.

Police arrest 11-year-old in robbery case

Omaha police have arrested an 11-year-old boy as a robbery suspect. The boy, already sought on suspicion of burglary, and a 15-year-old companion were armed with BB guns.

A woman and a teenage girl told police that two boys had fired BBs at their upstairs apartment windows about 7:40 p.m. Sunday.

The boys then forced their way inside the apartment, pointed the BB guns at the woman and the girl and stole tools and compact discs, a police report said.

Shortly afterward the boys were spotted in the area and arrested.

Officer Chris LeGrow, a spokesman for the Omaha Police Department, said Tuesday that he didn't know whether the boy was the youngest armed robbery suspect ever arrested by his department.

But he recalled once having to lift a burglary suspect up to a counter so the boy could sign a police form. LeGrow said he recalled the boy's age.

Cops nab speeders with pickup, baby seat

Even Ponch and Jon from "CHiPs" might be a bit envious of the newest weapon in the never-ending battle to nab speeders.

Police in Mount Pleasant aren't using a Camaro or a Mustang but an ordinary unmarked six-cylinder pickup truck — one with a baby seat at that.

Officer Mathew Pagliarini doesn't know of any other officers who drive unmarked pickups.

Police seized the truck in a

drug raid and outfitted it with tinted windows and hidden blue lights. They want to limit descriptions of the make and model so as not to alert motorists.

For many drivers, the first alert is when they see the blue lights flash.

The truck can surprise law enforcement officers as well.

As the unmarked pickup recently sat beside Interstate 526 waiting for speeders, a Transportation Department roadside assistance vehicle pulled alongside to offer

help.

"Hey man, you're blowing my cover," Pagliarini said.

Later, as he wrote a ticket for a car clocked at 83 mph, a Charleston County sheriff's deputy stopped to make sure Pagliarini was an officer.

"You never know," the

deputy said. "You get some freaks driving around with blue lights. Last night, two guys posing as police officers robbed some folks in North Charleston."

Later, Pagliarini stopped a driver doing 90 mph who said he was late for work.

"I'll be driving slower now for sure," said the driver, who was looking inside the truck that Pagliarini sometimes uses to chauffeur his 1-year-old son when off duty.

"You even got a baby seat in there? Oh, man, I don't believe it," the driver said.

Woman does 'mouth-to-beak' to save chicken

Sometimes a chicken does have lips, just not her own. Marian Morris saved her brother's exotic chicken, Boo Boo, by administering "mouth-to-beak" resuscitation on the fowl after it was found floating face down in the family's pond.

Morris, a retired nurse, said she hadn't had any practice with CPR in years, but that she was interested to see if she "still had it."

"I breathed into its beak, and its dad-gum eyes popped open," Morris said. "I breathed into its beak again, and its eyes popped

open again. "I said, 'I think this chicken's alive now. Keep it warm.'"

Morris said she was pleased to find that the bird she saved was an "exotic," and not just an ordinary chicken.

The chicken is called Boo Boo, because she is easily frightened. The family thought Boo Boo was startled and flopped into the pond.

Man, 94, shoots self, waits hours for help

A 94-year-old man who accidentally shot himself in the abdomen while cleaning his shotgun is expected to make a full recovery, despite

waiting until the next morning to ask for help.

Marcus Sturghill was trying to clean his .20-gauge shotgun when it discharged and hit him with a load of birdshot in the abdomen about 7 p.m. Sunday, Crittenden County sheriff's investigator Thomas Martin said.

Martin said Sturghill waited for a home health care nurse to arrive about 8:30 a.m. Monday before asking for medical attention.

Before the nurse arrived, Sturghill had cleaned the wound and wrapped it with a towel, Martin said. Sturghill was flown to The Medical Center in Memphis, Tenn., and was in stable condition Tuesday.

World's first million-dollar coconut tree for sale

Looking for something special to brighten your home, garden, tropical beachfront hotel or casino? How about a million-dollar coconut tree?

This is no ordinary palm tree, though — it's a botanical marvel, for the tree has three heads instead of one.

The Marc Delorme Agricultural Research Centre in Ivory Coast says it will reluctantly part with its pride possession, a magnificent 30-metre (100-foot) Malayan tall, in exchange for a million dollars to help fund its research.

"Coconut trees with multiple heads are very rare and I have never seen any as beautiful as this," coconut expert Roland Bourdix, of France's Centre for International Agronomic Research for Development (Cirad), told AFP.

Cirad helps the centre, located about 30 kilometres (20 miles) north of Abidjan, which has a 56-year record of research into coconut trees and oil.



A regular coconut tree. The Marc Delorme Agricultural Research Centre in Ivory Coast says it will reluctantly part with its pride possession, a magnificent 30-metre (100-foot) Malayan tall with three heads, in exchange for a million dollars to help fund its research.

Business Trust

Currencies

West African Unit of Account

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

Parallel Market

	Average
Dollar	144 145
Pounds	261 175

IFC executive visits Nigeria

Lars Thunell, Executive Vice President of the International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, will visit Nigeria, from today February 10 to 13, 2006.

The visit underscores the importance and continuing commitment that IFC attaches to its partnership with Nigeria. Mr. Thunell's program will include meetings with President Olusegun Obasanjo and government officials, as well as consultations with local private sector representatives, IFC clients, donors, and representatives of civil society. Mr. Thunell will be accompanied by Mr. Richard Ranken, IFC director for Africa.

These meetings will give Mr. Thunell an opportunity to discuss economic and social developmental priorities for the country and to explore ways to promote more private sector development.

"We congratulate Nigeria on its credit rating, which we believe reflects the vigour with which President Obasanjo and his team are pursuing their economic reform agenda," said Mr. Thunell.

Cocoa farmers embrace new technology

Cocoa farmers in the 14 cocoa producing states are set to embrace a new training module, the "Farmers Field School (FFS)" training technology, as from next month.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture's Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (IITA/STCP) is expected to provide the required expertise, management and overall leadership in the implementation of the FFS programme.

This was contained in a memorandum sent by the Cocoa Development Sub-Committee on sensitisation, training and implementation to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Malam Adamu Bello.

A member of the committee, who preferred anonymity, made this known to the Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja.



Flash Back: President Olusegun Obasanjo received the new Managing Director of British American Tobacco Nigeria, Richard Hodgson (sixth from left) at the State House Abuja last year. Richard Hodgson is seen here being introduced to the President by the former outgoing MD, Nick Hales (extreme right). Others are BATN officials.

Cartoon: Text messages urge boycott of Danish goods

Series of GSM text messages have been sent to Muslims across the country to boycott products from Denmark and Norway.

The messages to Muslims, come on the heels of protests by Muslims over the cartooning of Prophet Mohammed by a Danish newspaper.

"Please boycott all products made in Denmark and Norway, e.g. Nido and Dano milk. Help pass this message for the sake of Allah to other people," one of the text message stated.

Yet another one said: "Boycott all products made in Denmark and Norway and also do not do business with them."

NAN reports the messages, which has incensed many GSM phone users, urged Muslims to embark on prayers against the "blasphemous" publication.

The messages, which were sent in a multitude, also called on Muslims to condemn the cartoon in all its entirety.

NAN recalls that Kano State House of Assembly on Tuesday burnt the Danish and Norwegian flags to protest the "blasphemous" cartoon.

NNPC tenants sue FG over sale of estate

Occupants of NNPC estate in Area 11, Abuja, have sued the federal government and the Corporation over government policy on sale of residential houses.

In the suit filed before a Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday, the plaintiffs are asking the court to compel NNPC to sell the estate to them in line with the federal government directive

on sales of residential houses in the FCT.

Defendants to the suit are Minister of Federal Capital Territory, Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) President Olusegun Obasanjo, Attorney General of the Federation and the NNPC.

The occupants numbering 134, contended that the estate

being part of the government residential houses in Abuja is subject to the approved guidelines on the sale of federal government residential quarters in the FCT.

Counsel to the occupants, Mr Jeff Ejikonye, said that the estate was built with funds from the federation account under special priority project of

government and designated as quarters for NNPC staff.

He said that when the NNPC staff could not take up the flats because of high rent charged by the Corporation, it paved the way for most of his clients who could afford the rent to take up their respective flats in the estate.

He contended that as occupants of the estate, they were entitled to all the rights incidental to their status under the federal government policy on sale of its houses in Abuja.

The plaintiffs jointly asked the court to restrain the NNPC from transferring the estate to its Pension Trustee Incorporated to manage and to continue demanding rent from them.

Ejikonye said that the estate did not fall into the categories of houses exempted from the sales policy as contained in the maiden edition of the Federal Tenders

Journal on May 2005.

To buttress the claim, the counsel said that FCTA in May 2005 made available to them application forms for purchase each of the flat occupied by his clients.

He said that they completed the forms and submitted same with non-refundable fee of N10,000 per applicant.

When NNPC discovered this, he said that its management transferred the estate to its Pension Trustee body to manage and claimed ground that the estate did not form part of houses to be sold by government.

Meanwhile, counsel to NNPC, Dr Olumide Ayeni, has filed a Notice of Preliminary Objection to the suit.

In the application, Ayeni challenged the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court to entertain the suit and the right of action of the plaintiffs.

First Guarantee positions to administer pensions

First Guarantee Pensions Limited, one of the recently registered pension Fund Administrators (PFA's) has increased its authorised share capital from N200million to N500million, chairman of the company, Mr Olaiya Olando Ojo has said.

Speaking in Abuja yesterday after the company's 2006 Annual General Meeting (AGM), Mr. Ojo said the meeting was called to approve the inflow of more funds into the company, as away of consolidating its position and making it ready for the task of administering pensions in the country.

He said various individuals and corporate bodies have indicated interest in investing in the new company, hence the need to admit more investors.

According to Ojo, in addition

to already existing shareholders, the company will admit two or three more corporate investors who will add value to the services of the company.

"We are going for two or three institutional investors who will add value to the company. They will be reputable insurance and stock broking firms".

He said when the company begins full operations its target will be to attract working Nigerians from all parts of the country both in the public and private sectors of the economy as away of ensuring that it remains at a leading position in the industry.

Also speaking to Business Trust after the AGM, The Managing Director of the

company, Mr. Nkem Odibeli said the firm which currently has branches in Lagos and Abuja, is planning to open a branch in Port Harcourt next month, while three other branches would be established before the end of the year.

"Our vision is to be a world class PFA that will provide good service. We want to have the highest level of integrity in the industry," he said.

Vice Chairman of the firm, Hon Eze Chidi Duru said the company would abide by the rules governing pension administration as a way of gaining and retaining the confidence of its clients, adding that "this is a highly regulated industry and the National Pension Commission is there to regulate and safeguard contributors' money".

Foreign Exchange Rates

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

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BUSINESS TRUST

Northern Business

The Abuja business environment is difficult

Abubakar Sani is the chairman, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja Bureau de Change Operators Association, and the chief executive of Ajami Bureau de Change. He and his members have experienced some difficulties after the FCT demolition team visited their popular zone 4 business site. In this interview with our reporter, Hamisu Muhammad, he recounts their problems and new initiatives to keep their business moving.

Sir, we realised that some of your members have experienced some difficulties in transacting business as a result of the demolition of the zone 4 corner shops, how do you manage now?

Yes, honestly we are affected, because bureau de change is a kind of cluster business where we come together in one market and if there is need for any foreign exchange transaction we pool our resources but with this demolition some of our members have to find themselves outside zone 4 area where the market was established, so because of that we encounter some problems, however with the advent of GSM we are able to minimize the problems. The only thing now is that to bring out huge money from one place to another is not comfortable for us.

Recently, the chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, beamed his search light on



Abubakar Sani

your activities where he said most of your transactions assisted fraudulent people to syphon money from the country, how true is this allegation?

The role of Bureau de change in economic development in Nigeria can not be overemphasized, for instance, when we talk about African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the American initiative on African economic

growth, we bureau de change operators contribute a lot, whereby people export their commodities, and due to lack of domiciliary accounts, they have to come to us to exchange their money, our business provides a gap, also some new companies, engaged in international transactions also patronise us and this assists them in developing their businesses.

Again, when they said fraudulent people are using some of our members to syphon money from the country, these are not our members and I hope EFCC is able to know who those people are because there has never been that kind of incidence here in zone 4, but in any business there must be some bad eggs therefore it depends on the authority to trace them and take the necessary measure against them.

How will you react to EFCC's notion that in developed countries you hardly find this type of transaction as you are doing here in Ni-

geria?

Yes we believe it is not proper, but this time around we are trying to make it in such a way that our members find a definite place with definite address, that is one reason why we agreed to build an edifice that would accommodate everybody so, when you look at our environment, not only bureau de change business is been done in such a way, but other businesses, you can see people selling shoes, drugs, clothes on the road with no proper address, we are not contemplating doing wrong but there will be a time when things will be put in order.

In order as how?

One problem we are facing now is that the licensing process as requested by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is very stringent, the last time we had meeting with EFCC we told them of the stringent licensing requirement, and I believe he heard our complaint and they are working towards that.

What are such stringent conditions?

Like the deposit, CBN is asking for N10 million and the qualifications of people that will operate the bureau de change and most of our members are people with primary and secondary school certifi-

cates or even none, therefore we request that they should relax such conditions.

What is the response from the CBN?

We held series of meetings with CBN officials and I believe they must have writ-



Charles Soludo, CBN Gov

ten their reports, may be because of the bureaucracy, the result is yet to come out.

You talked about building a shopping mall, how did the idea start and what is the benefit?

It started when we had notice of demolition, we therefore gathered ourselves and approached the minister and eventually he heard our complaint and gave us the assurance of his support, firstly, he

allocated the land to our members, but under stringent conditions.

How did you generate funds for building such a big shopping mall?

We partly contributed the funds but we are also looking for financiers to help us because the amount is very high.

We are in discussion with some primary mortgage bankers to finance some of our members after the building. So that they will use their allocations as collateral.

People would like to know the owner of the land (zone 4 shopping mall) and your other problems?

Yes, the minister has allocated the land to our company, zone four property development company, we paid the fees.

There are a lot of problems in doing business here, firstly, there are different types of levies, environmental bills, revenue people and the high charges of rent of offices and shops, are some of the difficulties we encounter in our business and our clients do not always consider such things, they always need cheaper things or rates when doing business with us.

Post consolidation: Bank customers face difficulties in Kaduna

Following the consolidation in the banking sector, some branches of the new banks in Kaduna are finding it difficult to pro-

vide the required services as many customers are having

difficulty accessing their accounts.

When *Business Trust* visited the former Standard Trust Bank now UBA Group along

Ahmadu Bello Way in Kaduna on Monday and Tuesday the banking hall and premises were overcrowded and in chaos.

Some of the customers who spoke with *Business Trust* said they were unable to receive their January salaries which were paid through the bank. Others whose accounts are outside Kaduna were asked to come back later as staff claimed that the system was down.

Mrs Grace Johnson of the NCAA said she could not feed her children because she was unable to withdraw from her account more than a week after her salary was paid.

"I am a widow with three children. I have been working but unable to feed my children because I could not withdraw my salary from my account. I have been given my pay last week but yet to receive the salary and my children are starving," she said.

An official of the UBA Group who spoke to *Business Trust* on condition of anonymity said it is not a problem as the Group is still consolidating.

"The problem is all over the country at any STB or UBA branch you go. We are trying to merge the accounting system and this takes time as we can not close shop to do it, we have to continue doing whatever we can do," she said.

According to another of-

ficial of the bank, "the UBA bank is trying to integrate the UBA Group together. Problems like this must occur when 89 branches are being integrated into over 400 branches nationwide. They started working on the integration

since last Saturday but we don't know when it would be completed, he said.

Business Trust visits to the UBA regional office at Yakubu Gowon way Kaduna confirms the problem being faced by the branch as well.

...as Assembly increases budget by N2b

Kaduna State House of Assembly has adopted the report of its standing committee on this year's appropriation bill recommending an upward review of the budget estimates.

Committee chairman, Mohammed Ashiru, while sub-

mitting the report to the house, said it was imperative to increase the budget estimates by N2 billion.

He said the addition followed the submissions of the Ministry of Economic Planning in favour of ministries

and extra-ministerial departments in the state.

According to the chairman, the estimates in the appropriation bill now stands at N62 billion, some N2 billion over the estimate presented by the governor to the House.

NIPR Abuja chapter gets new exco

The Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Abuja chapter has elected Mr. Joe Itah as its chairman for year 2005-2007. Itah, an employee of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council NEPC, Abuja takes over from Mr. Goddy Nnadi, the public affairs manager of Petroleum Equalization Fund (management) board.

Itah will be assisted in the running of the Institute by Mr. Chinedu Asimago as vice chairman. Other elected executive members include Nnachi Okafor (secretary), Essien C. Essien (assistant secretary), Afotabi Olajuwon (financial secretary), Anne Tinn-Aku (treasurer), Victor Odojine (auditor) and Princess Noma Iubel (PR executive).

The election of officers marked the peak of the institute's 2005 AGM which took place on November 30, 2005.

In his address, Itah said the chairman on behalf of the

executive members promised to do everything legal and ethical to uplift the practice of the profession in the Federal Capital Territory. He cited areas such as capacity building through quality lectures/workshops, membership enhancement via good welfare packages and creation of enabling public awareness of institute's activities as cardinal focus of the new executive.



Joe Itah



Its business as usual at Dangote's stand at a recent international Trade Fair, Pic. Oluchi Okechukwu

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
ADSWITCH PLC.	2	1.30	15,000	19,500.00
CUTIX PLC	1	2.72	820	2,230.40
Sector Totals	3		15,820	21,730.40
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	1	17.00	144	2,448.00
PRESCO PLC.	2	10.50	5,428	57,186.60
Sector Totals	3		5,572	59,634.60
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	18	2.60	112,681	291,851.20
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	13	5.80	30,578	177,303.76
Sector Totals	31		143,259	469,154.96
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	86	2.75	3,135,437	8,488,502.28
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	4	9.10	32,500	295,750.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	3,000	6,780.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	3	5.11	2,288,821	11,695,875.31
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	277	34.00	964,615	32,734,046.89
GTBANK PLC.	158	13.34	1,319,456	17,650,325.79
INVESTMENT BANKING	10	4.57	702,500	3,210,425.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	1	0.84	62,000	52,080.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	61	9.51	2,013,567	19,058,505.07
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	101,438	284,026.40
OCEANIC BANK PLC	32	5.90	953,910	5,567,244.37
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	76	12.32	508,847	6,284,297.55
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	44	25.48	36,262,453	923,967,302.44
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	2	0.60	6,040	3,622.80
WEMA BANK PLC.	7	3.74	59,809	223,685.66
ZENITH BANK PLC	12	19.64	39,850	782,654.00
Sector Totals	776		48,454,243	1,030,305,123.56
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC.	1	1.85	10,000	18,500.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	42	100.5	193,777	9,401,014.40
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	199	36.25	989,658	35,819,329.44
Sector Totals	242		1,093,435	45,238,843.84
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	36	33.72	101,423	3,432,872.32
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	3	6.50	6,250	40,625.00
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	4	7.20	16,650	119,880.00
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	99	18.19	1,317,184	23,800,367.95
Sector Totals	142		1,441,507	27,393,745.27
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	2	3.75	10,628	39,855.00
CAP PLC.	10	8.80	49,877	441,277.82
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	1	4.15	20,000	83,000.00
Sector Totals	13		80,505	564,132.82
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	3	0.40	15,000	6,000.00
Sector Totals	3		15,000	6,000.00
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	5	1.20	33,166	39,762.56
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	5	3.74	6,840	25,487.04
JOHN HOLT PLC.	2	1.47	1,642	2,413.74
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	66	16.20	374,512	6,067,094.40
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC.	53	16.43	168,715	2,772,953.70
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	68	19.99	101,246	2,008,618.72
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.71	255	181.05
Sector Totals	200		686,376	10,916,511.21
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	6	1.09	100,000	109,000.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	5	22.15	4,500	97,947.00
Sector Totals	11		104,500	206,947.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	18	27.50	71,700	1,967,336.50
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	78	66.99	276,824	18,394,159.64
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	44	25.20	100,660	2,548,583.14
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	62	62.56	241,763	15,103,069.03
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	9	191.00	41,827	8,002,332.00
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	3	16.20	12,400	201,280.00
Sector Totals	214		745,174	46,216,760.31
FOOTWEAR				
FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES MAN. PLC.	1	0.30	200,000	60,000.00
LENNARDS (NIGERIA) PLC.	7	0.60	700	420.00
Sector Totals	8		200,700	60,420.00
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	3	2.70	51,162	138,137.40
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	23	10.25	345,452	3,542,430.50
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	1	3.23	1,486	4,799.78
Sector Totals	27		398,100	3,685,367.68
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
B.O.C. GASES PLC	7	2.77	42,372	118,410.44
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.70	51,000	35,700.00
VITAFIAT NIGERIA PLC.	60	4.86	794,304	3,795,138.74
Sector Totals	69		887,676	3,949,249.18
INSURANCE				
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	3	1.45	45,036	66,804.36
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	1	0.64	41,208	26,373.12
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	3	0.98	74,990	74,990.20
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	9	2.66	120,609	318,303.85
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	3	2.41	32,475	78,264.75
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	2	1.17	15,000	17,550.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	3	1.21	37,236	45,130.56
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	5	3.21	36,134	115,813.98
Sector Totals	29		402,688	741,230.82
MACHINERY(MARKETING)				
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC	1	0.56	500	280.00
Sector Totals	1		500	280.00
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC	6	1.20	70,150	83,487.50
Sector Totals	6		70,150	83,487.50
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	3	1.80	10,000	18,000.00
Sector Totals	3		10,000	18,000.00
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	1	0.50	90,000	45,000.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	41	41.00	191,538	7,863,184.52
CONOIL PLC	49	88.06	26,987	2,396,301.98
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	6	2.45	72,900	178,605.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	16	161.99	6,929	1,088,730.65
OANDO PLC	70	90.00	133,541	12,017,830.51
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	13	105.50	66,997	7,073,074.16
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	15	182.10	13,846	2,529,755.25
Sector Totals	211		602,738	33,192,482.07
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	1	3.18	1,600	5,088.00
Sector Totals	1		1,600	5,088.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	131	9.30	301,000	2,798,890.00
Sector Totals	131		301,000	2,798,890.00
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	1	2.07	480	993.60
Sector Totals	1		480	993.60
Overall Totals	2,007		55,661,023	1,205,934,072.82

TOP 10 TRADES AS AT YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
FG2NDBND08	1,000,000.00	10,000,000,000.00	1
NB	1,006,666.00	36,435,978.84	214
GUARANTY	1,327,856.00	17,762,234.79	162
WAPCO	1,364,834.00	24,667,479.45	107
FIRSTBANK	1,615,595.00	54,812,400.24	317
INTERCONT	2,030,067.00	19,215,855.07	66
UBA	2,189,317.00	26,560,839.98	111
FCMB	2,288,821.00	11,695,875.31	3
ACCESS	3,145,662.00	8,516,613.03	89
UBN	36,262,453.00	923,967,302.44	44

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
FG2NDBND08	100.00	1,000.00	+900.00
MOBIL	156.00	161.99	+5.99
GUINNESS	100.00	101.68	+1.68
NBC	62.30	62.81	+0.51
CADBURY	5.50	66.00	+0.50
ASHAKACEM	33.61	34.00	+0.39
OCEANIC	5.72	5.90	+0.18
CFAO	3.57	3.74	+0.17
NNFM	16.05	16.20	+0.15
NB	36.12	36.25	+0.13

TOP 5 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	198.50	190.00	-8.50
TEXACO	110.01	106.00	-4.01
AP	42.63	41.00	-1.63
CONOIL	183.00	182.10	-0.90
PRESCO	10.95	10.50	-0.45
CCNN	7.20	6.90	-0.30
BOCGAS	2.90	2.77	-0.13
ETERNAOIL	2.45	2.34	-0.11
DUNLOP	2.60	2.50	-0.10

Russia may cancel African debts

Russia may soon write off debts owed to it by 16 of the world's poorest countries, its finance minister has been reported as saying. Moscow would be willing to cancel about \$688m (575m euros; £394m) in bilateral debt, Russian news agency RIA-Novosti quoted Alexei Kudrin as saying.

The agreement could encompass a number of African countries including Benin, Tanzania and Zambia.

Russia is already considering writing off \$10bn owed by Afghanistan.

Moscow said on Monday it could forgive Afghanistan's debt if it agreed to take steps to reduce poverty and boost trade with creditor nations.

According to RIA-Novosti, Mr Kudrin said he would soon seek government approval for the cancellation of debts to 16 other nations.

Similarly, the agreement is likely to hinge on the countries concerned meeting certain conditions.

According to Alexei Kudrin, Russia could repay more of its own debt

"The main condition for writing off these countries' debt to Russia will be their agreement to fulfil certain requirements regarding the transparency of their finances, budget expenditures and poverty reduction," Mr Kudrin was quoted as saying.

Russia is also reported to be considering repayment of more of its own debt to the Paris Club of wealthy, creditor nations.

Innovation deficit affected Coca Cola profits-CEO

Coca Cola's chief executive, Neville Isdell has acknowledged that the company's current profit fall was caused by innovation deficits.

In recent years, Coca-Cola has seen its sales growth slip behind that of its rival PepsiCo, which has a bigger share of the noncarbonated soft drinks market.

Coca Cola's profits fell 28% in the last three months of 2005 following higher marketing costs and falling soft drink sales in France and the UK.

The fall in net profit to \$864m (£494m) was also down to a \$188m tax charge for returning overseas profit.

Coke's sales by volume rose by four percent in 2005, despite declining sales in France and the UK.

It spent an extra \$400m in marketing to revive sales of drinks such as Coke and Sprite, which make up 80% of revenues.

Chief executive Neville Isdell said the latest results "complete a transition year in which the company delivered solid unit case volume growth that was balanced well between carbonated soft drinks and noncarbonated beverages".

The firm is coming to the end of a strategic turnaround that has seen it focus more on emerging markets and sales of healthier, non-fizzy drinks such as its Dasani water and Minute Maid orange juice brands.

Last December it introduced a new marketing campaign based around the slogan "the Coke side of Life".

Back then Mr Isdell acknowledged that there had been an "innovation deficit" at the company prior to his arrival in 2004.

For 2006, Coca Cola has a raft of new soft drinks due to debut, including tea and coffee drinks, vitamin-enhanced juices and new versions of its Coke and Diet Coke favourites.

Business Trust

FCT to regulate GSM masts

The FCT Department of Development Control has said that henceforth no Global System Mobile (GSM) operator would be allowed to erect communication mast indiscriminately.

GSM operators in the FCT are alleging that the poor services encountered by their customers in the territory was as a result of attempt by the FCT Authorities to prevent the erection of masts in unauthorized places.

Investigations by *Business Trust* reveal that most GSM operators around the country including the FCT buy land, mostly measuring not more than 40mx50m, from owners or local chiefs at negotiable prices (as high as N2.5million) and proceed to erect their mast without permission from the relevant authorities.

However, a senior official of the Department of Development Control, Alh. Suleiman K. Gora, who spoke with *Business Trust*, said the department had not tampered

Nasir Imam, Abuja Property Editor & Austine Odo, Business Editor

with, closed down, or demolished any GSM operator's communication mast.

He said that some GSM operators have applied to the department for approval to erect masts in various locations within the territory.

Alh. Gora said that the regulation of the activities of the operators became necessary because hitherto most operators abused the situation because the law was lenient.

He said that the FCT Authorities decided to harmonize, not only the erection of masts by GSM operators, but all outdoor advertisements in the territory.

Alh. Suleiman Gora said the GSM operators were not paying any fees for the erection of masts and were encroaching on unauthorized places like roads, walkways and sewer lines.

The idea to regulate their activities, he said, was to design a uniform standard for all the operators to comply with.

The Cargo Defence Fund (CDF), an initiative of the Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC) is now seriously battling with problems associated with the

Cargo defence fund encounters problems

abandonment of legitimate cargo claims by Nigerian operators.

Azuka N. Ogo (Ms),

secretary, CDF said this during a chat with *Business Trust* at the Nigerian Shippers Council NSC Tower in Lagos on Monday.

According to her, issues such as the technicalities, follow up costs, foreign jurisdiction and in some cases fraud have discouraged many Nigerians from pursuing their legitimate rights.

She said however that exporters and importers have to face the consequences of abandonment.

According to her, these ultimately give rise to diminished income, inflated bank charges or loans, inability to sustain businesses, inability to fulfill business commitments, businesses folding up and other consequential economic losses.

More adversely affected are the small and medium sized companies, the bigger ones may afford to retain specialized foreign and local counsel.

She said that the fund has won over 300 cases on behalf of Nigerian importers and exporters (shippers) since its inception five years ago.



Customs seize bags of rice at the Seme border recently.

Following last week's clash between border community touts of both Nigeria and Republic of Benin at the Seme border, business gradually returning even as the Police are still patrolling the area.

When *Business Trust* correspondent visited Seme border yesterday, hundreds of people were seen going about their normal businesses as early as 9am.

However most vehicles were being diverted by armed police men who said that they were preventing the recalcitrant youths from marching into the Republic of Benin.

This is coming on the

Business returns to seme border after fracas

From Adelanwa Bamgboye Lagos

heels of series of security meetings held by Nigerian security agencies at the border and their counterparts from the Republic of Benin.

It was gathered that the meetings resolved that there should be immediate regular security patrols comprising the Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the Beninise gendarmes.

According to an impeccable source, other far

reaching measures has been taken to tackle the situation.

It would be recalled that between Monday and Wednesday last week, there was a bloody clash between Nigerians and Beninise at the border town of Seme leaving about four persons dead.

Trouble started when a Nigerian was alleged to have stolen a bag of rice belonging to another Nigerian inside the Beninise market situated at the border.

The alleged thief was reportedly arrested by the Beninise police (Gerdermes)

but some youths attempted to forcefully effect his release from police cell.

There after, the Beninise brazenly smashed vehicles belonging to Nigerians while

the fully armed gendarmes watched them without caution, saying that they (gerndermes) had not received directives to intervene.

VACANCIES IN A COMMUNITY

A young and dynamic community based in Abuja is repositioning itself towards the achievement of government's new microfinance policy. As a result, the bank urgently requires the services of suitable candidates to fill strategic positions in the Management Team of the bank.

POSITIONS & QUALIFICATIONS:

Manager/CEO

The candidate shall have the ability to lead and motivate the staff towards the successful attainment of the bank's goals, and is expected to hold a good honours degree in Finance, Banking, Economics, Accounting or related discipline. In addition, the candidate should possess a minimum of seven years cognate post qualification experience in the banking sector with a minimum of 3 years in a management position. Relevant professional qualification such as ICAN will be an added advantage.

Head, Banking Operations

The candidate shall be a holder of first degree/HND in Economics, Accounting, Banking or related discipline with a minimum of 5 years post qualification working experience in related sector of which 2 years will be in a management position. A relevant professional qualification will be an added advantage. In addition to his day-to-day functions, the candidate shall be responsible for interpreting and ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory/government guidelines.

Head, Inspection/Internal Audit

The Internal Auditor shall supervise the implementation of the bank's operational manual and ensure compliance with all relevant policies and regulations. The incumbent must possess a good first degree/HND in Accounting, Banking or any related discipline. The candidate must have 5 years cognate experience in a relevant institution and shall report directly to the Board. Membership in a recognized professional body will be an advantage.

METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Application, detailing each candidate's skills for the preferred post, Curriculum Vitae duly signed and indicating age, place and date of birth; photocopies of credentials; names and contact addresses (including e-mail and telephone [GSM] numbers) of two reputable referees should be submitted within one week of this advertisement to:

The Advertiser,
Ground Floor,
ENTERPRISE PLAZA,
3rd Avenue,
Gwarinpa Housing Estate,
Gwarinpa, Abuja.

Glo mobile introduces N200 SIM, offers 180 cars

Globacom has announced a reduction in the price of its prepaid classic line from N405 to N200 with additional N1,250 free airtime.

Announcing this in Lagos, Globacom's director of marketing, Mr. Mike Ehime said the new "SIM promo" was unprecedented in the telecoms industry as "it put money back to the pockets of subscribers."

According to Ehime, anyone who activates the N200 Glo classic line between February 6 and March 31, 2006 will enjoy N1,250 free airtime over the next six months and an additional 50 Glo to Glo SMS worth N375.

"Globacom has just introduced the new N200 classic line promo to enable more Nigerians benefit from its world class services.

Among the numerous benefits to subscribers in the new N200 classic line is the

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent, Lagos

airtime immediately on activation and a monthly N200 worth of Glo to Glo airtime over a six months-period, making N1,250 free airtime. Subscribers to the new N200 classic line who wish to enjoy these streams of benefits are expected to use their lines with a minimum of N500 monthly airtime for the next six months," said Mr. Ehime.

He explained that prior to the announcement of this offer, Globacom had embarked on aggressive network expansion and roll-out, covering over 12,000 communities, towns, cities, and major roads across the country. "The network has also been pursuing its plan to deploy over 800 new cell sites over the country in the

Globacom has announced that it is offering 180 state-of-the-art Kia Picanto cars to existing and new subscribers on its network.

In addition, it said, all its subscribers would be rewarded with 10 percent bonus airtime on N500 recharge and above until the end of February.

"Following the success of the Globacom second anniversary promo during which Nigerians freely won sleek cars in appreciation of their loyalty to the Glo network, a new subscriber loyalty programme has been introduced by the company.

"Specially, 15 Kia Picanto cars will be won at each of the 12 draws slated for six months starting from March. To benefit from the package, subscribers are expected to have recharged their phones with at least N1,500 airtime in the last 60 days preceding a draw date."

Mr. Mike Ehime, executive director of Globacom.

Business Trust

Privatisation Update

FG seeks managers for transmission company

With the unbundling of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), the federal government has begun shopping for managers for one of the units known as Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

The TCN, one of the 18 units of PHCN that is charged with the responsibility of transmitting power from various generating stations to locations across the country.

According to the Bureau of Public Enterprises, the federal government wishes to enter a contract for the management of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) Plc which is 100 percent owned by it.

The government has called for expression of interests from prospective management contractors/companies with expertise in power transmission.

The contractors would be expected to operate the company for a minimum period of 3 years.

The TCN currently incorporates the functions of Transmission Service Provider (TSP), the Market Operator (MO) and the System Operator (SO).

The TCN, *Business Trust* gathered, is to have its headquarters in Abuja with six regional offices; each with a number of satellite work centres.

It also has a national control centre at Oshigbo; a supplementary national control centre at Shiroro and supplies 5000mw of load with a potential demand of 8000mw.

The said contractors are also expected to manage and control the finance of the TCN including investment planning and improvement in profitability as well as manage transmission tariffs.

The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has denied allegations that the federal government has granted subsidies to RUSSAL, the new core investor in Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON).

Chigbo Anichébe, the bureau's Head, Public Communications said in Abuja on Tuesday that no such subsidies were provided by the BPE, saying that "The phantom figure of \$160million being bandied by a section of the press

...denies giving gas, dredging subsidies to

RUSSAL

obviously point to persons working from answers to questions".

He said the dredging of the Imo River is being done as an incentive to attract investors in the company.

"What is about to be lost in the controversy being contrived is that privatisation is a mode of attracting foreign investment and that FGN offers incentives to both foreign and domestic investors in key sectors of

the economy to ensure accelerated development. This in fact is a world wide practice."

He said the gas supply contract, on the other hand, is an agreement between ALSCON and the Nigerian Gas Company (NGC).

His words "a new gas contract was negotiated and entered between the Nigeria

Gas Company and ALSCON with elements of subsidy. ALSCON has hitherto enjoyed some subsidy on gas."

In fact subsidy on gas is equally extended to other major consumers, for example NAFCON, PHCN Plc, etc."

The federal government through the BPE last week signed a share purchase agreement with RUSSAL, which bought ALSCON for \$250million.

BPE seeks police support in screening investors

The Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, Mrs. Irene Chigbue has sought the assistance of the Nigeria Police in the verification of claims by potential investors participating in the privatization program.

She said that the BPE has neither the capacity nor statutory function to conduct security checks on investors and would rely on the Police and other security agencies for assistance.

A statement from the bureau signed by its Head, Public Communications, Chigbo Anichebe said the DG

Stories by Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

spoke when she paid a courtesy visit to the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, in his office last week.

"She noted that while the country is searching for foreign direct investment (FDI), it does not need any kind of FDI. She challenged the Nigeria Police to work with its foreign counterparts in conducting fit and proper checks on investors who are participating in the privatization program", said the statement.

She informed the IGP that

the Bureau successfully brought 24 enterprises to financial closure in 2005. Building on that achievement, she said the target of her management team was to close on 40 enterprises in 2006.

She further appealed to the IGP, according to the statement, to assist the Bureau in the area of publicity and mobilization of the rank and file of the Nigeria Police to participate in the privatization program.

In his response, the Inspector General said Nigerians can no longer

claim ignorance of the reform programs of the Federal Government. He added that the role of government in economic management must shift to making policies that would create enabling environment for private sector participants.

The IG promised to sustain the inter-agency cooperation with the BPE to achieve the common objective of government in the reform program, adding that the Nigeria Police has also embarked in reforming itself for a better service to the people.

SPECIAL PUBLICATION ON 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF STATES CREATED IN 1976

CREATION OF "NEW" STATES IN 1976

At the independence in 1960, the Nigeria political structure was still operating on a regional basis, meaning that, only three regions existed: North, West and East. The growing sentiments and agitations from the minority tribes of Southern origins, especially from the riverine areas now called the South - South geo-political zone or Niger-Delta, metamorphosed into the creation of Mid-Western region in order to accommodate such interests in 1963.

The disruption of political system in Nigeria by the advent of military administration stagnated the country's political progression. The period of the first coup in January 15, 1966 where some national leaders were dastardly eliminated was another clog. The continuous agitation for good governance, sense of belonging and participation by the rural dwellers witnessed the increase in the demand for more states creation shortly after the second military regime took over under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967.

The Gowon administration differed from the regionalism structure and opted for state creation. That was the first time Nigeria experienced smaller size of political demarcation into twelve states. Yet, those areas were considered as province rather than states because, so many ethnic groupings were merged instead of only very few that people were advocating for. Whatever happened during the first and second military regimes of Lt. Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi and Yakubu Gowon respectively are now history.

Expectedly, the population continues to grow and multiply, the National plan programmes and the socio-political structures in place were made nonsense of. There was a dare need to re-structure the entire system again given the widespread corruption that continued unabated. People were disenchanted and disillusioned; that was the state of the nation when army struck again, ousted the administration of General Gowon and the event led to the emergence of the late General Murtala Ramat Mohammed on July 29, 1975.

Given the enthusiasm with which the Murtala administration came on board with and the massive dis-orientation that characterised the civil service, the system was emeshed and engulfed with massive corruption. This made Murtala to institute panel of enquiries into the activities of past administration which led to the first purging in the civil service. Many of the indicted administrators and officials in the corruption saga were punished, had their career terminated, property confiscated and those that deserved severe punishment were clamped into detention.

The nation was at crossroad again on the growing tensions and agitations for new states to be carved out from the existing twelve created by Gowon's administration owing to lacklustre and slow pace in development across the land. Very many were marginalised, while a few elements took over the reign of governance and the essence of the exercise was completely defeated.

General Murtala Mohammed in his national broadcast heralding the creation of additional seven states with the already existing twelve, making 19 states: Kaduna, Kano, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Gongola, Bauchi, Benue, Niger, Sokoto, Kwara, Bendel, Plateau,

By Leke Adelere, Special Project Manager

Borno, Anambra, Imo, Rivers, Cross River and Lagos with the movement of the Federal Capital from Lagos to a centralised location up North, Abuja on February 3, 1976 warned and emphasised on what



General Murtala Ramat Muhammad

and how the state structure should operate. The Head of State said, "Part of the agitation for creation of states was a result of bad government, especially at the state level. To this end, all state administrations both old and new must henceforth seek to promote even development within their respective states and allay fears of minorities through fairness and justice in all governmental matters."

Issue of even and steady development of the nation featured prominently in the national announcement made by the late Head of State. He directed thus, "the more backward areas will receive the greater attention of all the governments, contrary to the previous practise of concentrating development at

the centre. The basic motivation in the exercise is to bring government nearer to the people, while at the same time, ensuring even development within a federal structure of government.

Unlike the 1967 exercise when political expediency necessitated a pre-emptive announcement, the new 19 state structure was promulgated with a measure of public consultation via the Irekefe panel.

But it was the very pettiness and ethnic chauvinism orchestrated before the Irekefe panel itself at some place that heightened the anxiety before the dawn broadcast.

With an insatiable autonomy complex by the Nigerian elite, it is now obvious that the number of states we have in the country does not matter; the issue now revolves around how many states have truly brought the government nearer to the people to meet their genuine aspirations rather than bringing the oppressors closer to the oppressed. In fact, it seems that as states increase in arithmetical progression, so does agitation for more states increase in geometrical progression.

For, if indeed, bringing the government closer to the people, enhancing national unity and political stability are the prime criteria for creating new states. Nigerians ought to have translated these lofty ideals better than seeing a concrete and substantial improvement in their conditions of living.

Thus, the task before every Nigerian today is to make the states structure work, and work for the benefit of all Nigerians.

When states are made

complimentary rather negatively competitive, and all states are jointly dedicated to the common good of the whole Nigeria, and when true patriotism takes its root in our hearts, then the states will work.

Of significant effect is the level of development that has taken place in most of the states in the country. We are more concerned about our immediate constituency, the Northern region where Bauchi, Benue, Kano, Niger Kaduna, Kwara, Borno, Sokoto, Plateau states and the Federal Capital Territory, FCT assume new structure, adjustment and outlook better than their old selves under twelve states.

In the last 30 years of their creation, several administrations have held sway in each of these states. Many of them with commendable legacies while other tenures were trailed with criticisms. In the present dispensation, the current

administrations in each of the states created then have been meeting the yearnings and aspirations of their people.

Things are changing for better and the dividends of democracy are trickling in droves. In Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Niger, Plateau and Sokoto states, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the standards of living are getting improved considerably. Those states that imbibe the spirit of transparency, accountability and poise to bequeath legacies worthy of emulation are showcasing what they've been contributing to the development of their respective states. For practical assessment of those states created in 1976 and therefore, celebrating their 30th anniversary, we begin serialising their landmark achievements from creation to date and especially, the significant contributions of the present administrations.



SPECIAL PROJECT PUBLICATION ON STATES CREATED IN 1976

Akume and the making of Modern Benue

By TYODZUA ATIM,

Chief Press Secretary to Governor George Akume

Created February 3, 1976, Benue State is the manifestation of a long drawn battle and agitation by the minority groups of the then Middle Belt for self-determination.

The state started off in 1976 with only seven Local Government Areas. Today, Benue State has twenty-three local government councils.

Benue state has passed through the leadership of several Chief Executive Officers most of whom, made their marks in the development of the state.

In 1999 the state witnessed a major watershed in its history, when, George Akume, the 3rd Executive Governor of Benue State an epitome of democratic humanism apostle of peace and social justice was elected into office on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

On assumption of office, there was anxiety and great expectations from the people. The people of the state had yearned for a democratically elected government that would meet their expectations and uplift their standards of living.

George Akume was mindful of these expectations. Given his background as a democrat and humanist governor Akume embarked upon a programme of Renaissance anchored on the total unification of the diverse ethnic groups that make up the state by healing old wounds and creating an atmosphere of peaceful coexisting among the various ethnic groups. Once peace had been achieved, the government directed its attention at the development of infrastructure, stabilization of the states' economy, urban renewal, agricultural development, education, health and provision of potable water supply.

The mainstay of Benue State economy is the rural areas where 90% of the populace reside. Beside this, more than 95% of the state's food requirement comes from the rural areas. Equally important, is the fact that the present administration derives its strength from the rural areas. Ironically, this area has been one of the most neglected sectors of the economy since the attainment of political independence. The George Akume's Administration therefore, considers the improvement of communication and provision of rural infrastructure as the cardinal policy thrust of the administration.

In this regard, the present administration on assumption of office embarked on the immediate construction of a number of rural feeder roads. These roads include the;

Sankera - Amaafu - Ugba - Ayati Road; Nyihemba - Abande Road, Kwande L.G.A; Annune - Ikpa - Igbor Road; Ekle Road in Ado LGA; Daudu - Gbajimba - Road; Uni-Agric - Gbajimba Road; Ukpoko - Oshigbudo - Oweto Road; Orokam - Okpoga; and the completion of Awajir - Oju road.

The intention of the government is to open up the rural areas and make communication easier through this method, it is envisaged that the difficulties often encountered by the rural dwellers in the transportation of farm produce to the urban centres would be minimised.

The Benue State Government has pursued with vigour the construction of township roads and drainage. So far over 40 kilometres of Makurdi township roads have been asphalted and rehabilitated. New streets and road have been opened and tarred in Makurdi, Otukpo and Gboko. In the state capital Makurdi, alone, over 30 streets and roads have been constructed under the 1st phases of PW road projects. These include. Adikpo Street, Vandeikya, K/Ala, Konshisha extensions, Welfare Quarters, International School, Homa Clinic, Eri Street as well as Owerri, JKN Waku, Wadata- Demkpe. Modern market roads. Others are Inikpi Street extension, Okpoga/ Balewa Crescent road, Bern Hotel- Bosua, off Atom Kpera Hotel Junction, FSP Clinic - Bishop Murray road. Others are Happy Home GRA Gboko Access Road new GRA Otukpo, JS Tarka way Gboko, Agbo Street K/Ala, Upu Otukpo roads among several others.

Agriculture which is the main stay of the state economy, is undergoing a major restructuring. The state Government has put up a machinery for the overhauling of the agricultural sector for grater productivity. Part of the plan is to over haul the system of fertilizer procurement and distribution to make it easily available to the farmers. So far, the Government has taken over the responsibility for the transportation of fertilizer directly to the rural areas. Also, mechanized agriculture is being encouraged with the purchase of over 150 tractors to boost food produce. The State Government also lunched the Accelerated food production programme. Experts from South Africa are in the state to provide technical assistance to farmers for increased food maintains production and farm the status of the state lands have been developed as the food basket of the nation. Already the following farm lands have been developed. These are Ber Agbum Ikpayoungo, NYSC, Agasha, rice farms Mbatyav Soya beans farm and Oketa rice farm have been put in place for farmers.

The present administration believes in the centrality of education as the cornerstone of both the developed and developing societies. Above all, the constitution of the people's Democratic party upon which platform, the George Akume administration came into power, strongly believes that the greatness of any nation, nay Benue State, lies primarily with the formation of a solid and sustainable education background. In the pursuit of these noble objectives, the Akume administration commenced the process of overhauling the state's education system through the provision of necessary infrastructures, equipment, learning aids and the employment of qualified teachers at primary post primary and tertiary institutions. The state has also established literacy centres throughout the state. Before the coming of the Akume administration, pupil enrolment in primary school was 841,637. Today primary school enrolments now stand at over one million. In order to provide qualitative education for the people of the state, the state government has put in place a medical school and Teaching Hospital for Benue State University. This is to curtail the problems faced by Benue indigenes seeking admission for professional courses in other Universities. With the establishment of the University of Mkar by the missionaries Benue State is adequately positioned to meet up with the educational needs of its citizens. This will also reduce the cost of training our children in other institutions outside the state.

Industrialization: If there is any sector of the economy that has continued to defy all solutions and halt successive administrations in Benue State is absence of a formidable industrial base. Worse still is the fact that even industries that were put in place by the spirited efforts of the Akume

administration several years ago before the coming to power of the this administration were either operating at a lost or were yet to effectively take off. Companies such as Benue Brewery Taraku Mills, Otukpo Burnt Bricks, and Agro-Millers and others remained dormant since they were established. The major task before the Government was to either ignore such ventures and allow them die natural death or resuscitate them in the increase of the public. The present Administration moved swiftly to review the crisis of state industries with a view to correcting the their ills.

After a thorough scrutiny the state government put in place measures to re-organise and revamp existing companies to make them economically viable. Today, the dormant Agro Millers and Taraku Mills products are back in the market.

To further increase the pace of industrialization of the state government has put in place a plastic industry, fertilizer blending plant, cassava processing factory, Fruit Juice Company at Makurdi and Katsina - Ala for the production of fruit juice.

Work on the Igumale Cement Factory is progressing. It is hoped that when completed, it will help in reducing the price of cement as this will make the product within the reach of the ordinary citizen. Civil work at the Makurdi fruit juice is 85% completed. The present administration as explained by the governor intends to "inject a new business consciousness into the management of its companies and industries. This, according to the governor, is a deliberate attempt to discourage the idea of companies looking upon government for funds in order to finance their operations.

Accommodation has been one of the major problem facing Makurdi, the state capital. When the Akume administration came into office it embarked on a deliberate programme of

providing cheap and affordable houses for the citizens. The government constructed the judges quarters for serving judicial officers, owner occupier housing project for low income earners and the Ever green housing programme, which is being handled by the states' Benue investment and property Development Company. Already, 100 units of the BIPC housing units at Nyiman have been completed. Another 100 units are being constructed at the North - Bank area. Efforts are being made to extend the programme to other Local Government Areas of the State.

Since Makurdi, the Benue state capital is situated on the edge of a river, it is prone to flooding. The Akume administrate embarked on the construction of culverts and drainages to curb the activities of erosion menace. Over 6000 units of gutters and culverts have been constructed under the state's ecological development programme being handled by the ministry of water resources.

Over 3000 boreholes have also been provided for rural communities while government has paid its counterpart funding for the greater Makurdi water works.

Benue Links, the main transport company of the state has received massive incentive and encouragement from the Akume administration with the purchase of over 100 buses for the fleet since the inception of the present administration. The efforts of the state government in this direction have drastically reduced the cost of transportation in the state and have made the ordinary man derive maximum benefit from government's transportation policy. The Akume administration has also provided eight new General Hospitals in Guma, Ukum, Obi, Apa, Konshisha, Makurdi, Tarka and Ado Local Government Areas.

A silent revolution is in the making, and George Akume is the architect of the making of modern Benue state. He has given hope to the hopeless - provided succour for the underprivileged rekindled the faith of the ordinary man in government by his people oriented policies and restored the pride of the Benue man.



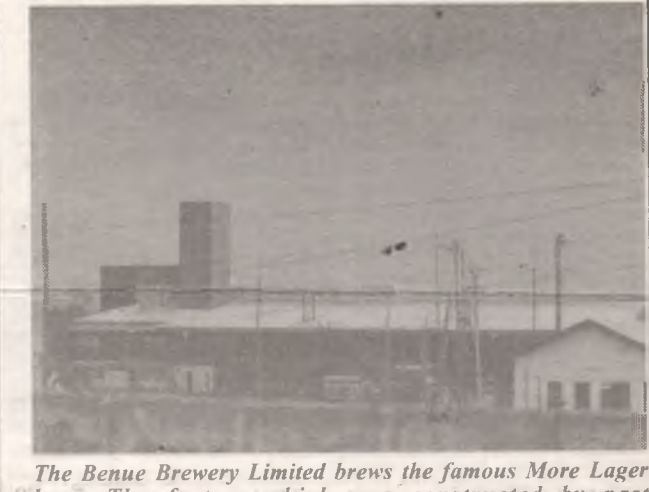
Part of ultra-modern Aper Aku Stadium in Makurdi built and completed by the military.



The Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi remains one of the late Rev. Fr. Moses Orshior Adasu is remembered for.



The famous Otukpo Burnt Bricks factory, which has been reactivated by Governor Akume for on-ward production.



The Benue Brewery Limited brews the famous More Lager beer. The factory which was constructed by past administrations is now been reactivation and leased to foreign investors.

SPECIAL PROJECT PUBLICATION

Benue state and the

Thirty years ago, General Murtala Mohammed created Benue State and six others in a major political proclamation that shaped the geo-political map of Nigeria. It was indeed, a bold and courageous action designed to address the long standing agitation of northern and southern minorities to take their destinies into their own hands.

To psychologists, 30 years is sufficient enough for a man to form well defined characteristics, which should determine the extent of his intellects and capacity to achieve success in life. At this stage too, the man's cognitive insight to problems within his immediate environment could also form the basis of a deductive behavioural analysis, which should determine whether he will grow up to be successful in life or failure.

Just like a man of thirty years, Benue State has clocked three decade since it was created on the 3/2/1976 by the Late General Murtala Mohammed. Right from birth, Benue State and some key players of Benue politics have continued to be as controversial as those who had championed the cause of its' creation. Most political analysts have come to associate the state with crisis management. The attitude of some of the political elites of the state also gives the impression that the state is a hotbed of petition writing and blackmail.

Different schools of thought have been advancing reasons for the state's under-development. Prominent amongst these reasons is that of inter-ethnic rivalry among the major ethnic divide in the state.

Those who hold strong to this view argue that any community that is divided against itself cannot progress, because, the energy which should be utilised in looking for more resourceful ventures would be made to waste on in-fightings and diversion of attention from the real issues at stake.

This theory, which has gained grounds among political actors outside of the state, is always used as a smoke screen to divide the people, divert government's attention and aggravate the people's differences. Although, this could form part of the reasons of Benue State under-development, they are not sufficient enough to derail development of a community that is knittly united. Another school of thought attest Benue's underdevelopment to poverty and lack of business initiative by Benue State Indigenes.

The proponents of this idea strongly believe that, if the state indigenes were resourceful enough, they could have been in control of business ventures like commercial buses, stalls in the markets, merchant trading and business entrepreneurship.

This group further argue that because of our pride and selfishness, we have left our state underdeveloped and that we always expect manna to come from heaven. They further argue that, whenever we have money that could help us establish business ventures, we prefer going for pepper soup and young ladies. And if anything else, this category of Benue elite indulges in writing spurious and unsubstantiated petition against their leaders.

Furthermore, others argue that underdevelopment in Benue State is caused by our past leaders who had little initiative to perform, or had biased tendencies, which overshadowed the interest of the entire state.

Yet, others point to the imbalance in appointment of indigenes to key positions within the civil service, while others accuse past leaderships of being biased in allocating industrial establishments to one section of the state to the disadvantage of other sections.

Perhaps on a more serious note, it is believed in other circles that underdevelopment in the state is as a result of past neglect by successive federal administrations and the Northern Region in the first Republic. In some cases, these controversies often degenerate into open confrontation by the various contending forces.

An objective assessment of Benue State administrations since its creation has to take into account, the circumstances that led to the ascendancy to power of successive administrations in the state. Thus, from Major General Abdullahi Shelling to the incumbent Dr. George Akume, the history of Benue State has been one characterised and periodised into significant environmental events that had at different intervals prevailed in Nigeria.

Secondly, the perceptions and actions of the eleven leaders who have so far ruled the state form the grounds of this assessment.

On the basis of previous agitation for local autonomy for the minorities in Nigeria, the regime under the leadership of Murtala Mohammed considered the creation of more states as a cohesive national integration factor along side with the political expediency in the running of the nation at the grassroots level.

Thus, out of the seven new States created, Benue State was peculiar and unique in the sense that the province did not get the political and economic patronage from the N.P.C. leadership because of the people's opposition to the then ruling Northern oligarchy. As such, at the time of its creation, there was virtually no viable infrastructural facilities to

By **TYODZUAATIM,**
Chief Press Secretary to Governor George Akume

accommodate the mass influx of civil servants, neither was there viable industrial establishments to absorb the number of unemployed youths that were just completing their secondary education.

Many people argued that these unpleasant situations helped in strangulating and crippling the state at infancy as they further contend that, one can not just give birth to a child and abandon the child at infancy.

This was the deplorable situation in Benue State when Late General Murtala Mohammed appointed then Col. Abdullahi Shelling as the

governor of the state in February, 1976. On arrival Shelling met a hostile environment and climate. He was in a state of dilemma where to begin.

He had to contend with the problem of setting up an administrative machinery for the State; he had to justify his posting to a people who were growingly disenchanted with their relationship with the Federal Government vis-a-vis state capital, which was Jos. He also had to grapple with the issue of providing infrastructure for the state as well as assessing the number of Benue assets in Lagos, Kaduna, Jos and Kwara States respectively.

To Shelling's credit he embarked on a massive construction network to provide accommodation for the teeming members of the civil service in the state. Abdullahi Shelling also established the Murtala Coll



Col. Abdullahi Shelling,
Feb.3, 1976 - July 20, 1978



Group Capt. Adebayo Lawal,
July 20, 1978 - Sept.30, 1979



Mr. Aper Aku,
Oct. 1, 1979 - Dec.31 1983



Brig. Atom Kpera,
Jan. 4, 1981 - Aug.27, 1981



Group Capt. David Jonah Jang,
Aug.27, 1985 - Sept.5, 1986



Col. Yahanna Madaki,
Sept. 5, 1986 - Sept.25, 1986



Col. Ishaya Bakut, Sept. 25, 1986 - Dec. 22, 1987



Col. Idris Garuba,
Dec. 22, 1987 - July 27, 1988



Col. Fidelis Makka,
July 27, 1988 - Jan 2, 1992



Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu,
Jan.2, 1992 - Nov. 22 1993



Group Capt Joshua Obademi,
Nov.22, 1993 - Aug.2, 1996



Col. Aminu Isa Kontagora,
Aug.2, 1996 - 1998



Built in the 80s by the administration of first civilian governor Aper Aku, the Taraku Golden Oil Mill has remained one of the prized companies in the state.



Col. Dominic Oneya,
1998 - May 29, 1999



Dr. George Akume,
May 29, 1999 - Date



What started in the early 80s as a mere cafeteria services was developed into a full and three stars hotel by the military administration of Col. Fedelis Makka.

ON ON STATES CREATED IN 1976

30 years of struggles

of Arts, Science and Technology, the A.T.C at K/Ala and the School of Basic Studies at Ugbokolo.

He further conceived the idea of Benue Brewery to be located at Makurdi, Idah Sanitary Ware Industry to be located at Idah, and the Burnt Brick Industry to be located at Otukpo.

Up to the time Shelling left the state in 1978, the roads within the metropolis were however left un-tarred.

Although most of us have in the past been oblivious of his achievement, to be fair to Shelling, he tried to correct the imbalance within the civil service structure.

One serious mistake associated with Abdullahi Shelling was that most of the establishments he opened operated on temporary sites. This situation is still affecting institutions like the Benue Polytechnic Ugbokolo, A.T.C. Kastina/Ala, and the School of Basis Studies, Makurdi.

Another failure associated with the Shelling era is that, he brought down the mini Makurdi Stadium, which was in perfect condition before he arrived and never worked towards reactivating it before he left. This unpleasant situation left Makurdi the state capital without a good stadium during his tenure.

Shelling's attitude in destroying the old stadium amounted to a waste of public fund and energy. In a nutshell, Shelling's administration in the state did not last long enough for him to see some of his projects through. The second military personnel who headed the state administration was Air commodore Adebayo Lawal.

Bayo Lawal came here on a specific assignment. His achievements or failures should therefore take into cognisance the background heralding his arrival. It is interesting to note that Nigeria was preparing to handover power to the civilians and all military officers who had had the intention to remain within the armed forces were directed to withdraw for military administrators.

This ushered in the arrival of Bayo Lawal who more or less came to the state to oversee the peaceful transition from military rule to civil rule. It is difficult to point out the specific project which Bayo Lawal undertook because of the short period he stayed in the state as Military Administrator, but it is to his credit that he succeeded in achieving the primary objectives for which he was assigned to perform. Lawal preserved peace during the electioneering campaigns.

There was no problem of open confrontation between parties that contested election in the state. After election, Bayo Lawal handed over power to the NPN candidate Mr. A.A. Aku on the 1st October, 1979.

The unique opportunities, which Aper Aku had were excessively high, as a member of the ruling NPN he had the presidents' ear. Again his former anti-corruption crusade posture against late Joseph Gomwalk, the then Governor of Benue Plateau State, provided a veritable platform for massive support by the people.

Haven waged a serious legal battle against Gomwalk for his failures to develop Benue Plateau, people believed that Mr. Aper Aku would be mindful of whatever policy direction his administration was bound to initiate because of his past antecedents as a social crusader. Due to the publicity he generated in the Nigeria Media, all eyes were on him to see how effective he would perform bearing in mind his past criticism on a governor's non-performance.

Right from the day Aku assumed power in Benue State, he had to contend with the numerous problems confronting a people who had had a long history of deprivation, degradation, and manipulation in the hands of privileged Nigerians who, in the past had access to power. For the simple fact that the lower Benue region happened to be located within a geographical climate inhabited by the so called minority groups, it people suffered an untold hardship, which Aku came to redress. He had a vision and a mission to accomplish.

Aku was ambitious and eager to develop the state. He started fairly well when he stopped the construction of a medical centre at Apir and directed that instead of investing on a big project in one location. Seven Cottage hospitals be constructed at Okpoga, Vandeikya, Kastina-Ala, Bassa and other areas.

Although his reasons to penetrate the local government areas were laudable, people still accused him of killing a project that was self financing and which could have helped solve the health problems of the state.

In terms of industrialization. Aku moved fast to construct the Benue Brewery, Benro Packaging, Benue Bottling Company, Lobi Bank, Ber-Agbum Fish Farm and Ikogen Cattle Ranch, where they were importing cows for breeding. He also moved fast to construct Benue International Hotel in Makurdi.

He signed the contract for the construction of Makurdi International Market and was also about to establish a flour mill in Makurdi. He constructed some of the main roads in Makurdi township and provided the existing street lights through direct labour at a cost of about 1.2 million naira.

Aku awarded the contract for the Art Council Complex, which was later abandoned at a stage. We also started work on the main bowl of Makurdi stadium. This was also abandoned at a stage. He obtained a foreign loan and started construction work on the Taraku Vegetable Processing Industry at Taraku.

Aku established two Advance Teachers' Colleges at Oju and Makurdi. He also was the first to establish a University of Technology in Makurdi. He embarked on massive establishment of Government Secondary Schools in the state. Aku's efforts in the education sector have seen the emergence and expansion of higher institution in the state.

Aku's greatest failure was in the field of education where teachers went unpaid for nine months, which resulted in the closure of schools and the subsequent calamities that brought the standard of education to its lowest ebb.

Psychologically, the moral of the civil servants was dampened, hopes and aspiration shattered, while misery and poverty became the order of the day. The gap between the rich and the poor widened in a geometrical proportion.

Brigadier J. A. Kpera's regime came at a period the state was almost at the verge of collapse as civil servants salaries were far back in arrears, while destructive politicking threatened the corporate existence of Benue State and indeed Nigeria.

Kpera met a crisis situation and attempted to resolve the problems in a crisis manner. In an attempt to accomplish this task, he took retrogressive decisions.

While Kpera paid civil servants their monthly wages, he demoralised them on the other hand as many people were retrenched from the service. He made away with the entire messenger cadre in the civil service structure, a policy which was construed to mean more poverty for the poor, as they were the lowest cadre of the civil service.

Kpera closed Ber - Agbum fish Farm, the Benue Hotel, the Poultry Factory at North Bank, scrapped the Teaching Service Commission and also the ATC's at Makurdi and Oju.

The greatest achievement of Kpera's administration was the peace, which heralded his arrival. He also constructed the temporary MacCarthy Stadium through direct labour. He further tarred a street in Wurukum and another one at Lobi Quarters as well as the assembly village road.

During his period, however, the civil servants were poorly treated as they had to wait for three or more years before promotion, which brought frustration in the civil service. He created a dichotomy between teachers in Government Schools and those in the private sector such that teachers in the private schools were receiving far below their government counterparts.

He again directed retrenched workers to take to farming but did not provide for them the financial incentives to start life. Kpera made scholarship expensive as only the science students were given opportunity to benefit from the scheme.

He, however, tried to correct the imbalance in the civil service structure. Kpera also placed order for the supply of drugs to the Health Management Board but introduced school fees of N30.00 per child in primary schools and N300.00 for boarding students in Secondary Schools.

The gravity of his problems made him become insensitive to the people's yearnings and dealt a total blow on his political reputation when he said; "he met the treasury in the state empty and he had left it empty".

Governor J. D. Jang's ascendancy to power heralded a new horizon in Benue State. He gave much attention to the opening of rural roads and dualization of entry points into the state capital, Makurdi. Jang gave the general hospital Makurdi a massive face lift. To tackle the rural development policy of his administration he established the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure, which has been changed to BERDA.

After the exit of David Jang, Benue State went through series of transitional crises as most of the governors posted to the state were either removed or transferred when they were trying to settle down. As such from Yohanna Madaki, Ishaya Bakut and Idris Garba no major development took place in the state. However, Idris Garba's regime commissioned the modern market and introduced the Benue Links company in Benue. The long period of transitional crisis, greatly hampered the development of the state.

However, the setback occasioned by the transitioned crises earlier mentioned was compensated by the arrival of then Lt. Col Fidelis Makka in 1989 who brought in dynamism and transparency in the administration of the state. Makka's commitment to the development of Benue State was so strong that any obstacle on his way was booted out in a ruthless manner. Indeed, the feeling in the state is that Aku, Makka and Akume are the architect of modern Benue State. Like a dragon, Makka systematically set for himself the task of completing

most of the abandoned projects initiated by the Aku civilian administration. He re-designed and completed the Aper Aku Stadium, Staff Development centre and built the following: IBB Square, Fidelis Makka Library, Pauline Makka women centre, Day care and resurfacing of some township roads like Gondo Aluor and Stadium roads among others. The Otobi water works, which was started by the first civilian Northern Regional Government, also received attention. Makka also set up a committee head by late ambassador Edwin Ogbu to work out modalities for the establishment of the Benue State University and signed the law establishing it by edict No 3 of 1991. The rural electricity project started by Aper Aku was pursued with vigour. He also completed the six general hospitals, which the Aper Aku administration had started.

Moses Adasu, the second civilian governor of the state came with an aggressive administrative posture and lobbying to attract federal presence. As the first catholic priest to venture into partisan politics, he had the ears of the Nigerian leadership. Adasu could not translate his agenda into practical reality because he stayed for only two years. Even then, he speedily assembled the team of administrators and academics that started the Benue State University. He built the Tarka foundation, which up to date, still has its mandate in mystery. Other projects embarked upon by Rev. Adasu included; BENCO roof tile, and the K/Ala fruit juice.

Like the previous transitional period, which the state had to contend with after Rev. Adasu, the state entered yet another transitional period when Isa Kontagora took over. Kontagora was primarily concerned with creating and generating revenue and wealth for the state. He therefore conceived the idea of a Benue Plaza and Governor's lodge all in Abuja as well as the Benue shopping plaza in Kaduna. He built the Maimuna Kontagora hostel and completed a wing of the Art council theatre in Makurdi. Dominic Oneya who took over from him built the Assembly village and conceived the idea of a fertilizer blending plant for the state.

Dr. George Akume took over the leadership of the state in 1999 after a prolonged period of military rule. Tension among neighbouring communities was high and conflict soon ensued. He used diplomacy to cool down raised nerves. He had to contend with a major crisis that threatened the corporate existence of the state. Being a product of the system, he decided to tackle poverty on five major fronts. These include: Human development, infrastructure provision, stoppage of capita flight, politics of inclusion, Agriculture and industrialization.

The human Development concept of the Akume administration hinges on his firm commitment to workers welfare by prompt payment of workers salaries and allowances. Through this method the apparatus of governance has not been disrupted. The academic calendar remains stable and consistent. With the free flow of salaries the state economy has been stable over the past six years. Liberalization of contract policy has also seen the circulation of money within the state and stopped capita flight. In the area of industrialisation Governor George Akume has established as plastic industry, cassava processing factory, fertilizer blending factor, two fruit juice factories. Work is on-going on Tomato purry, mango juice and Igumale Cement Company. Work is to commence on an Ethanol plant, which when completed will produce starch, oil and cassava flour. Some of the industries which were dead have been revamped like the Agro-millers, Taraku mills and Otukpo Burnt Bricks. Over 640 kilometres of rural roads are under construction as the government has also spent over N2.6 billion on ecological projects in the three senatorial zones. Work on the Benue State Television project has reached an advance stage of completion. The other important aspect of the Akume administration is the upgrading of facilities at the Benue State University with the building of a college of medical sciences and a Teaching hospital. Eight new general hospitals have also been constructed. His government introduced rural radio by the establishment of Radio Benue sub-stations at Katsina-Ala and Idekpa. He built the government school Makurdi, school of Health Technology Agasha and introduced mechanised agriculture in the State. The State under Akume is running one of the most successful transport systems in Nigeria with the introduction of the modern marcopolo buses on the fleet of Benue Links Company. The State government's urban renewal programme has seen to the opening and construction of over 45 kilometres of township roads, which were handled by PW Nig. Ltd. Three major housing projects have being undertaken by the George Akume government. These are: Judges Quarters, owner occupier estate and the evergreen housing project. These project are designed to ease accommodation problem in the state capital. The government has entered into a joint partnership with the Federal government to build a new water works for Makurdi. The project, which is intended to increase and expand the distribution of potable water to Makurdi town, will also cover other neighbouring communities.

To this end, the National Planning Commission in conjunction with DFID, USAID and the commonwealth rated Benue State the 6th best out of the 36 states of the federation in terms of service delivery and good governance.

Benue state has no doubt come a long way. It may not have reached its peak in its quest to develop but there are clear signs that within a short while the state will be the envy of many. There is still room for improvement because at the moment the absence of adequate electricity in the state and bad rural roads is hampering the rapid development of the state. Above all, there is need for change of attitude by the people who must embrace Akume's developmental initiative by taking the ample opportunities the governor has created.

Attitudinal change is very important if the state is to be developed. An Ibo man who resides outside his state would always strive to invest in his home state but a Tiv man would prefer to garner money from Benue and invest elsewhere. If New York is relocated to Benue from USA and the attitude of the people towards business remains anti-progress the state will stagnate. If Akume is running the most benevolent administration and has set-up high profile industries but the attitude of the people towards business remain the same, development will still elude the state.



Improved upon by the Akume administration to win various national acclaim, Benue links Transport Corporation was established by the military and has a major employment opportunity as it has also, greatly eased the problem of transportation in the state.



The Fidelis Makka distraction among other projects, built the state library in Makurdi.

SPECIAL PROJECT PUBLICATION ON STATES CREATED IN 1976

Benue State At 30: The journey so far

Opinion pool conducted by Hir Joseph, correspondent (Makurdi)

Adoka Adaji, media practitioner, politician and Gen., Sec. Opiatoha k' Idoma: The creation of the state followed the struggle for self-actualization by the then people of the newly created state.

On creation, the state had three major tribes- Tiv, Igala and Idome respectively. The Igala were brought from Kwara State while both Tiv and Idoma were excised from the then Benue - Plateau State.

Administration: The then Colonel Abdullahi Shelleng was appointed as the first Military Governor of Benue State. The responsibility of putting the new state on track was placed on his shoulders.

On creation, basic infrastructures were lacking. The Shelleng led administration had the task of providing roads especially within Makurdi the state capital. He engineered the provision of what is today known as J. S. Tarka Way, Benue Crescent, Iyorchia Ayu Road, Railway Bye-Pass, Bank Road, Ahmadu Bello Way, kashim Ibrahim Road among others.

In the area of residential accommodation, Col: Shelleng initiated and completed the building of Lobi Quarters, Ankpa Quarters, Kwararafa Quarters and Manor Quarters respectively.

He made provision for the construction of office accommodation in different parts of Makurdi without neglecting the provision of same at the Local Government Headquarters. Even the present State Secretariat was a brainchild of Shelleng administration.

Without fear of contradiction, every successive administration has been building on the foundation laid by the Shelleng administration in the state.

The group Capt. Bayo Iwalu Interim Administration also made a mark within its short life span before it handed over to the Aper Aku led civilian administration in 1979.

The Aku administration achieved a lot for the state especially in the area of industry. He saw to the establishment of Benue Brewery, Benue Burnt Bricks, Benro packaging, Benue Bottling Company, Benue Agricultural Development Company, Ikyogen Cattle Ranch, Idah Sanitary Wares among others.

In the area of education, the late Aku administration established Advanced Teachers Colleges at Makurdi, Ankpa and Oju respectively in the 80's. He also saw the need for the establishment of post-primary schools at the grassroots. The idea of a State University was Aku driven.

The Aku administration also established General Hospitals at the Local Government Headquarters that had none.

The Aku legacy is a big one that cannot be forgotten easily. Aku actually gave the people of Benue State a pride in the Nigerian scheme of things. Among the successive military regimes after Aper Aku Air - Commodore Jonah Jang and Brigadier - General Fidelis Makka particularly impacted positively on the lives of Benue People.

The Rev. Father Moses Adasu administration would be remembered for the actualization of Benue State University.

The Present Dr. George Akume administration has recorded impressive achievement in the area of schools renovation. Above all, he made a giant stride in upgrading of infrastructures at the Benue State University.

If the industries at the various stages of completion can be completed before he leaves, he will have his name written in gold.

Peace: The prevailing peace between the two major tribes in the state is a clear testimony of unity of purpose. It is hoped that such unity will result in the transformation of power to the people of Zone C.

I feel after 30 year of peaceful existence, an Idoma should be entrusted with the governorship position of the state come 2007.

Without the creation of Benue State 30 years ago, the level of development witnessed today would not have been possible. If state creation is the yardstick for development, I suggest another state (Apa) be created out of the present Benue State. Benue State has fared well in the last 30 years with development taken to the grassroots. I wish the tempo would

be sustained.

Elder Joseph Kyaakyor Atir, Community Leader: A man at 30 is no more a baby. By that I mean Benue State has gone a very long way in various considerations including socio-economic and political development. But most importantly, the state which was created along side others especially in the old northern region stands out clearly as a model.

Talking about agriculture for which the people of Benue are highly known for, I think we did not only place ourselves permanently on the world map of food production, we also have contributed immensely to the overall development of the nation. This is so because agricultural products gotten from the till of the people have attracted much in terms of revenue to the federal purse.

On the political scene too, the State has recorded tremendous development, 30 year after. The entire middle belt got its identity because of the activism for minority rights crusade as was being carried out by the late Joseph Sarwuan Tarka and his followers. We have produced for the nation politicians of both national and international recognition. Apart from the J.S Tarka, the Obande Obeyas and their contemporaries, we have produced the Paul Unogos, Isaac Shaahus, the Iyorchia Ayu's the David Marks and the chief Barnabas Gemades who have track records in their respective contribution to the national political landscape.

As a people we have however not being able to successfully fight down the myriad of problems, one of which is selfishness, which has, to a very high extent, occasioned backwardness for the state.

But all in all I think, we can make it one day. As a highly diverse but hard working and understanding people, we will continue to talk to ourselves on the need to fight selfishness among ourselves. Most importantly, we have to support the administration of George Akume, a youngman who has shown tremendous concern to place Benue State permanently on the world map of development.

Mrs. Grace Atim, civil servant and coordinator, Child Rights Protection Initiative (CRPI): Benue State has come a long way, and you can see a lot of development. Let me talk of the area of education. Benue is one of the states that has own state university standing out in the community of the universities. Recently BSU was selected as one of the Universities whose programmes have all been accredited at once.

In the are of child development, there has been lot of development. Benue is one of the states which is in the process of passing the bill on the Child Right Act which when domesticated, will have a lot of impact in terms of child development in the state. I think we have come a long way and hope that we will continue to go places.

When the bill is passed and domesticated, it will be implemented according to the culture and peculiarity of the Benue people.

But if it is not passed, like am a parent and if I abuse my child, you can't take me to court because there is no legal provision guiding the handling of children. But when it is domesticated it will be binding on all the Benue stakeholders so I think the Benue child will benefit from the bill.

On the political scene too, let's not forget that Benue remains the first and only state in the entire Africa, to have produced a female speaker for the State Assembly. That's one record, which even the pioneer states have not been able to beat.

Tyotom Kegnku, Lecturer and Public Relations Consultant: There has been development. Development can be seen in terms of physical structures on ground and even other variables that go with them. You have to try and compare

one environment with another to really know whether there has been actual development or not, but in my own opinion, I feel Benue state has gone a long way in terms of development.

In the area of education, which I am, concern directly, we have a Benue State University, which was established as far back as 1992. This, as far as I am concerned, makes a turning point in development effort at least in the area of education. And if you look at the two campuses of the university, a lot of structural work is going on through funding by the State Government who owns the university. But because, the university itself has good government relation, it has also attracted funding from the E.T.F and ALGON.

Do not forget also that there are lists of other tertiary institutions established in the state and which are enjoying tremendous development and funding by the present administration in the state.

There are also other areas. The transport sector in the state for instance is doing very well because Benue Links is one of the best state owned transport companies in Nigeria, by the rating of many institutions. I think we are doing very well in that area.

Coming to other areas of development like water and powers supply you might say development has not been much in this area but at least something is being done to alleviate the people's sufferings. Only last week the minister for water resources was here to lay a foundation for the greater Makurdi water works which is also expected to be extended to other major towns in the state. So by and large I think there has been development in these areas.

And when talking about state creation, you have to also consider that Benue was created along other states. But what have these states done that Benue has not been able to. The percentage might differ, but by and large, there has been tremendous improvement from that highly backward area that was carved out of the old Benue Plateau state. Even though a lot of negative stories are still being written about the state by some quarters, I think such quarters have been ill informed about the state.

Ageba Dooga Godwin, National President, National Association of Political Science Students (NAPSS): The journey so far is that of development. And physical development has been the major source of our recognition as a state at 30. Movement between here to the neighbouring states was a difficult exercise by 1976 when Benue was carved out of the old Benue Plateau, but today, the story is different. We have not only attracted these basic infrastructure, which makes life meaningful, we have also improved on them.

And taking about institutions, Benue State has not only recorded a tremendous growth, but has remained one state north of the country where nothing is lacking. We have a state owned university which was the first ever established in the whole of the old northern region. We were also able to attract a Federal University of Agriculture, and with a host of other tertiary institutions in the state, one can categorically say Benue is the model of northern Nigeria.

Still taking about institutions and as it regards the health sector you won't say Benue is doing badly. Without a single referral health centre at the time of creation, Benue now boast of a number of general hospitals and a federal medical centre for which the administration of governor George Akume is doing more to upgrade. Besides that the on-going project work on the Benue State University Teaching Hospital will place the state in an envious position as our people will no more be trooping out to neighboring states for medical attention. There is also the College of Health Sciences which Dr. Akume is about to complete and this will make a turning point from the very desperate situation the state found itself as our youths hardly got admission in health science related courses in other Nigerian universities. You can count on and on but the list of physical development is endless.

Alhaji Ibrahim Ndabagi, politician and sports administrator: At the time of creation, Makurdi, the state capital had only two roads with asphalt, and that was barracks road and what is today know as Atiku Abubakar road. Today Makurdi and other towns in the state have become canter for perfect network of roads and beautifully constructed streets. The present administration has particularly achieved a feat in turning the state into a haven for investors. You need investors for economic growth. The days of the military actually placed the state in a situation where it was virtually impossible for investors to come, but today, you have the Indians, Japanese, Americans and other businessmen from various other countries jostling for investment in the state.

The is so because Dr. George Akume, whom I will describe as the father of Benue economy, has provided the enabling atmosphere. By this we can now see that the journey so far, for Benue state, is good.

Dr. Jerry Agada, civil servant and National Vice President Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA): At 30 I can say Benue is faring fine as a state. You do not expect a state to develop overnight and become like London like other big places, it has to take sometimes to grow up. It is like a child just given birth to, but I can tell you that Benue State has now grown into adulthood.

Those of us who witnessed the creation and were working then in what is today plateau state, we can tell the story better. Upon creation, we were deployed to Benue state where we had to start up without anything concrete on the ground. There was no residential quarters, no office accommodation.

We started under trees, but today, such facilities abound in not only Makurdi, but all across the state.

In the various sectors of the economy, talking particularly of education Benue can boast of having the highest number of tertiary institutions in the North, which are also doing well. This is not to talk of privately owned ones, which abound everywhere in the state.

With the teaching hospital, the Governor Akume administration will put a final touch on the development of the educational sub-sector, which has made so much giant strides in the development of the state, 30 years after creation.

On the whole I want to say the state has grown up, and has known tremendous development.

The end to development is the end to human existence, so long as we continue to live, Benue State will continue to develop and very well too. One day it shall become a heaven on earth.



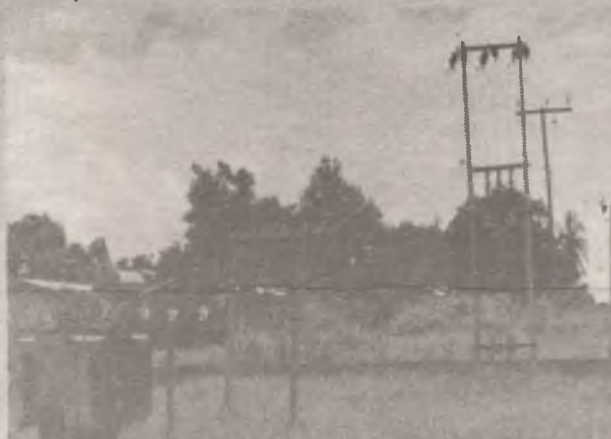
What is today rehabilitated and renamed Atiku Abubakar road was one of the only two tarred Makurdi township road at inception in 1976.



Rural Roads as this about and have perfectly networked the state, thereby easing the hitherto problem of occurs for transportation of both people and agricultural productions successive refines made tremendous in impact in this area of infrastructure.



The State owned Radio Benue was established in the 80s by the Military and has remained one of the major symbols of the 30 years old State.



Rural electrification has been one of the major are of privacy from inception to date.

NIGERIAN EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MEETING ON EEG BASELINE MATTERS

The processing of 2005 EEG claims has commenced in earnest, and in order to make open the issues involved in the determination of rates under the redesigned scheme, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council hereby invites the under listed companies to a meeting as follows:

VENUE: Conference Hall, NEPC Lagos Zonal Office, 13/15
Ladipo Oluwole Street, Off Marine Road, Apapa,
Lagos.

TIME: 9.00 A. M. each day

* Companies have been grouped into two for the purpose of the meeting. The meeting with Group A will hold on Saturday February 11, 2006, while Group B is on Monday February 13, 2006.

GROUP A (SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2006)

S/No	Exporter Name
1	AAH KAYZ RESOURCES LIMITED
2	AFRICAN TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS LIMITED
3	AFRIMPEX ENTERPRISES LIMITED
4	AGRO TRADERS LIMITED
5	ALKEM NIGERIA LIMITED
6	ARMADA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
7	ASIA PLASTICS INDUSTRY NIG LIMITED
8	ASSOCIATED COMM EXPORTERS & TRADERS NIG LTD (ACET)
9	ATLANTIC SHRIMPERS LIMITED
10	BALLY PLASTICS AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES NIG LIMITED
11	BANARLY NIGERIA LIMITED
12	BETA GLASS PLC
13	BHOIRAJ INDUSTRIES PLC
14	CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIGERIA PLC SOKOTO
15	CENTURY EXPORTS LIMITED
16	CHELLCO INDUSTRIES LTD
17	CYBELE COSMETICS LIMITED
18	DANSA FOOD PROCESSING COMPANY LIMITED
19	DECENT BAG INDUSTRIES LIMITED
20	DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC
21	ENG HUAT RUBBER IND. EPF/ENG HUAT IND. LTD
22	FANTASTIC TRADERS NIGERIA LIMITED
23	FARIOG NIGERIA LIMITED
24	FATA TANNING EPF
25	FINE CHEMICALS NIGERIA LIMITED
26	FRIGOGLOSS INDUSTRIES NIG LIMITED
27	HONEYWELL FISHERIES LIMITED
28	HR VENTURES LIMITED
29	HUFAWA ENTERPRISES LIMITED
30	IBT AND ASSOCIATES NIG LTD
31	KULAK TRADES & INDUSTRIES PLC
32	LEO SUNSHINE LIMITED
33	LORNEVIEW INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
34	MAHAZA COMPANY LIMITED
35	MAMUDA INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
36	MARIO JOSE ENTERPRISES LIMITED
37	NIGERIAN BAG MANUFACTURING COMPANY LIMITED
38	NIGERIAN EMBROIDERY LACE MANUFACTURING CO. LTD
39	NIGERITE LIMITED
40	NORMAN INDUSTRIES LTD
41	NYCIL LIMITED
42	OK PLAST LIMITED
43	OLAM NIGERIA LIMITED
44	ORC FISHING AND FOOD PROCESSING LIMITED
45	PANAR LIMITED
46	POLMAZ LIMITED
47	PURECHEM INDUSTRIES LTD
48	RMM GLOBAL COMPANY LIMITED
49	SADHWANIS NIGERIA LIMITED
50	SARA FOODS LIMITED
51	SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC
52	SHIRAZ AGRO INDUSTRIES NIG LTD
53	SINO PP WOVEN BAG NIGERIA LIMITED
54	SLIMPOT TANNERY LIMITED
55	SONNEX PACKAGING NIGERIA LIMITED
56	SONVIG INTERCONTINENTAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
57	SOSACO NIGERIA LIMITED
58	SPINTEX MILLS (NIGERIA) LIMITED
59	STANDARD FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
60	STANDARD PLASTICS INDUSTRY (NIG) LTD
61	SUDIT OIL AND CHEMICAL LIMITED
62	SUN AND SAND INDUSTRIES LIMITED
63	SUNFLAG (NIGERIA) LIMITED
64	TANORTH TANNERY LIMITED
65	TARABAROZ FISHERIES LIMITED
66	VITAL PRODUCTS LIMITED
67	VIVA METAL AND PLASTICS INDUSTRIES LIMITED
68	WEST AFRICAN COTTON COMPANY LIMITED
69	WEST AFRICAN GLASS INDUSTRY PLC
70	WEST AFRICAN MILK COMPANY NIGERIA-PLC
71	WEST AFRICAN SEASONING COMPANY LIMITED

16	COOP COCOA PRODUCTS LIMITED
17	COOP COMMODITIES LIMITED
18	COTTON AND AGRICULTURAL PROCESSORS LIMITED
19	CROWN FLOOR MILLS LIMITED
20	DANA PLASTICS LIMITED
21	DOLPHINE FISHERIES LIMITED
22	ED & F MANUFACTURING LIMITED
23	EXXON RESOURCES
24	FIRST SPINNERS PLC
25	GENERAL AGRO OIL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
26	GIMSER COMMODITIES LIMITED
27	GLOBUS ENTERPRISES LIMITED
28	GOD'S LITTLE TANNERY LIMITED
29	GONGONI COMPANY LIMITED
30	GUM ARABIC COMPANY NIG. LIMITED
31	HAFFAR INDUSTRIAL COMPANY LIMITED
32	HERCULES TYRES LIMITED
33	IMONIYAME HOLDINGS LIMITED
34	INDUSTRIAL & FARM EQUIPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
35	INTERNATIONAL POLYMER SYSTEMS LIMITED
36	INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE INDUSTRIES NIG LIMITED
37	JK INDUSTRIES LIMITED
38	JOF IDEAL FAMILY FARMS LIMITED
39	JON TUDY INTERBIZ NIGERIA LIMITED
40	KIMATRAI NIGERIA LIMITED
41	KODE INVESTMENTS LIMITED
42	KOLE-DAFE NIGERIA LIMITED
43	KOLORKOTE NIGERIA LIMITED
44	KWALE RUBBER COMPANY LIMITED
45	LADGROUP LIMITED
46	LARRABEE ENTERPRISES LIMITED
47	LIVING FOODS LIMITED
48	MARPELI ONE NIGERIA LIMITED
49	MASTAY INVESTMENTS LIMITED
50	MBS MERCHANTS LIMITED
51	MICHELIN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
52	MICHELIN NIGERIA LIMITED
53	MINI LIMITED
54	MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC
55	MONTBRIZON INDUSTRY NIGERIA LIMITED
56	MULTITREX INVESTMENTS LIMITED
57	NASMIER ENTERPRISES LIMITED
58	NEFRADAY (IGEPVA) LIMITED
59	NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC
60	NIG. CASEIN & PACKAGING MANUFACTURING CO. LTD
61	NIG. GAS CYLINDERS MANUFACTURING CO. LTD
62	NIGERIAN BOTTLING COMPANY PLC
63	NULE INDUSTRIES LIMITED
64	OCEAN FISHERIES NIGERIA LIMITED
65	OK FOODS LIMITED
66	OLOFIN PISTES LIMITED
67	OMIC WOOD INDUSTRY LTD
68	OSSI RIVER RUBBER ESTATES LIMITED
69	PETER AND LEVER LIMITED
70	PILROADY NIGERIA LTD
71	POLYBAG INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
72	PREMIER LUMBER AND (NIG) LIMITED AKURE
73	PROCTER & GAMBLE NIGERIA LIMITED
74	PROF AS DOR NIGERIA LIMITED
75	PROSPERITY LIMITED
76	RED INTERNATIONAL LTD
77	RICKIT BENCKISER NIGERIA LIMITED
78	RIGAL PLASTICS INDUSTRIES LIMITED
79	RELANCE TEXTILE INDUSTRIES LIMITED
80	SAPELI INTEGRATED INDUSTRIES LIMITED
81	SENGOLD FISHING COMPANY LIMITED
82	SHANGAI PACKAGING INDUSTRY LIMITED
83	STANMARK COCOA PROCESSING COMPANY LIMITED
84	STAR SEED NIGERIA LIMITED
85	SUPERTEX LIMITED
86	TASAREE INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
87	THAMAR HOLDINGS COY LIMITED
88	TOWER ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC
89	TRENDS VENERATE LIMITED
90	TROMCO LIMITED
91	TROPICAL WOOD TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED
92	ULYSSES NIGERIA LIMITED
93	UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC
94	UNION AUTOPARTS MANUFACTURING COMPANY LIMITED
95	UNIQUE LEATHER FINISHING COMPANY LIMITED
96	UNITED FISHERIES LIMITED
97	UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILE PLC
98	UNITED SPINNERS NIGERIA LIMITED
99	VISTA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
100	WATER SIDE RUBBER ESTATES LIMITED
101	WESTERN METAL PRODUCTS COMPANY LIMITED
102	WOOD MILLS INDUSTRIES LIMITED

PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL

SIGNED:

G. M. SASORE (MRS.)

Special Adviser to the President/CEO, NEPC

GROUP B (MONDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2006)

S/No	Exporter Name
1	AAREM (R.M) NIGERIA LIMITED
2	AFRICA STAR NIGERIA LIMITED
3	ALIMOL LIMITED
4	AMAJON INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
5	ARAROMI RUBBER ESTATES LIMITED
6	AVOP INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
7	AYoola FOODS NIGERIA LIMITED
8	BAS INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
9	BEL POPYRUS LIMITED
10	CADBURY NIGERIA PLC
11	CAPRISAGE (EXPORT) WOOD & FURNITURE CO. LTD
12	CELPLAS INDUSTRIES NIGERIA LIMITED
13	CENTURY DYES AND CHEMICALS
14	COCOA INDUSTRIES LTD.
15	CODINA COMPANY NIGERIA LIMITED

Advertorial

BEFORE THE DARKNESS FALLS

The Nigerian polity is overheating at a disturbing rate and I consider it mete and proper to say something in warning. Many of the founding fathers and nationalists who offered their sweat, blood and life for the freedom of this country are no longer on this planet. The few of us who are still around cannot look unconcerned when we see the country drifting towards a precipice.

The tone and mode of politics and politicking is becoming alarming and frightening. Recently the military was obliged to sound a note of warning to politicians and political actors and the indications so far are that the significant warning has not been taken with sufficient seriousness.

In the race towards 2007, politicians are no longer talking of parties, ideologies or principles; the emphasis has shifted to Zonal or regional blocs, line-ups and ethnicity. Much as it may be pleaded that these are lawful and legitimate, they could be overplayed and lead to dangerous consequences. There is the loud talk of **Third-Term** ambition which is neither confirmed nor seriously denied, and passions are running high over the saga. There is the strong agitation for a South-East President being strongly propagated by the **South-East Forum**. There is the amalgam of South-East and South-South agitating that the Presidency should be slotted to any of the two geo-political Zones. There is the strong agitation by the **North** that since democratic Presidency has remained with the South for eight years, it should now rotate to the North. And there is the new solidarity of **Southern Forum** embracing the three geo-political Zones of the South. All these may appear to be legitimate and lawful, but if the interests remain rigid and uncompromising, as canvassed, they could constitute a grave danger to the peace and unity of the country.

I am an apostle and strong advocate of **Dr. Azikiwe/Ahmadu Bello** policy of compromise and give-and-take for it is only under such policy that Nigeria had seen peace. In the Independence year of 1960, Sir Ahmadu Bello's **Northern People's Congress (NPC)** and **Dr. Azikiwe's National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC)** formed a Coalition Government and in a patriotic dialogue shared offices at the Federal level. There was one solid North at that time and it was for the **Sardauna** to distribute his allotted offices to their provinces. Dr. Azikiwe and the NCNC distributed their share of public offices in the Eastern Region and Western Region as follows:

Ministers - (East)

R. Amanze Njoku (Present Imo State)
Jaja Anucha Wachukwu (Present Abia State)
Aja Nwachukwu (Present Ebonyi State)
M. T. Mbu (Present C/River State)
Dr. E.A. Esin (Present Akwa Ibom State)

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mbazulike Amechi (later Minister - Anambra)
R. B. K. Okafor (Present Imo State)
F. E. Ofor (Present Abia State)
D.C. Ugwu (Present Enugu State)
U.O. Ndem (Present C/River State)

Ministers - West

T. O. S. Benson (Ikorodu then Western Region)
J. M. Johnson (Lagos Capital Territory)
Olu Akinfosile (Ondo State)
F.S. Okotie-Eboh (Present Delta State)

Parliamentary Secretaries - West

Alade Lamuye (Present Osun State)
L.A. Yerokun (Present Oyo State)
H. Omo-Osagie (Present Edo State)
Owhotomi Oweh (Present Delta State)
O. Bademosi (Present Ondo State)

The NCNC did not have elected Members of the House of Representatives from the present Rivers and Bayelsa States and could therefore not nominate a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary from that Province of the East, but in order to give them representation in the central Government, a political strategy was worked out and Melford Okilo who won election on the platform of opposition Action Group was encouraged to cross carpet to the NPC and he was appointed a Parliamentary Secretary.

This bridge of understanding and compromise constructed by Zik and the Sardauna of Sokoto gave the country **Peace and Unity** until the Western Regional Crisis of 1964 split the ruling Action Group party in the West into two factions headed by Awolowo and Akintola. The NPC backed Akintola, while the NCNC pitched tent with Awolowo and this caused a major crack on the Bridge and that enabled the military to make a coup in January 1966 and blew the bridge to pieces. The rest of the story is well known to all and sundry. A brutal civil war followed, millions of lives were lost and friends of yesterday became enemies of today.

to contest the scheduled elections and the results showed that regional and ethnic influences were still very potent in the country. The NPN, with strong Northern dominance, won the Presidential election, but failed to win majority seats in the two Houses of the National Assembly. The NPP under the leadership of Dr. Azikiwe came second with total acceptance by the Igbo States of the South-East, followed by Plateau State in the Middle Belt. In order to restore stability and peace, Zik and his NPP went into a coalition with the NPN. Thus an old damaged bridge was reconstructed and this brought stability and modest progress to a nation that was thoroughly tired of strife and military dictatorship'. By the middle of 1983, the inexperienced hawks in the NPP prevailed on Zik to break faith with the NPN and go into a utopian **Alliance of Progressives** with Awolowo's UPN, Waziri Ibrahim's GNPP and a dissident faction of Aminu Kano's PRP. Again the NPN won the 1983 election, but the vociferous rejection of the election results by the club of **Progressives** posted an unhidden invitation to the military to once again murder democracy in the country. The military once again took over the government of the country from December 31, 1983 and perpetuated itself in power till 1999.

It is an irrefutable fact of history that each time this bridge of compromise and understanding constructed by Zik and the Sardauna was put to use, there prevailed peace and amity in the country and each time the bridge was damaged or seriously cracked, what followed was disequilibrium.

I am no longer an active participant in politics, but I am certainly not apolitical. Today the ominous signs that hover above the country do not portend well for the peace and unity of the country. As somebody who hails from the South-East geo-political Zone of the country, which has been at the receiving end of the injustices that followed the civil war, I believe that it is in our interest and the overall peace of the nation that we should revisit the Zik/Sardauna formula and rebuild that bridge of amity between us and the North provided that it is on a solid foundation of justice, equity and total over-all national interest. This is without prejudice to the contacts of the various sectional fora who are already doing their things, but they should not do their things in a way that will divide the country or plunge its citizens into a senseless war that will take innocent lives. Early nationalists and founding fathers of the nation made great sacrifices to secure independence for a united Nigeria. Many of them have gone the way of all flesh, but the few of us still around will invoke the wrath of God and all our heroes past, on any opportunist pseudo-politician who for selfish ambition will plunge the nation into any strife or division.

As the country sits precariously on a keg of high explosive, it is for the President to do or say something that will douse the high tension which his speculated third term ambition has generated instead of the meaningless and incoherent invectives and abuses which Presidential spokesmen and party choir masters are dishing out to a disgusted public. There are enough crises situations and sore issues that demand the urgent attention of the President in his present incumbency rather than the diversion of third term.

The situation in the Niger Delta area is delicate and explosive and if not handled with great tact and maturity could inflict severe damage to the economy. And youths, traditional rulers and political leaders of the areas involved should be told that there is no wisdom in violence or destruction of structures and installations that produce the wealth which they are demanding to control.

The fight against economic crimes is highly commendable, but the dragnet should be made to spread beyond Governors and politicians who do not endorse the thoughts and desires of the President. The search light should be beamed on other arms of the Government as well as the National Assembly, the States, the Local Governments and the Electoral Commission. The NNPC, the Oil Companies and even some leading agitators in the oil producing areas are not exempted from the massive stealing and diversion of the national wealth.

Before I say the final word, let me say it loud and clear that the President, the Police and the State Security Service owe it as a duty and debt to unravel and tell the nation and the world what authority, agency or persons have been responsible for the spate of political murders that have taken place in all parts of Nigeria in the last couple of years. Why have the investigations been inconclusive and uncompleted? It is an unchangeable law of nature that those who spill other people's blood must pay with their own blood, and those who take other people's lives must pay with their own lives.

Finally my main advocacy is that in spite of and in addition to other bridges being constructed or reconstructed, that main bridge between the East and the North which has held this country in peace and amity should be reconstructed. As a sole survivor of the original Zik's team of the First Republic from this Zone, I will be delighted to lend a hand. Whether the bridge will be redesigned or structurally modified, I am willing and ready to contribute to its reconstruction. All I want, on behalf of myself and my departed compatriots, is **Peace, Amity and Justice in democratic Progress** of the nation which we sacrificed so much to found.

Signed:

The military held the country hostage from the time of the 1966 coup until the restoration of democracy in 1999. Political parties were formed and the military was obliged to restore democracy in 1999. The military held the country hostage from the time of the 1966 coup until the restoration of democracy in 1999. Political parties were formed and the military was obliged to restore democracy in 1999.

EKO TRUST

2007: Gov's aide accuses PDP of plans to rig elections

The Special Adviser to Governor Bola Tinubu on Political and Legislative Matters, Oyinlomo Danmole, has said that the allegations by President Olusegun Obasanjo that the 2003 general elections were rigged in favour of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) was a ploy by the rival Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to manipulate next year's election.

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

action to Obasanjo's claim came even as the Tinubu administration challenged the federal government to prosecute the erstwhile Head of Service (HOS) in Lagos, Rafiu Tinubu, who allegedly owned up to have perfected the rigging to install the AD in the state.

But Danmole, who described the President's claim as a mere fallacy lacking every semblance of truth, accused Obasanjo of not weighing his allegations and the implications of such pronouncements on the nation's democracy.

According to him, the President knew the best thing to do with the acclaimed "election rigger" was to recommend him for prosecution by relevant law enforcement agency, rather

than making unsubstantial allegations through the pages of the newspapers.

"The President owes a duty to prosecute any such person whose act constitute an obvious sabotage of the democratic process", Danmole said, insisting that the mandate was freely giving to the AD under the leadership of Tinubu in apparent appreciation of people-oriented programmes implemented during the first term

tenure.

Recounting the events of the 2003 polls and the subsequent Supreme Court judgment that the PDP lost the elections in Obasanjo's home, Ogun State, the special adviser said the President got it all wrong as it was the PDP and not the AD that was guilty of election manipulations, especially in the South West geo-political zone.

Alleging that the President was flying the kite of the orchestrated threat to "capture Lagos", Danmole urged Obasanjo to forget Lagos as the state would not be up for grabs, adding that the electorate would always identify with the AD, being a party that has plans for them.

According to him, the hardships inflicted on Nigerians by the PDP-controlled federal government were enough reasons for the people to reject them with their votes, assuring that the AD would regain all the state it lost to the PDP at the 2003 polls during the 2007 elections.

His words: "What had been stolen from us will surely return" to us. The President has actually confirmed that he is afraid. Or why else will the President be threatening his governors with sack if they fail to perform. At the eve of an election, he should be praising them, not the upbraiding that we are now having".

Robbers attack bank in Ikorodu

A gang of armed robbers on Monday attacked a first generation commercial bank in Ipakodo, Ikorodu, Lagos State and carted away unspecified amount of money.

The robbers, numbering about 12, according to sources, arrived the bank at about 10am in a commercial mini bus and reportedly entered the banking hall as customers and demanded to see the manager.

The robbers later held all customers and bank officials hostage. A security man who attempted to escape from the banking hall, probably to inform the police, was shot.

While they ordered everyone to lie on the floor, the

robbers made for the bank's vault and collected as much money as they could.

However, luck ran out on them as the driver of the vehicle used for the robbery was arrested alongside a suspect after a hot chase by a team of mobile policemen near a river while the other robbers escaped.

Following the robbery, it was learnt that the police have arrested two officials of the bank for interrogation. Both suspects are now at the SCID.

The Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, and senior officials of the SCID were said to have visited the bank shortly after the incident

to assess the extent of damage.

Spokesman of the command Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, confirmed the incident

to our correspondent.

Ojajuni could not, however, confirm the exact amount stolen from the bank and neither could he ascertain the arrest of the bank officials.



Members of the panel of inquiry into disturbances in Ajah being sworn-in by Governor Tinubu at Alausa secretariat...recently.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Results delay: LASU

lecturers may face sack

The Vice-Chancellor of Lagos State University (LASU), Prof. Lateef Hussain, has threatened to sack lecturers who delayed the release of results of examinations taken since October last year.

This was contained in a statement issued by the vice chancellor on Monday.

Hussain in the statement said it is unfair for students to write examination and not to know their results and yet resume for their studies.

"This is unacceptable and this administration is therefore determined to put a stop to this unwholesome practice," he said.

"As another week begins, February 2006 is here, the humiliation of not producing university results since the end of examination in October 2005 has deepened.

It is now time to send names of lecturers who default," he added.

The vice-chancellor advised the lecturers who are

yet to submit their results to start looking for employment elsewhere, saying that the stoppage of salaries which he adopted did not work.

He mandated all heads of department to forward the names of lecturers to him and copy their deans, warning that any head of department who refused to comply with the directive may be removed immediately and may face sack.

Hussain appealed to students, parents and the public to bear with the university on the delay in resumption and release of the results.

However, the Head of Information, Mr. Tunde King, disclosed that the school might resume next week as lecturers have responded to the vice-chancellor's order.

It would be recalled that LASU has been noted for delay in releasing examinations' results as some students could spend four years on campus without seeing their results and knowing their performances.

Use service lanes only, commissioner warns drivers

Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation Muize Banire has warned commercial drivers plying Ikorodu-Mile 12 route to restrict their movement to the service lane or pay a fine of N25,000.

Banire gave the warning in his office at the state secretariat Alausa, Ikeja on Monday.

The commissioner said with effect from next Monday all commercial buses coming from Ikorodu toward Ojota should take the service lane

right from Owode-Onirin to Ojota-Odo Iya-Alaro Bridge where they would link the expressway.

He added that at Maryland the drivers would pass under the tunnel until they get to Obanikoro bus stop where they would again link the service lane till they get to Jibowu or Yaba.

"All commercial bus operators coming from Ikorodu must ply the service lane with effect from February 13 or risk the payment of the sum of N25,000 fine," he warned.

He noted that the move is to end the indiscriminate parking, picking and discharging of commuters on the expressway by commercial bus drivers, which have been impeding free flow of traffic in the axis.

"Law enforcement agents have been directed to ensure strict compliance with the directive, and any commercial bus operator who violates the new directive would be made to face the full wrath of the law," he said.

He expressed regrets that

despite attempts to educate motorists on the need to consider other road users, commercial bus drivers have continued to display flagrant disregard for traffic rules and regulations thereby compounding the chaotic traffic situation.

He also warned the displaced traders at Mile 12 and Ketu to stay clear of the road.

He called on commuters to always board buses at designated bus stops along the service lane rather than doing so along the expressway which expose them to danger.

Inside Politics

NDP, ACD: Return of opposition politics?

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
Special Correspondent

In the 1999 general elections, the three political parties, namely the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) that participated in them, gave a good showing of themselves. PDP won the presidential election with General Olusegun Obasanjo as its standard bearer. The APP (now All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP) won governorship seats in nine States and had good representations in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The AD comfortably won the six governorship seats in the southwest States. Significantly, Obasanjo could not deliver his home state of Ogun to the PDP. Yet by a combination of votes delivered to him in the north and the southeast and south-south zones, he was able to secure the majority votes in twenty-four states, representing two-third of the votes cast, to emerge president.

The APP and AD had produced an alliance presidential ticket that had Chief Olu Falae and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi as presidential and vice presidential candidates respectively against Obasanjo/Atiku Abubakar ticket of the PDP. But immediately he was sworn in, Obasanjo had set out to emasculate opposition parties by co-opting leaders of the opposition parties in his cabinet. From the AD, he brought in the late Chief Bola Ige and from the APP (ANPP), he brought in the party's former National Chairman, Alhaji Mahmud Waziri as Special Adviser on Inter-Party Affairs. It was the purported all-inclusive government that saw people like Dr. Mohammed Shaata, Hajia Aisha Ismail and Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, among others, from the APP (ANPP) platform becoming cabinet ministers.

The appointment of members of the opposition parties caused tension in the affected parties. Leaders of the parties were divided as to whether they should accept Obasanjo's offers or not. Somehow, the offers became the root of the problems that fractured the AD and the APP. The late Ige had accepted the offer to spite the leadership of AD, which allegedly programmed the presidential

ticket for Falae at his (Ige's) expense. Gradually, even if systematically, the opposition parties continued to lose their bite and bark, even as Obasanjo expanded the frontiers of his control over the political space. Before the 2003 general elections, all perceived obstacles to the re-election of the PDP government at the centre had been taken out of the way. When the PDP thought that Obasanjo was going to have a smooth ride at the polls, the ANPP platform drafted former Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari to slug it out with Obasanjo for the nation's plum seat. Buhari gave a good showing of himself despite, as reported, the massive rigging that characterised the polls nationwide.

This was why at the general elections, Obasanjo's PDP performed a "magical feat" by capturing five of the six states in the southwest, save Lagos, thus effectively weakening the AD in the zone. It succeeded in reducing the number of states that the APP won in 1999 under the new ANPP platform to seven. AD could not play its role as opposition party. If not for Buhari's decision to go to court to challenge the presidential poll's result, the ANPP leadership under Chief Don Obot Etiebet would have long abandoned opposition politics for strategic accommodation in politics of largesse by the Obasanjo government. But as soon as the Supreme Court delivered judgment in favour of Obasanjo, leaders of the ANPP who were compelled by the virtue of their position in the party to stand by the party's candidate, became free to maneuver to take care of their personal interests. Today, the ANPP has lost its identity as opposition party. Many of its leaders are hobnobbing with the PDP presidency. Analysts say that Nigerians would have been disappointed in 2007 if the ANPP were to be their bet in the battle to stop Obasanjo's planned tenure extension.

But as it is now, there is hope on the horizon for Nigerians who are angling for change of leadership in 2007. The reason is the

two prospective formidable political parties have emerged on the political terrain. By their emergence, there is a renaissance of opposition politics. The parties are the Alhaji Aliyu Habu-Fari-led National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Chief Alexis Aniello-led Action Congress of Democrats (ACD). The NDP was registered before the 2003 general elections, but because of review of strategy, former military President, General Ibrahim

hub of that political alliances and alignments. Sources close to the development hinted that the former military president has associates and loyalists in the 34 political parties that now dot the nation's political landscape and that what would happen is for Babangida to provide a rallying and magnetic point for these men and women to come together to push his common candidacy for the 2007 presidency. Although, Babangida has not openly



Obasanjo: Will he bow to opposition?

Babangida, whom it wanted to adopt, did not declare for the 2003 presidency. Today, the NDP has revved its engine, preparatory to presenting Babangida as its candidate for the 2007 presidential election and once it is confirmed that Babangida would run on the party, many people believe that there would be mass movement of people into the party. The prospects of Babangida running on the NDP platform, if his presidential aspiration for 2007 is irrevocable, are very bright against the backdrop of the emerging feelers that Obasanjo has seized the platform of the PDP to prosecute his third term agenda.

Those working on the IBB presidency project have always calculated that the battle would be won through a coalition of political parties. The NDP in the circumstances would be the

declared for the race, many people close to him say that his body language speaks volume and some even claim that he has assured them that he would not disappoint them. Babangida himself has given the strongest hint yet of his presidential aspiration when he said that he would be actively involved in political activities in 2007.

The awesome Babangida political network, which sources said, has solid organizational and structural shape, as believed, would be able to fire oppositional shots from the belly of the NDP, if he decides to settle for the party, which in February, last year, met in Abuja to announce him as its preferred candidate for the 2007 presidency. Last weekend, indications emerged from the National Chairman of the NDP that the Babangida presidential

project would soon commence. In a text message to this correspondent, which was more revealing than the previous text messages of good wishes for either Friday or Sunday, Habu-Fari said: "Let us look back with gratitude, look forward with hope, look up to God with prayers. Let 2007 be our guiding spirit as we pronounce the commencement of the project. Happy Sunday". IBB's strategists, on reflection, are now, as learned, seeing the beauty in not putting all of their eggs in one basket. If Obasanjo eventually gets to run on the PDP platform and IBB wants to challenge him, he will do that on the NDP platform. This is the surmising of Babangida's foot soldiers in the battle for 2007 presidency.

It is not only the formidable NDP that has revved its engine, preparatory to the 2007 politicking, the ACD, which was registered recently, has also revved its engine. The ACD has become a beautiful bride because of its progressive allure. It is a big masquerade waiting to be unmasked. And that unmasking will be done in the next few days. It was gathered that the generation of progressive politicians in the country are heading to the ACD to transform the platform into a formidable opposition party that would give Obasanjo's PDP a run for its money. In fact, what is creating excitement around the ACD is the report that Vice President Atiku Abubakar's men might have set machinery in motion to have him run for the presidency on the party platform. They were said to have begun talks along that line. If the vice president heads for the ACD, he would not be walking into a gathering of strange people as many of those leading the ACD were with him in the denier Social Democratic Party (SDP). The implication of this is that many loyalists of the vice president would leave the PDP for the ACD. It may not be appreciated now the kind of setback this would have on the PDP until it happens.

Atiku has got an awesome political machine and a network that pervades the nation. He is not a greenhorn in political party formation and mobilisation. A tested political strategist

and rugged mobiliser, Atiku's movement into ACD if he does so eventually, will up the ante of opposition to Obasanjo in 2007. The horizon of opposition against Obasanjo's PDP would be widened. If Babangida is leading the battle for the 2007 presidency on the NDP platform and Atiku is doing so on the ACD platform with Obasanjo making use of the PDP platform, which is already in his pocket, the polity would witness a gritty contest for the soul of the nation. Watchers of political scene say that it would be fatal at this point to write off General Buhari of the ANPP, notwithstanding the loss of oppositional verve by his party. There have been conjectures that having been terribly mismanaged and rendered ineffective to play its oppositional role, the powers-that-be, acting in concert with some pliant state governors of the party, may completely put the party in the cooler and further make it impossible for Buhari to pick the party's ticket if he desires and decides to run again.

Whatever it is, the 2007 presidential election is a mystery that has to be unfolded. Who will unfold the myth of succession that has been built in the polity by Obasanjo's men and the PDP around the nation's plum seat? From NDP through ACD to other innocuous parties, the sing-song is that Obasanjo must give way. If Constitution is amended to permit Obasanjo to run, then the elements in the NDP, the ACD and others would have to take up the gauntlet for the greatest political battle to, in the words of opposition elements, "save democracy in Nigeria". The task of leading a credible opposition against self-perpetuation under any guise, there is a concurrence in the camp, rests on them. Nigerians are looking up to them and not to the military to stop Obasanjo if they are tired of his (Obasanjo's) rulership. Will NDP, ACD and other pro-democracy allies stake all they have at their disposal to ensure a proper civilian-to-civilian transition in 2007?

Inside Politics

Constitution amendment long over due - Mike Nkwocha

Following citations in various quarters of the country over the proposed constitutional amendment by the National Assembly and the formation of a nationwide coalition on constitutional amendment by some Nigerians, Daily Trust reporter, Mustapha Abubakar, spoke to the national coordinator, Nationwide Coalition on Constitutional Amendments (NCCA), Barrister Mike Nkwocha, on this matter. Excerpts:-

Why do you advocate constitutional changes?

Today people are still asking for the need for a constitutional amendment, but before this administration, under the regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar (rtd) who didn't have the trace of the constitution, Nigerians were asking for the government to show them the constitution that will guide them, which was never made public until the Obasanjo administration came into office. It was then that Nigerians started agitating that it has to be amended, which led to all parties' constitutional review. It has equally received support from the civil society, through suggestions for a model constitution for this country due to the defect in the present constitution.

It is not that it has to be amended, it is long overdue. Ordinarily, immediately General Abdulsalami came into office as the head of state, there should have been a sovereign national conference to fashion out a system of constitution, a constitution that would guide the country to a new democracy.

The 1999 Constitution

came out with a tier in its preamble and because Nigerians never give themselves a defective document, the issue of constitution amendment is important. Now that we are coming to the end of Obasanjo's administration, it is time to correct wrongs in the constitution. Take the issue of electoral reforms, if we don't have a good electoral process that will guide and guarantee good elections and for the hand-over of power come 2007, we are going to continue with an endless constitution and that is why we are supporting the call for the amendment of the constitution.

Who benefits from constitutional changes?

It is for the Nigerians and the good governance of this country. Every patriotic Nigerian will benefit from the process. The constitution is not meant for one man or a woman who is in power. It is for all Nigerians. What we are saying is that Nigerians are interested in good leadership, good governance; interested in poverty reduction to the minimum level, and good houses. In fact, there is no way our constitution can accommodate these issues raised. The constitution is



Barrister Mike Nkwocha.

for everybody in Nigeria and that is why we are saying everybody must participate. It is not going to be a one man or the National Assembly affairs. My argument is that it should reflect the manner our constitution is in 1966 where everybody

participated in the review without leaving anybody out, because it is a fundamental right of all.

What do you think about the opposition to the project?

In as much as I disagree with the opposition, it is

democratic to air their views. We can't have the monopoly of wisdom. They have their reasons. Take for instance, the National Assembly is not given its right, which is among the reasons we are saying Nigerians should come out to make a solid foundation. What I'm saying here is that we need to come together to make the amendment workable.

In addition, the present government came into authority with decrees which were collectively made by the military. The right of the individual has been totally removed, thus making the constitution not to have a sense of direction.

However, so far the government called for public hearings on the constitution amendments, which I have a copy of, I think it is a commendable effort. If our electoral reform is restructured, you don't need somebody to back you in your constituency before you can win an election in your locality. I mean you don't need God-fatherism. If we should allow what has been imported into the constitution to enter 2007, honestly we will not go anywhere.

So everybody should be out with their views so that we can have a better Nigeria; a better document at the end of the day.

Mantu recall: INEC prepares for signature verification

From Andrew Agbese, Correspondent (Jos)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is to begin verification of signatures for the recall of the deputy Senate president, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu from the National Assembly.

The exercise is to hold in five local governments of Plateau Central Senatorial District.

Indication for this is contained in INEC's response to the recall petition, addressed to the leader of the delegation that submitted the signatures, Capt. Joseph Din.

INEC's letter, a copy of which was made available to Daily Trust in Jos, asked the petitioners to nominate two persons to serve as agents in each of the five local governments.

The commission also said it has approved that its offices in each of the five local governments in the zone be used for the verification exercise.

The letter, however, did not state the date the verification would start but added that this would be announced soon.

Part of the letter signed by INEC's director of operations, Alhaji Ahmed Kagara reads: "Following the receipt of a petition from some voters in the five local government areas of the above senatorial district alleging loss of confidence in the distinguished senator representing them in the

Senate chambers of the National Assembly and consequently seeking to recall him, the commission has considered and directed that a verification of the signatories to the petition be carried out in accordance with its guideline for the recall of a member of the National Assembly or House of Assembly of a state.

"The commission has further approved that the 5 LG's INEC offices of the senatorial district serve as centers for the verification exercise expected to commence shortly on a date soon to be announced.

"This letter, therefore is to formally inform you as the official representative of the petitioners of the matter and to request you to nominate and forward the names and addresses of ten (10) persons to serve as your agents (ie 2 per center) in the five designated centers for the exercise to the resident Electoral Commissioner, Plateau state in accordance with the INEC guidelines.

"Your earlier response to this letter will be highly appreciated."

Some voters from the Plateau Central Senatorial District had submitted about 208,000 signatures and 14 bump points of voters to the INEC headquarters in Abuja on December 10, 2005 for Mantu's recall.

"In as much as I disagree with the opposition, it is democratic to air their views. We can't have the monopoly of wisdom. They have their reasons. Take for instance, the National Assembly is not given its right, which is among the reasons we are saying Nigerians should come out to make a solid foundation. What I'm saying here is that we need to come together to make the amendment workable. In addition, the present government came into authority with decrees which were collectively made by the military.

Inside Politics

2007: When the South earnestly ask for OBJ

Those who doubt the determination of President Obasanjo alleged third term bid had a rethink when, last week, the South-West PDP caucus in Abeokuta, Ogun State's capital pleaded with the president not to go back to Ota farms in 2007. The caucus, literally begged the president to enforce his third term plans. It was a reminiscence of the late General Sani Abacha days when Daniel Kanu and others floated "Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha" (YEAA), a pressure group that sought to perpetuate the reign of Abacha. Like those days, when the head of state did not denounce the groups calling for his perpetuation, the incumbent Nigeria leader has kept tight lips over the matter.

What has irked most observers over the South-West governors demand is the failure of the president to call them to order. Says Alhaji Ibrahim Ishyaku, "the president should have reprimanded the governors for demanding for what is clearly unconstitutional. The third term is not in the constitution and a president who swore with the Bible to stop or defend the constitution; it is a shame that he watch as those governors desecrated the constitution.

"Their demand is treason-

**By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor**

time the president has shown he is not peeved with the unconstitutional call for to become Nigeria's leader in 2007.

Nnamani too!
If the South-West PDP governor request for third term is strange, what can one make of Governor Chimaroke Nnamani call for the president to run for the highest office in the land? Nnamani was said to have told the press in Lagos that it does not matter if the president ran for office, especially if a constitutional amendment permits it, noting that President Obasanjo was a good material for the PDP.

Nnamani's calls is coming at a time when the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is in Enugu and have arrested many of the state's top ranking administrators who are presently in Abuja and answering vital questions. The endorsement of the governor is seen by some observer, as a direct fallout of the EFCC activities in his state.

The governor also was instrumental to a recent meeting of the Southern leadership in Enugu where a decision was taken by their Forum that the presidency must shift to the South. At the meeting, which held at the State House of Assembly, emotion

dorsement of Obasanjo by the south-West PDP caucus, it appears Chief Falae was not

Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu before the civil war began. Chief Awo had pledged his support



President Olusegun Obasanjo speaking in jist after all.

Is South-West deceiving the South-East/S'outh?

They had agreed at Enugu that power will shift to the South-East or South-South. So why have they confessed their support for the president? Is the South-West voiding their initial resolve reached at Enugu. Owerri and Lagos? Is this a case of back stabbing and betrayal of

for the Biafran cause, saying that the West will equally secede as soon as the East be-

gin their own. But what happened? Ojukwu, on the strength of Awo's promised support, made his declaration.

"He expected Awo to make an announcement as well. Alas, to his amazement Chief Awo did not only refuse to make the supportive announcement, he organized with the rest of Nigeria, the biggest sabotage in Nigeria's history. He brought the idea of changing the currency and denying the West food stuff and thus causing starvation there.

"The present alliance, we knew from the start, was bound for failure. We knew and scoffed at the idea, because we know that the South-West are master betrayers as history have shown in the past," he said.

According to him, there was no way the South-West will allow the South-South to hold on to power, because of the mutual and historical animosity between the groups, especially as it relates to politics. The recent support by the South-West has probably

vindicated his position. But what will the reaction of the South-South be? Will they refer to their initial agreement and cry wolf or would they watch in helpless silence as their contract is revoked?

OBJ's growing popularity

Although the president has kept a studied silence over his ambition, political observers said that he is waiting for the nation to demand for his presidency. The ploy is to get groups and individuals advocated for an Obasanjo presidency. Already certain civil societies and youth groups are getting ready to support the third term bid, even as governors of 36 states are concluding plans to throw their weight behind the project.

So, is the president's popularity soaring or is it a case of sycophancy and crass-favour seeking? Are the governors acting on their own or is the fear of EFCC that is eating away at them? Indeed, will the president succeed in getting the nation's support for his alleged ambition?

"The recent support by the South-West has probably vindicated his position. But what will the reaction of the South-South be? Will they refer to their initial agreement and cry wolf or would they watch in helpless silence as their contract is revoked?"

able and, instead of accusing Gen. Malu for engaging in treason, the presidency should have reproved those governors for insulting the collective will of Nigerians," he said.

At the Ogun State meet with the PDP caucus, the president was reported to have "covertly" accepted the governors call and said, in Yoruba language, that there was nothing wrong with the demand. It was not the first

reached a feverish pitch when the South-East/South-South explored their history of "deprivation" They made passionate appeals, demanding that it is only proper for them to produce the next Nigeria leader. During the meeting, and at some point, former presidential candidate, Chief Olu Falae jokingly asked the South-East and South-South to donate the chair to them.

trust? The answer, according to second republic minister of mines and power, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan, is in the affirmative. According to him, what the South-West PDP did is tantamount to blackmail. He said that what has happened is a case of history repeating itself. "The West is not doing anything new, if you go

FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION P.M.B. 3473, KANO



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MANAGEMENT

News

Rivers releases N300 million to parents of Sosoliso crash victims

The Rivers State government has released the sum of N300 million to parents of students of the Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja, who died in the Sosoliso plane crash of December 10, 2005, which occurred at the Port Harcourt International Airport.

The Commissioner for Finance in the state, Mr. Kenneth Kobani, on behalf of Governor Perter Odili presented cheques to the parents at the executive chambers of the Government House in Port Harcourt. He said the presentation was a fulfillment of the governor's promise to the parents at the memorial service held in the honour of the victims.

Also speaking, the Special Adviser to the governor on Special Duties, Mr. Shedrack Akalokwu explained that the amount

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt

was for the scholarship awards to surviving siblings of victims of the ill-fated Sosoliso air disaster.

"Governor Odili had offered to give scholarship to surviving siblings of the students," he said, and advised the parents to use the money for that purpose.

Receiving the money on behalf of the Parents/Teachers Association of the school, Mr. Isaac Okemini who lost a daughter in the crash thanked the government for the support it had shown to parents of the crash since the incident occurred.

He lauded Governor Odili for his commitment to alleviating the pains of the parents, but regretted that no single government agencies involved in the management of the airport has thought it wise to send a condolence letter to the affected parents. He said although it was a national tragedy, one would have expected the agencies involved to show some form of concern.

In a related development, only four out of the 16 airlines approved to operate at the Port Harcourt International Airport are in operation. The airlines are Aero Contractor, Chanchangi Airline, Virgin Nigeria and Aviation Development Company (ADC).



Former deputy commandant of the National War College, Major General Ali N Bamalli handing over to his successor, Major General Samuel U Atawodi. General Bamalli was recently appointed the general officer commanding 2 division Nigerian army Ibadan.

2007: NOA boss counsels youths on thuggery

By Abdulwahab Ajikobi

As Nigerians count down to the 2007 general elections, the Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Alh. Idi Faruk, has called on Nigerian youths to resist any attempt to use them as political thugs for the establishment of a government that will not be in the best interest of the nation.

In his paper entitled: "The Role of Attitude in Nation De-

velopment: The Role of the Youths" at a seminar organised by the Progressive Movement for a Better Society, University of Abuja, the director-general urged Nigerian youths to submit themselves to the dictates of hardwork, discipline and patriotism.

Represented by Mr. Bonat Tagwai, a deputy director in the agency, Alhaji Idi

Faruk said Nigerian youths should organise themselves into agents of political mobilisation for the purpose of enthroneing a more viable, responsible and responsive political order that would stand the test of time, noting that the future of Nigeria and the responsibility to uphold and defend the unity and honour of the nation lies in their hands.

Describing the youth as the creative force for national development, Alhaji Idi Faruk said that if their energy and ingenuity are harnessed and positively channelled, they could become a veritable agent of positive change and development, stressing that in any society, the youths have always been the arrow head of development.

To be able to rise to the

challenge of today, the NOA boss said that the Nigerian youths must make conscious and concerted effort to remain focused, and break away from the shackles of mediocrity, materialism, personal parochial values of the moment and embrace the wider national and patriotic values of the nation.

He said: "It is imperative for the youth to internalize the culture of responsible leadership and patriotism, even while in school. In place of secret cults, students should form themselves into social clubs with noble ideals. They must be ready at all times to fight against cultism and gangsterism, examination malpractices and other vices not only by refusing to be active participants, but by also exposing perpetrators of such vices to the appropriate authorities."

Alhaji Faruk observed that the challenge of national development may be enormous, but not insurmountable by the Nigerian youths once the right attitude is manifested in all the many parts of the world, the youths have positively influenced the political and destiny of their nations.

He maintained that the Nigerian nation should not be divided by any single individual or tribe, adding that if we do not unite to put national interest before personal or tribal



Gov. Peter Odili

Nigerian films are excellent - Atiku

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar has said that, "the celebration of Nigerian Film and Video Industry is a patriotic and worthwhile venture."

Speaking yesterday, in Abuja when he received a delegation of the members of the Organising Committee of the 3rd National Film Festival, now branded Zuma Film Festival 2006, in his office at the State House, Abuja, Atiku noted that Nigerian films and videos "are well sought for all over Africa and Europe."

"This is a pointer that the industry is doing very well and I believe that it can do better. Developing the Nigerian film industry has been a subject of discussion at the highest level of government and every one acknowledges the popularity of Nigerian films all over the world.

Although he expressed satisfaction on the progress made by the film industry, he

organise and shape it in the fashion of other great film industries in other parts of the continent and the rest of the world.

He called on the festival organisers to explore the full participation of the private sector, especially in the area of funding and promotion of events, because government can only do little in terms of developing the film industry.

According to the vice president, the Nigerian film industry "can be well organised and exploited in terms of, providing revenue and employment and it will still retain its valued educational and entertainment roles."

Earlier, the Festival Director of the Zuma Film Festival, 2006, Mr. John Oluwagbemiga, expressed appreciation for the vice president's interest in the development of the Nigerian film industry.

nessed remarkable development and growth both in terms of volume of production and quality of films, which are being released at an average of 20 per week."

According to him, "this achievement has equally at-

tracted global media attention, and the phenomenon of Nollywood is today being celebrated for its sheer resourcefulness, originality and the enterprising resilience of the Nigerian spirit in creating something out of nothing."

Kwara House passes 2006 budget

Kwara State House of Assembly has passed into law, this year's budget of N35bn.

Made up of over N17bn as re-current and N18bn as capital expenditures, the state governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, presented the budget to the House in December last year.

Speaker of the House, Alhaji Bio Ibrahim commended members for working relentlessly towards the quick passage of the appropriation bill.

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent, Ilorin

mentation of the budget to ensure compliance with provisions of the 2006 estimate.

Meanwhile, Governor Saraki has extended the suspension of the Ekiti local government council chairman, Mr. Dele Abiodun, by three months.

In a letter to the state As-

tated by the need to conduct thorough investigations into allegations of misappropriation of public fund levelled against the suspended council boss.

He explained that the extension would give Mr. Abiodun the chance to defend himself of all the greivous allegations made against him by some members of the public.

The council boss was suspended last year by the state government for alleged mismanagement of public

Advertorial

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF BENUE STATE, DR. GEORGE AKUME, ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 BUDGET PROPOSALS TO THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON FRIDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 2005.

Mr. Speaker,
Honourable Members of the House,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to once again appear before this honourable House to present the 2006 Budget for your consideration and approval. By this time last year, I laid before you the financial programmes of the State for 2005, which you duly considered and approved.

Mr. Speaker, you may wish to recall that this honourable House approved a budget of **Forty-Seven Billion, four Hundred and sixteen Million Naira** (N47.416 billion) for the out-going year 2005. The budget comprised the sum of **Twenty-Eight Billion, Six Hundred and Seventy Million Naira** (N28.670 billion) for Recurrent Revenue and **Thirteen Billion, Four Hundred and Seven Million Naira** (N13.407 billion) for Capital Receipts, bringing the total Revenue projections to **Forty-Two Billion and Seventy-Eight Million Naira** (N42.078 billion). The budget also provided for the expenditure of the sum of **Eighteen Billion, Four Hundred and Twenty-Five Million Naira** (N18.425 billion) for Recurrent Expenditure and **Twenty-Eight Billion, Nine Hundred and Ninety-One Million Naira** (N28.991 billion) as Capital Expenditure, thus bringing the total expenditure to **Forty-Seven Billion, Four Hundred and Sixteen Million Naira** (N47.416 billion).

Before I proceed with the review of the performance of the 2005 Budget, I consider it appropriate to state once again by way of reminder, the development vision and strategy of this administration. As clearly enunciated in the **Benue Advance Plan** and now the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), the main focus of this government is to eradicate poverty, inequality, ignorance and ill-health through the execution of people-oriented programmes in agriculture, education and the provision of rural infrastructure.

When this government assumed office in May 1999, the decay in the educational infrastructure was an issue of serious concern and the massive renovation and restoration work on these infrastructures in the early life of the administration was a necessary rescue operation.

As a clear development focus, government realized that over 70% of our total population comprised peasant farmers. Accordingly, if poverty eradication was to be frontally addressed, the improvement in the incomes of these farmers must be targeted. To secure higher incomes, the farmers' production levels must be enhanced through the provision of modern implements, fertilizers and herbicides to stimulate and sustain enhanced production. Furthermore, government embraced primary processing of farm produce in order to enhance their market value, increase utilisation and eliminate waste.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished members, the foregoing explains why this government embarked on industrial ventures against the tide of the National Policy of Government divesting from industrial ventures. Again, our administration focused essentially on agro processing industries hence the investment in fruit juice processing, Cassava processing, Mango and Tomato processing, Rice Processing, the Fertilizer Blending Plant and the Benkims Plastics Industry. The Plastics industry is primarily to handle the packaging aspect of our agriculture.

Honourable members would notice that by the time the Accelerated Food Production Programme was launched earlier this year, we were sure that the processing industries were nearing completion and were therefore in a position to consume the increased farm output.

Our achievements so far in this regard may appear modest, owing to the resources at our disposal. I am confident however, that we are on the right path and the link up with the farming community by the launch of the Accelerated Food Production Programme marks a watershed in our poverty eradication programme and the quest for improved living standards of our people. Let me now return to the review of the performance of the 2005 Budget.

2006 Budget

Mr. Speaker, Government's proposals before you are to generate the sum of **Thirty-Six Billion, Five Hundred and Ninety-Six Million Naira** (N36.596 billion) as revenue and spend a total of **Forty-Six Billion, Three Hundred and Seventy-Eight Million Naira** (N46.378 billion) in the 2006 fiscal year. The budget will aim at sustaining the momentum of growth began when this administration came on board hence it is christened **Budget of Accomplishment**. The budget has a deficit of **Ten Billion, Eighty-Nine Million Naira** (N10.089 billion), which will be financed through the floating of **four billion naira** (N4 billion) Revenue Bond and loans from local banks.

Revenue Proposals

The projected revenue of **Thirty-Six Billion, Five Hundred and Ninety-Six Million Naira** (N36.596 billion) is expected from the following sources:

Internally Generated Revenue	-	N6.078 billion
Value Added Tax	-	N2.101 billion
Federation Account	-	N20.000 billion
Capital Receipts	-	N8.428 billion

Recurrent Expenditure

The proposed recurrent expenditures in 2006 stand at **Seventeen Billion, Four Hundred and Sixty Million Naira** (N17.460 billion). Expenditure components include:

Personnel Costs	-	N7.538 billion
Overhead Costs	-	N3.929 billion
Consolidated Revenue Fund Charges	-	N5.827 billion
Stabilization Fund	-	N165.8 million

Capital Expenditure

Mr. Speaker, the proposals before you of **Twenty-Eight Billion, Nine Hundred and Seventeen Million Naira** (N28.917 billion) for capital expenditure is distributed to the following sectors:

Economic	-	N14.955 billion
Social	-	N7.832 billion
Environmental	-	N2.486 billion
Administration	-	N3.285 billion

Key Project Areas in 2006

Government is conscious of the fact that this is the only full budget year this administration has in its remaining tenure and is therefore fully committed to doing its best to complete all projects initiated as well as maintaining those in hand. To actualise this goal, Government will strengthen the Project Monitoring Committee, which shall henceforth submit its reports to the State Executive Council on a monthly basis. All contractors handling projects for the government must be prepared to brace up or face appropriate sanctions.

The proposed **Twenty-Eight Billion, Nine Hundred and Seventeen Million Naira** (N28.917 billion) in the 2006 proposals will be utilized for the execution of the following projects.

Industry

The sum of **Three Billion, Fifty-Eight Million Naira** (N3.058 billion) proposed for the industry sub-sector is meant to cater for, among other industrial concerns, the Cassava Extrusion Plant to which the sum of **One Billion, Four Hundred Million Naira** (N1.4 billion) has been allocated. Furthermore as an encouragement to investors, Benue State Government has approved **seventy million naira** (N70 million) equity holding in a Roots and Tubers factory to be established in the state. Work on the Igumale Cement Company will be stepped up now that the necessary groundwork has been made. Civil construction and machinery procurement have been allocated the sum of **Nine Hundred and Eighty Million Naira** (N980 million) in the draft budget before you.

Sites for the Tomato Processing Plant have been acquired and construction work will commence early in 2006 for which the sum of **Two Hundred and Twenty-Two Million Naira** (N222 million) has been proposed. The Katsina-Ala and Otukpo Fruit Juice Companies have combined proposals of **One Hundred and Forty-Five Million Naira** (N145 million).

Agriculture

With the processing facilities now in place, government will approach agricultural production next year in a revolutionary fashion. Accordingly, the sum of **six hundred million naira** (N600 million) is proposed to undertake massive land development schemes for mechanised agriculture in all the local government areas of the state.

The cultivation of the mandate crops of cassava, soyabean, rice and sesame will be given a boost with the allocation of **five hundred million naira** (N500 million). In addition, heavy-duty tractors and other equipment will be procured to promote the cultivation of these crops.

In order to reduce the cost of procurement of fertilizer from distant sources, Government intends to procure bulk raw materials for the Fertilizer Blending Plant at the cost of **One Hundred and Fifty-Four Million Naira** (N154 million). This will not only keep the plant busy but will also guarantee our farmers timely delivery of the commodity. With the full completion of the mixing and blending plant, attention will be focused on the Organic Plant, which has an allocation of **Seventy Three Million Naira** (N73 million).

Experience gained during the implementation of the Accelerated Food Production Programme so far will be consolidated and extended to all the 23 Local Government Areas in 2006. The sum of **Sixty Million Naira** (N60 million) has been proposed for this.

Housing

Government will continue to emphasise the construction of housing units under the Benue Investment and Property Company Housing Schemes and the Owner-Occupier Scheme in 2006. Similarly, in order to boost the operations of the Benhouse Building Society Limited to make it meet the yearnings of the people of Benue State, the sum of **Three Hundred Million** is set aside to increase its capital base.

Transport

The Transport sub-sector, which is vital to the movement of people, goods and services, will remain high on the priority list of Government. Towards this end therefore, government has earmarked the sum of **Four Billion and four hundred million Naira** (N4.4 billion) for the execution of Township and Rural roads projects in the State. Out of this amount, **Seven Hundred Million Naira** (N700 million) has been set aside for Township roads while the company handling rural roads in the State has been mobilized to site and will complete most of the roads started with the allocation of **One Billion, Eight Hundred Million Naira** (N1.8 billion). Last year, Government released the sum of over **Four Hundred Million Naira** (N400 million) for the execution of Rural Infrastructural Development in the State. Government will consolidate on this effort to provide more dividends of democracy to our rural populace. And to achieve this goal, the sum of **Three Hundred and Fifty Million Naira** (N350 million) is proposed in the draft budget.

Similarly, government has set aside the amount of **Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira** (N250 million) for the completion of the Asphalt Plant at Abinsi and purchase of quarry plant and equipment for the production of materials to be used in the completion of the roads.

Also, government will continue to support the Federal Government's efforts to ensure the early completion of work on the Otukpo-Oweto and Gboko-Ameladu Roads. Efforts will be intensified to complete work on the 417 kilometres and 230 kilometres Romix Stabilizer Rural Roads in the State.

Power

The sum of **Four Hundred and Fifty-Nine Million Naira** (N459 million) has been set aside for the expansion of Solar Power Street Lighting Project to include streets in Gboko and Otukpo. Provision has also been made for the installation of Traffic Control Lights and for work on the Katsina-Ala Hydro-Electric Power project to improve the flow of traffic and power supply to the State. Furthermore, under the energy power programme, the Federal Government in conjunction with states and local governments will fund projects throughout the country for the purpose of improving power generation and distribution. Under the programme, Benue State will benefit from the provision of 330 KVA line from Akwa Ibom through Enugu State to Makurdi across to Plateau State.

Commerce, Finance and Tourism

Work on the Makurdi International Hotel will resume to enhance the tourist potentials of the State with the provision of **One Billion, Five Hundred Million Naira** (N1.5 billion). To further empower the people of the State to actively participate in the on-going Federal Government Privatisation exercise, Government has proposed the sum of **One Billion Naira** (N1 billion) to hold on trust, purchases made in this regard. The equity purchased in these enterprises will be passed on to our entrepreneurs at the appropriate time.

Health

The pace of the on-going work on the BSU Teaching Hospital will be accelerated as the completion date is next year. To provide learning facilities to our student doctors, Government is already planning ahead to equip the facility with modern equipment that will be the pride of the State. To facilitate this goal, the sum of **Two Billion, Five Hundred Million Naira** (N2.5 billion) is proposed for the completion and equipping of the hospital.

Government has not abandoned our first generation Hospitals whose main buildings and staff quarters have fallen into a state of disrepair. The sum of **One Hundred and Fifty Million Naira** (N150 million) has been provided in the draft estimates to rehabilitate the eight old General Hospitals.

Construction work on cottage Hospitals in Local Government Areas that do not have hospitals will commence in 2006.

Information

The relevance of television in the dissemination of information and for entertainment in this technological age cannot be overemphasized. It is in the realization of this that Government embarked on the construction of Benue State Television towards the end of its first tenure. Structural works are at an advanced stage of completion. Government will utilize the proposed sum of **Six Hundred Million Naira** (N600 million) to provide state of the art digital equipment to provide an alternative information outlet to the people of Benue State.

To improve the coverage of Radio Benue, Government is negotiating with relevant bodies to supply 50 KW/FM Transmitters to the station.

Social Development, Youth and Sports

In line with modern trends to limit the staging of certain sporting events indoors, Government is committed to not only completing the Multi-Purpose Indoor Sports Hall at the cost of **Seventy Million Naira** (N70 million), but is also embarking on the second phase of work on the Olympic-Size Swimming Pool with an allocation of **Thirty-Three Million Naira** (N33 million). The large number of swimming medals available to be won in competitions is sufficient to attract attention to the swimming pool project.

Water

The drive for the provision of potable drinking water, which was begun in 1999, will gather momentum in 2006 with increased work on the New Makurdi Water Works. **One billion four hundred and sixty eight million naira** (N1.468 billion) is provided for this sub-sector. In spite of the initial rehabilitation work on the old Makurdi water works, the perennial water shortage has persisted. In view of this, government has decided to focus its attention and finances on the take-off and effective delivery of the Greater Makurdi Water Scheme. This scheme was designed to provide water for Makurdi town and its environs and was to have been executed by the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund. However, following the inability of the P.T.F to execute it before being scrapped, responsibility for its execution became that of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, which decided to jointly finance the project with the Benue State Government.

As the Honourable House is aware, we have met our share of financial requirement but the Federal Government is so far not forthcoming on the project. We have therefore, resolved to start the project while seeking the involvement of the Federal Government to meet its share of responsibility. Towards this end, the sum of N800 million has been provided in the 2006 budget for the take-off of the Greater Makurdi Water Scheme. This when added to what has already been contributed would adequately meet the state's counterpart requirement on the project. Other major water projects to be tackled include:

Otukpo, Gboko and Katsina-Ala Water Works	-	N250 million
Water Supply projects to rural areas	-	N100 million
Wannune Water Scheme	-	N97 million
The Rehabilitation of PCI Water Schemes	-	N19 million
Semi-Urban Water Schemes	-	N68 million

Education

As in previous years, Government will accord high priority to education in 2006. The sum of **Two Billion, Seventy-Eight Million Naira** (N2.78 billion) has been allocated to the sector during the 2006 fiscal year. This represents an increase of 19% over the figure of **Two Billion, Thirty-Four Million Naira** (N2.34 billion) approved by this Honourable House in 2005.

The Human Capital Development Project initiated in 2005 under which 20 students were sponsored to read various science-based courses in a Mexican University will be pursued. The sum of **Six Hundred and Seventy-Nine Million Naira** (N679 million) has been earmarked for this and for the payment of regular student scholarships.

As is now customary with this administration, Benue State University will receive priority attention. The buildings of the School of Medical Sciences will be completed in 2006 while existing facilities will be maintained in top form. A total of **Five Hundred Million Naira** (N500 million) is allocated for the development of the University.

Similarly, Government will address the problems of the other state-owned tertiary institutions in the year. In particular, the problem of accreditation of courses in these institutions will be tackled.

Environment

The environmental sub-sector has an allocation of **Seven Hundred and Nine Million Naira** (N709 million). The opening up of settlements in Makurdi through the construction of drainages will be stepped up for which an allocation of **Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira** (N250 million) is provided. Erosion control projects spread in all parts of the State will receive a boost as **Four Hundred and Eight Million Naira** (N408 million) has been set-aside for the purpose.

Urban Renewal Programme for Gboko, Otukpo and Katsina-Ala Towns

The major urban towns of Gboko, Otukpo and Katsina-Ala are in dire need of the provision of infrastructure like roads, streets, drainages, streets lights, environmental sanitation, and water supply distribution networks. This administration has decided to improve on the existing situation in these towns by embarking on an urban renewal programme for these towns. Attention would under the programme be focused on road projects, green areas development, erosion/flood control, water supply improvement projects and environmental sanitation. We will involve the local government councils in these towns in the urban Renewal programme towards the attainment of a more salutary environment for the people.

General Administration

Projects under General Administration in 2006 are to take **Three Billion, Three Hundred Million Naira** (N3.3 billion). Government intends to take full advantage of the programmes offered by our development partners and accordingly the sum of **One Billion Naira** (N1 billion) is earmarked for Government Counterpart Cash Contribution (GCCC). Furthermore, as a special welfare package for public servants, government will in the New Year sell some of the houses in Assembly Quarters, Lobi, Ankpa, Kwararafa, Manor and Welfare Quarters to its workers on owner-occupier basis. Other major projects in this sub-sector includes:

Information and Communication Technology	-	N120 million
Rehabilitation of VIP Guest Houses	-	N100 million
Government Lodge in Lagos	-	N200 million
Construction of State Electoral Commission's Area Offices	-	N100 million
Construction of the State Planning Commission Permanent Office	-	N95 million
Furnishing of Courts/Chambers and Library for the Judiciary	-	N70 million
Staff Housing Loan Scheme for Civil Servants	-	N50 million

The growing public service wage bill has been a source of great concern to this government. By regular increments, the wage bill and pension will amount to **Seven Hundred and Twelve Million Naira** (N712 million) per month as from January 2006. At this rate, the capacity of government to execute Capital projects has been seriously restrained. While there has been sustained pressure from certain quarters for government to take steps at reducing the huge wage bill, government has continued to exercise caution in the face of our practical realities. It is proposed that in the year 2006, government will dialogue with the labour unions with a view to resolving this problem without unnecessary social crises.

New Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology

In its quest to continually restructure the apparatus of government to bring it in conformity with operational realities, a new Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology has been created while the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development has been scrapped. Similarly, the full portfolio of the Ministry of Works and Housing will now include Transport. Consequently, the ministry shall henceforth be known as the Ministry of Works, Housing and Transport. Mr. Speaker and distinguished Honourable Members, these then are our goals and aspirations. As noted earlier, I am confident that our development programme is perfectly on course. I believe that with the high sense of responsibility and commitment exhibited by all the arms of government and with the Almighty God on our side, we are sure to berth safely.

Conclusion

I wish to seize this auspicious moment to express the appreciation of the Executive to Honourable members for the wonderful support and cooperation we received in our joint efforts in the year 2005 to meet the yearnings of the good people of Benue State. Our profound appreciation also goes to the Judiciary, the workers of Benue State, traditional rulers, political leaders and other stakeholders in the project to make our state the pride of all of us. As we look forward to 2006, I call on the people of Benue State to rededicate themselves to the task of moving the state forward. To this end, I look forward to the continued cooperation, support and solidarity of the entire people of the state with our administration so that together we shall attain the goals of development we have set for ourselves in the coming year.

I thank you most sincerely for your attention and hope that in your usual commitment to the good of Benue State, you will give us an approved budget in record time.



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News

Minister pledges to assist S/African Airways

The Minister of Aviation, Professor Babalola Borishade, has promised to consider the request for additional frequencies for the South African Airways made by the South African High Commissioner to Nigeria, His Excellency, Bangumzi Sifingo.

The high commissioner, who visited the minister in

his office in Abuja, observed that three weekly flights from Lagos to Johannesburg by the South African Airways and the *Virgin Nigeria* were not enough to cope with the high demand of air travellers to both countries.

The high commissioner expressed unhappiness with the inadequate flight services rendered to air travellers as South Africans and Nigerians have to fly to Kenya and Ethiopia respectively, before coming to either Johannesburg or Lagos.

Sifingo therefore requested the minister to do everything possible to increase the flight frequencies from three to six per week to solve the problem being experienced by air travellers to both Nigeria and South Africa.

The minister reiterated his determination to ensuring safety, comfort and high quality service to air travellers.

The minister also stated that the request for additional frequencies would be considered based on the available capacity to be verified through an empirical evidence.

AEA gets new MD

An executive director/chief executive officer has been appointed for the Abuja Enterprise Agency. He is Alhaji Ahmed Tunde Popoola.

Alhaji Popoola brings to this job over 20 years work experience spanning the private and the public sectors. Prior to joining AEA, he was a general manager with Gulf Bank and has in the course of his working career, gained vital experiences in banking operations, finance, corporate planning and strategy, customer service, product development, risk management, treasury and funds management.

He also has rich experiences in venture capital and project evaluation and analysis. In addition, he has deep knowledge of running small businesses, having assisted in setting up, nurturing and providing consultancy services to a number of them.

Alhaji Popoola obtained a Bachelor in Economics from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and masters in both Economics, and Banking and Finance from the University of Lagos. He is a fellow of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the Chartered Institute of Taxation. He is a member of the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM) and alumnus of Lagos Business School. He has attended numerous courses and conferences locally and abroad and instructed a wide range of courses in his career.



Ogogo dancers at the Civic Reception to welcome President Olusegun Obasanjo to Ogun State... recently

NASS should review laws on examination malpractices -NECO

The National Examination Council (NECO) has canvassed stiff penalties against examination malpractices in Nigeria. Also, NECO wants the National Assembly to review the current laws against examination malpractices.

From Aidelaje Ojo, Correspondent Minna

The chairman of NECO Governing Board, Alhaji Maleka Mohammed, stated this at the weekend in Minna at a meeting of the board.

Mohammed explained that the review of the penalties had become necessary in order to maintain credibility in the examinations conducted by the council.

"I would like to also observe that the public has a legitimate duty to subject to critical scrutiny our plans and programmes, particularly as they effect the quality of our examination process.

"By acting proactively, we would have gone a long way in increasing public confidence in NECO assessment procedures," he explained.

The chairman said that NECO would not condone sharp practices in its examination process.

"I wish to recall that in my address at the maiden meeting of this board, I stressed the need for a renewed dynamism in the

realization of this vision which you will agree with me is imperative in order to reverse the negative effects of lack of credibility, which has often ravaged the nation's examination process," he said.

He said NECO would employ the examination process that would inculcate morality and integrity among

youths in line with national objectives.

Mohammed also announced government's approval for the construction of six zonal NECO offices in Bauchi, Enugu, Ibadan, Ilorin, Sokoto and Uyo.

"It is expected that when these physical structures are completed, we would have laid a solid foundation for realizing our dream of acquiring cutting-edge infrastructure of a world-class status for NECO," he emphasized.

NAPTIP urged to set up offices in 36 states

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) has been called upon to establish offices in the 36 states of the federation to enable people to have correct statistics of trafficked persons in their states.

The Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, who was represented by his Deputy, Mr. Philip Salawu, made the call in a keynote address during the opening ceremony of a two-day anti-human trafficking geopolitical zone workshop organised by the office of the Special Assistant to the President on Human Trafficking and Child Labour in collaboration with the Swiss Embassy at Chelsea Hotel, Abuja.

According to him, the vulnerability of women and children in this act cannot be over emphasized, adding that the rights of the child and women must be protected.

On the Child Rights Act, the governor said the state had embarked on sensitisation campaign to educate stakeholders and the public on the importance of the Act.

He maintained that the Bill on child rights has passed through the second reading in the state's House of Assembly, assuring that the

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter

Bill would soon be passed into law.

He pointed out that a Child Rights Committee which he said is multi-sectoral in its composition, has been established as an organ for the effective implementation and monitoring of the act when passed into law.

On gender disparities, he disclosed that the state government had established gender committees for creating awareness on the existing gender disparities in homes, societies, communities and workplace.

CRSG to compensate victims of demolition

The government of Cross River State says only owners of demolished structures erected before the construction of the Murtala Mohammed highway, leading to the Tinapa site, will be compensated.

The state government has already concluded plans to compensate owners of demolished structures along the highway leading to the resort site.

The demolition was to further expand the highway to allow for free flow of vehicular and human traffic to the Tinapa resort.

The commissioner for Lands and Housing, Mr. Bassey Eyo

Ndem, who dropped the hint in an interview, said only those whose structures along the highway were erected before the construction of the road around the 1970's would be compensated by the government.

According to him, such claimants would have to produce reasonable evidence which may have to do with certificate of origin.

Mr. Ndem said those who created structures after the road project had begun may not benefit from the largesse from government, saying that "by erecting their structures after the road project, they rather violated

government's regulation that structures be erected kilometres away from the road.

Though he did not disclose the details of the compensation, but the commissioner assured that as soon as the procedures were perfected by the property owners, they would be compensated.

He announced that the government had pegged the acquisition fee for certificate of occupancy at N14,000 for government and N7,000 for private land, stating that interested land speculators are requested to make all necessary arrangements at the Ministry of Lands and Housing.

Niger Delta: PAC chieftain proffers solutions to crises

The federal government has been counseled on the way forward for the people of the Niger-Delta.

In a statement made available to journalists in Abuja yesterday, a chieftain of the Progressive Action Congress (PAC), Prince Patrick Nnaji, said the federal government should urgently convene a conference on the Niger-Delta.

Prince Nnaji said the conference should include oil firms operating in the area, elders, leaders of thought,

traditional rulers, youth, religious leaders and anybody that has anything to do with the Niger Delta.

In proffering solutions to the unending crises in the area, Prince Nnaji suggested that all firms operating in the area should be mandated to employ 70% of the youth or in the alternative, set up small scale industries that would absorb jobless youth in the area.

The PAC chieftain opined that such industries could be soap, candle, creams, poultry and fishing, which at the end of the day, would bring succour to stakeholders in the enterprise.

He disclosed that the major problem of the area was abject poverty.

"How would the people in the area be happy when there are virtually no social amenities and other means of livelihood since fishes are no longer available at their farmlands polluted by oil?" Prince Nnaji queried.

He said the meeting should critically look at all the various complaints and address them promptly to curtail the recurring violence in the region.



NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI

1ST CONVOCATION CEREMONY

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Adamu Baikie (CON), on behalf of Council and Senate invites the general public to the 1st Convocation Ceremony of Nasarawa State University, Keffi for the conferment of First Degrees, Honorary Degrees and Launching of Three Billion Naira Endowment Fund.

Special Guest of Honour

His Excellency,
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR
 President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,
 Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Chief Host

His Excellency,
Alh. (Dr.) Abdullahi Adamu
(Sarkin Yakin Keffi)
 The Executive Governor of Nasarawa State.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

- i. Sunday 12th February, 2006
 Inter-Denominational Service
 Time: 9.00am
 Venue: St. Peters Anglican Church, Keffi.
- ii. Friday 17th February, 2006
 (a) Special Juma'at Prayer
 Time: 1.50pm
 Venue: University Central Mosque, Main Campus.
 (b) Convocation Lecture on the Topic "National Economic Reform Agenda and Implications for Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria".
Guest Lecturer:
 Prof. Charles Soludo
 Governor of the Central Bank
 Time: 3.00pm
 Venue: Pyanku Campus Auditorium.
 (c) Gala/Cultural Nite
 Time: 8.00pm
 Venue: Pyanku Campus Auditorium.
- iii. Saturday 18th February, 2006.

Convocation Ceremony

- a. Installation of the Chancellor and Conferment of Honorary Doctorate Degree
- b. Endowment Fund Launching

Chairman:
 Lt. Gen. T.Y. Danjuma.

Chief Launcher:
 Otunba Mike Adenuga
 Chairman, Globacom.

c. Award of Honorary Degrees to:

- i. Justice Muhammed Lawal Uwais
 Chief Justice of the Federation.
- ii. **Lt. General T. Y. Danjuma**
 Former Minister of Defence.
- iii. His Excellency,
Dr. Peter Odili
 Rivers State Governor.
- iv. His Excellency,
Alh. Adamu Aliero
 Kebbi State Governor.
- v. His Excellency,
Dr. Olusegun Agagu
 Ondo State Governor.
- vi. **Chief Mrs. Cecilia Ibru**
 Managing Director
 Oceanic Bank.

d. Award of First Degrees and Prizes

Time: 9.00am
 Venue: Convocation Square

Important Information:

- i. Procession Rehearsals
 All graduates and other officers involved in the procession shall assemble for rehearsals on Friday, 17th February, 2006 at the Main Campus at 10.00am.
- ii. All graduands should endeavour to collect academic gowns as from Wednesday 15th February, 2006 upon payment of N200 non-refundable fee. All graduands should also note that the University would assist in facilitating their transportation arrangement back to their respective Campuses.
- iii. Invitation Cards.
 Each graduand will receive one invitation Card to invite his/her guest to the convocation.

You are all welcome

Signed:
Bala I. Ahmed II
 Ag. Registrar

News

C/River regulates okada operations

The Cross River State House of Assembly has passed a law to regulate the operations of commercial motorcyclists in the state.

The law tagged: "Commercial Motorcyclist Regulation Law 2006", was passed by the Assembly recently with stiff provisions, which aim to curtail the excesses of cyclists and their passengers.

According to the new law, the use of siren by commercial motorcyclists attracts a prison term of three months or a fine of N10,000.00

The law also restrains the riders from using offensive weapons in the cause of any

disagreement. Fighting with offensive weapons on the road attracts a two-year jail term or N30,000 fine, while operating as a commercial cyclist without the necessary particulars and documents is liable to a N5,000.00 fine.

The law also prevents a passenger from harassing a commercial motorcyclist and on conviction, is liable to a fine of N20,000.00.

The Speaker of the state's House of Assembly, Mr. Bassey Ewa, stated while concluding the passage formalities, that the new law would seek to curtail incessant harassments of okada riders and vice-versa.

He appealed to citizens of the state to give the law a chance to perfect discipline and orderliness on the roads.

Similarly, the state's Assembly has advised companies operating in the state to evolve a good community relations policy to ensure peaceful co-existence with their host communities.

The chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Commerce, Industries and Poverty Alleviation, Mr. Ferdinand Okpokam, who gave the advice when the committee visited the United Cement Company site, Calabar, said the policy would nip

in the bud the incessant disagreements and conflicts between companies and host communities.

The managing director of the company, Mr. Joseph Okomboso, expressed appreciation for the peaceful atmosphere enjoyed by the company in the state, adding that it would do everything possible to sustain the tempo.



Governor Donald Duke

Plateau youths protest blasphemous cartoon

Some Muslim youths in Jos, the Plateau State capital, yesterday embarked on a peaceful demonstration against the recent blasphemous cartoon on the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAW), by Danish and Norwegian newspapers.

The protest, which lasted about two and a half hours, commenced at the Central Mosque in Jos, and took the placards-carrying youths through some major streets in the state capital.

The youths, who chanted anti-Denmark and anti-Norwegian slogans with the shout of *Allahu Akbar* intermittently, stressed that they would not tolerate any insult on the Prophet and the religion of Islam.

They urged all Muslims to condemn the action of the

From Rakiya A. Muhammed, Correspondent (Jos)

newspapers and boycott all Danish and Norwegian products.

The youths ended the protest at the office of the Jama'atul Nasirul-Islam, Jos, at about 1.00pm.

Addressing the youths, the secretary, JNI Plateau State, Ahaji Alhassan Hussein, urged them to remain calm, adding that JNI was in total support of the action of the youths.

He said the JNI in Plateau State would meet very soon to take a position on the incident and ensure that it gets to the appropriate quarters.

Meanwhile, security was beefed up in areas that the protesters went to ensure that the situation was not hijacked by hoodlums.

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ALL NIGERIAN PEOPLES PARTY

NO. 46, KIYAWA ROAD, DUTSE, JIGAWA STATE.



RE: JIGAWA: ANPP'S MANY LIES AGAINST GOVERNOR IBRAHIM SAMINU TURAKI
SUSPENSION OF GOVERNOR IBRAHIM SAMINU
TURAKI: NO-GOING BACK

The attention of the Jigawa State ANPP has been drawn to a publication in the *DAILY TRUST* of Wednesday, January 25, 2006 signed by one Alhaji Muhammadu Murtala of no fixed address.

The ANPP Jigawa State wish to inform our esteemed members that its determination to ensure discipline within the rank and file of its members remain unshaken.

Disciplinary measures taken after full investigation into the grievous uncondoned anti-party activity against the party, therefore cannot be reversed.

We are happy that the national Secretariat of our great party has constituted a verification committee to confirm series of anti party activities perpetrated by Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, culminating in the final carpet crossing from the party to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

To add salt to injury, instead of addressing his offence and seeking ways of appeasement, Turaki chose the path of confrontation, sponsoring series of rantings against the party.

How on earth can a disciplined party member promote disaffection within his party through wild allegation and lies. Turaki's suspension is conclusive, it was arrived at after exhausting all constitutional due processes of the party.

ANPP is an independent party not under the control of any other political party therefore, when Turaki decided to leave the party we are not to await for any instruction or announcement by his new party before taking action on his misdemeanors.

What we expect of the write-up is to come out clearly and State whether he has truly gone or not, rather than beating about the bush.

We urge the loyal members of Jigawa State ANPP to remain calm in the wake of series of confusing and misleading publications by Saminu Turaki and his cohorts.

Take the forged PDP membership register published in the *Daily Trust* of Wednesday January, 25 2006 for example.

We wonder what blinded their vision to put the registration date at 1/10/05 a very important public holiday in this country when the PDP did not hold any registration exercise throughout the country to mark the national day.

The apparent alterations in the document where the column containing the particulars of the form were forged by using small letters instead of capital letters thereby casting doubt on its Authenticity.

A copy of the Authentic register with Turaki's membership NO is reproduced herewith for public perusal.

Long Live ANPP

Long Live The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Signed:

Alhaji Shehu Mustapha Babura
Interim Chairman

News

Obasanjo should go — Youth coalition

A youth coalition has called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to stand by the oath of office he swore to in 2003 and relinquish power at the expiration of his second term in 2007.

The Northern Youth Coalition Movement stated that Obasanjo should respect his earlier promise to Nigerians, even as it demanded power shift to the North and a president that will respect the people's will and listen to the masses come 2007.

The chairman of the movement, Hon. Mohammed Yusuf, disclosed to *Daily Trust* that the youth coalition movement has designed its programme of action to mobilize, sensitise and enlighten the Northern youths and all stakeholders on its objectives.

"The Northern Youth Coalition Movement is focused on fighting injustice meted to the Northern people. Mr. President should stand by the oath of office he swore to in 2003 and hand over power in 2007.

"We are after power shift to the north and a president that will listen to the masses' demand in 2007. We want total emancipation for our

From AbdulRaheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

people by educating them." He outlined the obstacles of North development as poverty, hatred, religious intolerance and ethnic hostilities.

"The president and the National Assembly should respect the constitution to allow peace and unity to reign in our polity. The Northern union must call on other political groups in the North to embrace the legacies of our founding fathers so that our mission would be actualized

in 2007. We also appeal to the governors and political leaders to rise up to their responsibilities and bury their differences to ensure a united and peaceful northern Nigeria."

He added that the North masterminded the shift of power to the South in 1999, thus the call for power shift to the North in 2007 becomes appropriate and legitimate. The group therefore promised on mobilizing the youths to ensure that a credible, competent, vibrant and resourceful northern politician emerged as candidate for the exalted position in 2007.

Nigeria ranks fourth on TB

Nigeria has been ranked fourth on the global prevalence list of tuberculosis, TB, and first in Africa with fifteen infections every minute.

The representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the South-South zone of the country, Dr. Michael Sose, made this known at the opening session of a two-day orientation workshop on active case protection and management of

From Edet Ekanem (Uyo)

tuberculosis and leprosy for healthcare workers in Akwa Ibom State organised by the Health Care System Development Project II, in collaboration with Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health.

The WHO professional felt disturbed that at least six persons die as a result of tuberculosis infection within the same period in Nigeria, stating that by this development, Nigeria and Africa at

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has embarked on training its master trainers as part of efforts for the actualization of some of the incentive programmes the NDE promised to put in place for its trainers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the training the trainers workshop held in Jalingo, Taraba State on Tuesday, February 7th, 2006 the Director General of NDE, Dr. S. O. Adeladun, remarked that the training programme for the directorate's master trainers that is being simultaneously carried out by in-house instructors in twelve states is expected to add tremendous values to the performance and target achievements of the trainers within the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS).

The D.G, who was represented by Mr. K. Kantiya, the assistant director, Vocational

NDE trains 'master trainers'

From Ado Adamu, (Jalingo)

and Skills Development of the directorate, observed that the master trainers of the NDE, majority of whom are informal sector operators, came from different backgrounds and their educational experiences varied from simple traditional apprenticeship to technical school, even polytechnics and universities. He added that the disparity in academic experiences of the trainers has a direct impact on the NDE's objective of uniformity in skills delivery to the youth, thereby initiating some form of capacity building arrangement for all the master trainers involved in the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme

(NOASS) to create uniformity in skills acquisition for the youths nationwide.

The D.G. disclosed that within the framework of the NDE and master trainers partnership, close to a million unemployed youths have been trained in various vocational skills, while presently about 37,000 youths are undergoing vocational training in various trades.

The NDE boss further disclosed that through the master trainers, thousands of the graduated trainees have been able to set up their respective workshops and many others have been absorbed by their trainers or gone into other forms of paid employment.

In his address of welcome, the Taraba State coordinator of NDE, Alhaji O.

Mohammed Sambo, remarked that the NDE recognizes the fact that the trainers themselves need to be trained, so much that it has designed training programmes for the trainers periodically to sharpen the skills of the master trainers so that they will in turn train their trainees qualitatively to make them viable. He called on the master trainers to make the best use of the training opportunities to update their vocational skills.



PLATEAU STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY Office of the Speaker

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Jos-Plateau State.
Tel: (073) 460153, 464080.

January 31, 2006

HOUSE RESOLUTION

Whereas this Hon. House in reaction to a Petition submitted by the EFCC requesting the House to investigate allegations of money laundering against the Governor of Plateau set up a special committee in compliance to the provisions of Section 128 and 129 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

Whereas the Committee commenced investigation and in course of doing its duty received a strange letter signed by Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde of the EFCC, requesting some Hon. Members and officials of the House to appear at the Commission

That in view of the fact the Petition submitted by the EFCC did not indict or mention the House in any way, it behooves on this House to invoke its relevant powers under the Constitution to deal with the situation.

Now therefore, this Hon. House do now resolve as follows:

- i. To mandate the Special Committee on the EFCC allegations against the Governor of Plateau State to invoke the provision of section 128 and 129 in the conduct of its investigations to summon Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde of the EFCC to appear before it for cross examination, and that no Member of the Special Committee be released to appear before the EFCC until this issue is resolved by the Committee.
- ii. That the Hon. House do now adjourn *sine die* until reconvened by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong. But that this special Committee continues its normal proceedings.
- iii. That this Resolution shall not be amended, withdrawn or tempered with without the approval of the whole members of the House.
- iv. That in the event of any unwarranted arrest the entire House shall submit themselves for arrest

Signed
Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong
Speaker

[Handwritten signatures and names of members of the House of Assembly]

News

Group commends Obasanjo's reforms

The Movement for Democracy and Progress (MDP), a civil rights organization, has called on Nigerians not to elect the next president on the basis of ethnic or regional considerations.

Addressing newsmen in Kaduna Monday, the secretary of the organization, Comrade Ibrahim Abdullahi, called on Nigerians to shun leaders who appeal to the electorate on regional, sectional, ethnic or selfish basis.

"Concern should be on credibility, sincerity of purpose, ability to deliver, focus and competency," the MDP added.

The body said the present administration had ensured the unity and stability of the nation's peaceful co-existence among Nigerians, and sustained a stable democracy for economic reforms.

"We cannot run away from the fact that the present government was faced with many challenges of uncertainty in trying to expand the democratic space in attainment of a status where all persons enjoy freedom," he said.

Comrade Ibrahim Abdullahi called on Nigerians to stop listening to those who claim to be representing them "who after ruling this country for several years have not made any meaningful impact on the lives of Northerners.

"Our problems in the north for decades are abject poverty, street begging, neglect of agriculture and illiteracy which the past northern leaders that ruled the country for 35 years could not solve.

"We are of the belief that the present government has been working tirelessly towards consolidating its reform programmes. The

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief, Kaduna

president has not by deeds or words engaged in any third term bid and those agitating for it are only exercising their freedom of expression.

"We categorically call on our leaders to desist from their insinuation and fabrication of misleading information to cause confusion, rather they should promote the course of unity and stability in the nation.

"We express our position as regards the performance of this administration without any contradiction or equivocation based on the desire to promote development and progress," he added.



From left are the Deputy Governor Kebbi State, Alhaji Saleiman Mohammed Argungu; his counterpart from Benue State, Ojene; Governor Sam Egwu of Ebonyi State and Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State during the stakeholders' meeting with President Obasanjo on agriculture held at the State House, Abuja...recently. Pic: Joe Oroye.

Corruption: Dariye replies EFCC

The governor of Plateau state, Chief Joshua Dariye has reacted to the allegations of graft against him and the constant raids conducted in his state



Governor Joshua Dariye

by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC.

The governor who seemed visibly angered by the activities of the EFCC in Plateau state, said the recent harassment by the operatives on members of the Plateau state House of Assembly will

be the last time the EFCC officials would harass any body in the state.

Describing the EFCC operatives as "Obasanjo's dogs", the governor who was addressing members of the Plateau Assembly, a civil coalition group, at the Government House in Rayfield, Jos said the EFCC should know that he as an indigene of Plateau state has the capacity to contain them.

His words: "They should know that i am a Plateau man and that in Plateau the Ngas, the Tarohs and the Musherers eat dogs, so we have the capacity to deal with any stray dog."

The governor said he is not at all worried by the charges of graft against him as he did some of the things he was being accused of having done due to "instructions from above."

He said specifically, that the N1.1 billion Ecological fund which he was being accused of siphoning, was spent according to orders from above where he said he gave about N66 million for Obasanjo's campaign, N100 million to the South west PDP, N100 million to the North East PDP and another N10 million to senator Ibrahim Mantu.

The governor said if the resolve is that he should return the money, then all those who had collected the money should equally return their shares while the accusations on his person should stop.

Leader of the delegation Mr. Simon Gwan had earlier stated that the delegation was in the Government House to express their

From Andrew Agbese, Correspondent, Jos

solidarity to both the governor and the government of the state for what it is passing through in the hands of the federal

government.

The EFCC had conducted various raids on the Plateau ostensibly to arrest those it had indicted in its investigations against the governor with the recent

being the said it carried out in the state to arrest members of the Plateau state House of Assembly which it invited to its head office in Lagos but who declared to appear before the commission.

BUK approves dress code

Following the 28th meeting of principal officers of the Bayero University, Kano, the university has approved a dress code for all students of the institution in order to curb the mane of promiscuity in the academic environment.

The meeting, according to the university's official, accepted and approved dresses that do not expose delicate parts of the body like armpit, waist, back etc. It also added that the dress should not be transparent and too

By Aliyu S. Machika, Correspondent, Kano

tight. "Severe disciplinary means would be taken against students who contravene this law," it stated.

In a related development, the Muslim forum of the university described the move as a step in the right direction, saying there is no doubt descent dressing is a good behaviour that compliments other forms of discipline.

OBITUARY

The Management and Staff of the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Plc. Regret to announce the death of:



Mr. Adamu Bala-Gano Aged 40 Years (1966-2006)

Which sad event took place on the 1st of January, 2006 after a brief illness. Until his death, Mr. Adamu Bala-Gano worked in the Engineering Department, Abuja Factory.

He has since been buried according to Islamic rites in Abuja.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace - Amen.

Signed: MANAGEMENT

Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Eagles can't explain poor show



Coach Augustine Eguavoen and team coordinator, Sumonu Bello Osagie, are at a loss as to the Super Eagles poor performance in Tuesday's Africa Nations Cup semi final match against Cote d'Ivoire in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Eagles went out of the competition after going down to a Didier Drogba goal a minute into the second half. Despite the loss, it was the team's worst outing in the competition that surprised Nigerians.

Eguavoen could not explain what went wrong. He said Tuesday night: "I really can not understand why the team played badly. "Yes they started slowly, but this has been how they played the previous games. "I kept telling them to change that attitude of starting games slowly but I don't know why it was difficult for them to do. But then in those games they were able to increase the tempo later, but yesterday it continued and it became too late. I don't really know what happened and can't say until we discuss the match."

As human beings the boys are disappointed and are not happy at losing out of the trophy the way they did, after doing so much. But we have to make them forget that and move on."



Egyptian soldiers watch Nigeria's Taye Taiwo, right, vying for the ball with Ivory Coast's Emerse Fae during their semi-final match in Alexandria on Tuesday.

Eagles break Bassey's heart

Super Eagles campaign for the Africa Cup of Nations went up in huge smoke in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, on Tuesday following their 1-0 loss to Elephants of Ivory Coast in the first semi final fixture.

The Eagles, quite against predictions, put up an amazing low performance and were bungled out by Didier Drogba's 46th minute strike after the referee failed to pick Drogba's seeming offside position.

Charles Bassey (MON), one of Nigeria's legion of ex-internationals was deep in emotions when his reaction on the match was sought.

Bassey won the cup in 1980 with the Eagles in Lagos and is now head coach of Akwa United, a Professional League side in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state.

"My heart is broken. I am totally disappointed by this result. It was so bad, such that I don't even have enough courage to say anything,"

Charles Bassey said before his mobile phone went off.

After playing for over two hours in the quarter finals against Tunisia on Saturday, the Eagles trip from Port Said was delayed for three hours before they made the two-hour bus journey to Alexandria on Monday.

"I can't really say if it was fatigue that affected the boys but it is possible."

Bello Osagie would want the Eagles players to focus on the third/fourth place play-

off game against Senegal. "It is difficult to explain what went wrong against the Ivoriens, but I must say there is no need to cry over spilt milk now. "The important thing is to

work on the morale of these players because we still have a match to play in a couple of days. "Since we have come this far it will not be good to give up on everything just like that."

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Eguavoen: We played badly but...

Super Eagles head coach, Augustine Eguavoen has admitted to said that Cote d'Ivoire were the better side in Tuesday's Africa Nations Cup semi final, but then went on to question the goal that gave the

Ivoriens a 1-0 win over Nigeria.

After much hype, the Eagles put up a lack lustre performance and were nailed by Chelsea of England's forward, Didier Drogba, whose 46th minute

strike was not without controversy.

Eguavoen said after Eagles defeat: "We played badly. We were outplayed by the Ivoriens in every department and I give credit to them.

"But everybody who watched the match will agree with me that their goal was scored from seven meters offside."

Eguavoen has put behind him the loss to Cote d'Ivoire and has set his eyes on taking a medal to Nigeria from Egypt 2006.

"Despite the defeat in the semi final I have faith in this team and I have no intention of leaving them.

"Besides, we have a third-place match to play in a couple of days and since we have come this far we don't want to go home empty handed.

"We have a very young and quality team. This team has shown a lot of promise.

"I've just been in charge for six months but believe you me, if we have one or two years more this team will be fantastic."

... blames fatigue

Coach Austin Eguavoen has blamed fatigue as the reason the team crumbled against the Ivory Coast on Tuesday.

Eguavoen, who saw his dream of becoming only the second Nigerian to win the trophy as a coach, said the team's performance was a disappointment.

From the first fifteen minutes and to be honest that was their undoing.

"I think Taiwo and Odiah should have done more but that's football and we have to move to the next phase."

Nigeria will have to improve in the third round.

this fact, he said, was disappointing. He told KICK OFF

Oruma, Aiyenugba robbed

There was more misery for the Super Eagles yesterday morning in Alexandria after at least two players lost big sums of cash at their hotel rooms here.

The Eagles failed to fly Tuesday against Cote d'Ivoire in the semi-final of the African Nations Cup when they went down 1-0 and hours later the players woke up to discover they were missing large sums of cash.

Olympique Marseille mid-

fielder Wilson Oruma lost 6,000 US dollars while Enyimba goalkeeper Dele Aiyenugba said he was missing 2,500 US dollars.

Some other players lost phone sets and other personal belongings.

"I can't believe this is happening to me," said a shocked Oruma.

Top team officials confirmed the theft and told KICK OFF the police have waded into the incident which took place at the Hilton Green Plaza Hotel where the team stayed for their African Nations Cup semi-final clash against the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire on Tuesday.

Both Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria put up at this hotel. When the Super Eagles



at the hotel, the police

Juventus join chase for Taiwo

In spite of Tuesday's semi-final ouster of the Super Eagles at the Nations Cup in Egypt, Taiye 'The Tornado' Taiwo is set to reap immediate dividends of his debut Arian hampionship, with Juventus reportedly joining Inter Milan in the chase for his contract.

Initial talk had been about Obafemi Akinwunmi Martins making moves to lure Taiwo to join him at Inter Milan, but the latest from Italy indicates that The

and Juve's Fabio Capello after scoring against Ghana in the Super Eagles first match at Egypt 2006.

Although Taye Taiwo's Marseille contract does not expire until the summer of 2009, it is not expected to dissuade the Italian duo from stepping up their interest.

Already, Inter appear to be heading the chase and may test Marseille's resolve with a bid in the region of 10 million euros. Juventus, however, may now wish to commence more formal

at the hotel, the police

Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

We were robbed, say furious Senegal

Angry Senegal players said the referee robbed them of a chance to reach the African Nations Cup final after refusing a clear penalty in Tuesday's 2-1 defeat by hosts Egypt.

Senegal playmaker Diomansy Kamara was brought down by Egypt defender Ibrahim Said towards the end of the semi-final. Cameroon referee Divine Evehe appeared ready to award a penalty before deciding to award a goal kick instead.

"Of course we were robbed," Kamara told reporters. "There was a clear penalty, you can see the (television) pictures.

"The referee has to give it, it's the same rule for everybody whether it's at home or away. But he doesn't give it and we are eliminated.

"It's the turning point of the match. I see the ref and I think he's going to give it. He (even) goes towards the penalty spot...it's just unacceptable."

Senegalese fury was heightened because Evehe had awarded Egypt a penalty in the first half, converted by captain Ahmed Hassan.

"He gives the first penalty

and he has to give the one on me in the 90th minute. Egypt are in the final because of a refereeing error," said Kamara.

"We are disappointed... and I think Africa has taken a few steps back with this kind of refereeing."

That view was shared by

forward El Hadji Diouf, who also said he felt robbed.

"The Confederation of African Football has to take a look at the African game because the Europeans are going to laugh at us with refereeing like this," he said.

There was a sense of deja vu about Tuesday's events

as Senegal were also knocked out two years ago by hosts Tunisia following another controversial refereeing decision.

"In Tunisia we didn't deserve to go out and today we didn't deserve it either...we have to look at refereeing again," said Diouf.

Asked if it was a penalty, he said: "Of course it was and the referee looked all ready to blow his whistle.

"Now I know it's the host nation but that's not sport.

"Sport is about the best team winning...this defeat is hard to accept."



'Team more important than Mido'

Egypt assistant coach Shawki Gharib said the team was more important than Mido after the striker argued with coach Hassan Shehata as he was being taken off in the 2-1 semi-final win over

Senegal in the African Nations Cup.

"The Egypt team does not just mean Mido," Gharib told a news conference on Tuesday after the host nation had set up a final showdown with Ivory

Coast. "Mido is just one player in a squad of 23."

Gharib sidestepped questions about whether Mido would face disciplinary action and if he would be considered for the

final. "Now we have to concentrate on the final and forget our problems," he said. "The important thing is what we are going to do in the final."

The Tottenham Hotspur

striker had a poor game and was substituted in the 79th minute with the score 1-1.

Amr Zaki took his place and promptly headed the winning goal three minutes later with his first touch of the ball.

Mido, who had missed Egypt's previous two games with a groin injury, opened his arms wide in a gesture of surprise before walking slowly off the pitch to the bemusement of team mates.

As Mido reached the touchline he was involved in an angry verbal exchange with Shehata which threatened to escalate before he was restrained by players on the substitutes bench.

The striker then headed towards the tunnel before finally deciding to sit on the bench.

Mido, who left the stadium two hours later after being drawn for the obligatory doping test, said he had calmed down and implied the coach had made the right decision.

"I'm alright, only now I'm okay," he told Reuters. "Of course, I'm delighted. I hope we can win the final, it's very important for us.

"They (Egypt) had a lot of chances after I was substituted."

And then there were two...

The home dream remained alive in Cairo on Tuesday as Egypt held out against the tough physical challenge of Senegal to book their place in Friday's CAF Africa Cup of Nations decider against 2006 FIFA World Cup finalists Cote d'Ivoire.

A substitution that

threatened a national controversy proved a moment of inspiration as Amr Zaki score the winner for the Egyptians 10 minutes from the end of their semi-final against Senegal.

Zaki had been brought on for a furious Ahmed 'Mido' Hossam, whose displeasure at being taken off for the final quarter-hour manifested into an ugly screaming match with his coach Hassan Shehata as he left the pitch.

Mido screamed at the coach and threw up his hands in frustration in full view of the 80,000-strong crowd as he was taken off but the coach's decision was vindicated just moments later when Zaki rose to head home a perfect cross from Mohamed Aboutrika.

The goal gave the Egyptians a 2-1 victory over Senegal and a place in the final against an Ivorian side who had proven too good for Nigeria earlier in the day.

The Ivorians won 1-0 in Alexandria with Didier Drogba's class showing again as he netted his third goal of the tournament.

The Ivorian captain took advantage of a lack of concentration in the Nigerian

defence as the second half got underway, beating the offside trap to run onto a long pass from defence and expertly slot the ball home.

It was a trademark goal from the Chelsea striker; whose team mate Kolo Toure later paid tribute to his scoring acumen. "Didier lifts the whole team, he's a great striker," said the defender, who had an outstanding match at centre half himself.

The Ivorians paced themselves through a pedestrian encounter against Nigeria's youthful side, who looked exhausted after their quarter-final exertions at the weekend, where they had needed a penalty shootout to get past Tunisia.

"We were out-played in all departments. We have to be honest about it," said Nigerian coach Augustine Eguavoen, a past winner of the Nations Cup as a player.

Nigeria, even with Austin 'Jay-Jay' Okocha on in the second half for his first appearance of the tournament, had little to offer in the game, which was desperately short of goal scoring chances.

But the second semi-final in a feverish Cairo more than

made up for the lack of action in Alexandria.

A moment of madness from Frederic Mendy, who slapped at the ball in his own penalty area and was lucky to stay on the pitch with just a yellow card, allowed Egypt to take the half-time lead.

Captain Ahmed Hassan showed his calmness in twice converting the resultant penalty, having to retake it after one of his teammates had encroached into the penalty area.

But Senegal, who had comeback from a goal down to win in the quarter-final against Guinea on Friday, did not take long to equalise after the interval.

Mamadou Niang powered a close range header into the net for his second goal of the tournament, setting fragile Egyptian nerves on end. He had shrugged off two defenders to get the goal.

Then came the coach's decision to take off 'Mido,' which set off the incredible exchange of insults at the side of the pitch. The Spurs man had to be calmed down by his teammates as he returned to the bench while the coach's fury was evident, particularly soon after when Zaki scored.

Toure backs Elephants for good World Cup

Ivory Coast defender Kolo Toure believes his side's progress to the African Nations Cup final proves they will also be a force at the World Cup finals later this year despite qualifying for the first time.

"We wanted to show that we are going to the World Cup, that we have a good team and that we deserve to be there," the Arsenal back

told reporters.

"By getting to the final, I think we have shown to our continent that we are going to represent them well at the World Cup finals.

"We have sent our strong message for Germany later this year," added Toure, who was one of his country's better players in their 1-0 semi-final victory over Nigeria on Tuesday.

"This is our first big tournament together and we have a young side with average age of around 25. It has been fantastic for all of us to get this experience.

"Playing in the final will be great, it will be the first final for many of the players."

Ivory Coast face Egypt in Cairo on Friday's, after the hosts qualified for the final with a controversial 2-1

victory over Senegal.

Toure also paid tribute to the influence of captain Didier Drogba, whose goal settled the outcome of the match.

"He's a great striker and importantly he's scoring goals," Toure said of the Chelsea forward.

"Drogba lifts the team. But all the team played well, we mustn't forget that. We have been getting stronger."



Drogba... the Chelsea forward will spearhead Ivory Coast's quest for glory in the African Cup of Nations final against Egypt

Sports

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Nigerians call for foreign coach

Nigerians have reacted sharply at the nonchalant attitude of the Super Eagles, whose lack lustre performance in the semi-final match against the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire ensured that the country crashed out of the 25th African

By Patrick Andrew, Asst. Head Sports Desk

contained the pace, mental alertness and physical fitness of the Elephants."

Monsura Ali, a business woman said she was

your *tolo* policy' and align with the yearnings of Nigerians for a mature foreign technical adviser for the Eagles".

Issah Hassan, a sport administrator, lambasted the technical crew for the poor sense of judgement in the selection of the players, stressing "even a lay man knows that Nwankwo Kanu is at his best as super sub even in Europe, so it was rather embarrassing for them not just to start him in the match but play him as the top nine. No, it shows that indigenous coaches have not grown to the level of handling the senior national team effectively. We should not allow their successes in the age-grade tournaments to blind fold us into believing that they can deliver when the stakes are high".

Wale Adekanbi said it would have better for them to lose to Tunisia than raise the expectation of Nigerians in the quarter-final match that was roundly applauded for its quality, contest and finesse.

"After watching them play a classical match against Tunisia and then the dismal game against Cote d'Ivoire, it is hard not putting the blame on the coaches who it was obvious had problems with team selection. Though I personally think it would have been easier for us to beat Cameroun had we played them, one is sad that the team lost out after raising peoples' hope and what is more losing to the Elephants."

They concluded that the outcome of today's losers' final match will be inconsequential since the ultimate prize has been missed.

The Eagles will confront the Teranga Lions of Senegal whom they defeated 2-1 during the preliminary.



Eguavoen

Cup of Nations.

A cross section, who spoke yesterday condemned the uninspiring performance of the team and insisted that rather than being a product of poor quality of players it was a reflection of the depth of the technical crew.

Consequently, they called on the government to discard the idea of depending on indigenous coaches to handle the senior national team, noting that they were not yet ripe enough to assume that responsibility.

Dele Ogunseemi observed that the team lacked the fibre needed to crush the Ivorians, stressing that the Eagles neither showed a sense of purpose nor commitment through out the 90 minute of the match.

"If the Elephants were in themselves a very highly tactical side they would have roasted the Eagles who were without the fire and zest to win the match. The players were not only nonchalant but also clearly fagged out and bereft of ideas to plot for victory".

Tony Ezimakor, a sports journalist, in his submission said that, "the players appeared overloaded, overstressed and physically and mentally out of focus. You could see Taye Taiwo standing akimbo very early in the match. It was same with others hence they could not

thoroughly disgusted with the lukewarm attitude of the Eagles during the match.

"The Eagles appeared discomfited, disoriented and totally out of shape for the match. Their performance lowered the standard of the championship and indeed is a disgrace to Africa. I think the coach showed by his selection that he lacks the depth for the assignment. I also think that it was high time the government drops this 'if you want a foreign coach na

Okocha backs Eguavoen

Outgoing Super Eagles captain Austin Jay Jay Okocha has backed calls for Austin Eguavoen to remain in charge of the Super Eagles.

Although Nigeria lost 1-0 to the Ivory Coast in Tuesday's African Cup of Nations semi-final, Okocha believes Eguavoen has started the important process of building a young, talented side that will be formidable in the future.

"Eguavoen is a young coach who has proven himself and I think he should be given the chance to continue," Okocha told BBC Sport on Tuesday.

He added: "With coach Eguavoen, the future of Nigeria is bright because he's

building a young team."

Eguavoen is determined to stay on as coach despite Tuesday's loss, Nigeria third successive defeat in a Nations Cup semi-final.

"I'm determined to continue my job with the Super Eagles because I want to continue my plans to build a solid young team," said Eguavoen, who hopes to beat Senegal in Thursday's third place match.

Meanwhile, Okocha has reiterated that he will retire from international football at the end of Nations Cup campaign.

"I'll stick to my word that the Nations Cup in Egypt is my last tournament and I'm quitting international football at the end of Nigeria's campaign."



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Whereas this Hon. House in reaction to a Petition submitted by the EFCC requesting the House to investigate allegations of money laundering against the Governor of Plateau set up a special committee in compliance to the provisions of Section 128 and 129 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

Whereas the Committee commenced investigation and in course of doing its duty received a strange letter signed by Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde of the EFCC, requesting some Hon. Members and officials of the House to appear at the Commission

That in view of the fact the Petition submitted by the EFCC did not indict or mention the House in any way, it behooves on this House to invoke its relevant powers under the Constitution to deal with the situation.

Now therefore, this Hon. House do now resolve as follows:

- i. To mandate the Special Committee on the EFCC allegations against the Governor of Plateau State to invoke the provision of section 128 and 129 in the conduct of its investigations to summon Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde of the EFCC to appear before it for cross examination, and that no Member of the Special Committee be released to appear before the EFCC until this issue is resolved by the Committee.
- ii. That the Hon. House do now adjourn *sine die* until reconvened by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong. But that this special Committee continues its normal proceedings.
- iii. That this Resolution shall not be amended, withdrawn or tempered with without the approval of the whole members of the House.
- iv. That in the event of any unwarranted arrest the entire House shall submit themselves for arrest

Signed
Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong
Speaker

1. Hon. Speaker

2. Hon. Deputy Speaker

3. Hon. Member of the House

4. Hon. Member of the House

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16. Hon. Member of the House

17. Hon. Member of the House

18. GEOFFREY G. TENE

19. DINAH N. LAR

20. Hon. Member of the House

21. Hon. Member of the House

22. Hon. Member of the House

23. Hon. Member of the House

Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Eguavoen guns for bronze



Eagles coach Austin Eguavoen has said he wants to at least take something away from the African Nations Cup and so will be gunning for victory against Senegal in Thursday's third-place match at the Military Stadium in Cairo.

The Eagles crashed out of the semi-finals courtesy of a Didier Drogba goal in the 46th minute, which Eguavoen insisted was scored from an offside position.

"Drogba was at least seven metres offside," Eguavoen said after the loss.

"However, we did not deserve to win this match because Cote d'Ivoire outplayed us in all departments. We were slow in our ball movements and in the end played our worst match in this tournament."

Eguavoen said he therefore hopes to make up for this disappointing performance by winning bronze on Thursday at the

expense of the Teranga Lions of Senegal.

"We want to come away with something and right now that would be the third-place medal," he said.

Meanwhile, the Eagles are likely to be without several top stars for Thursday's third-place playoff against Senegal as Everton defender Joseph Yobo and Mikel Obi are down with injuries.

Yobo is nursing a groin injury and now looks set to miss the Senegal game while

Mikel is suffering from an ankle complaint he picked up during the Cote d'Ivoire game.

While Joseph Enakrahire has been suspended after bagging two bookings in the knockout stages of the competition, against Tunisia and Cote d'Ivoire.

Yussuf Ayila is also ruled out as he has yet to recover from an ankle injury which ruled him out of Tuesday's semi-final loss to Cote d'Ivoire.

Nigeria vs Ivory Coast: A Postmortem

It's difficult to comprehend the lack-luster performance of the Super Eagles in their semi-final defeat by the Elephants of Ivory Coast. The team was deficient in mobility, fluidity, drive and determination. Here is a player-by-player appraisal and analysis of who did what ...and why?

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Assistant Editor

VINCENT ENYEAMA: He was one of the team's strongest points, not only against the Elephants, but throughout the tournament. His heroics between the sticks was instrumental in the Eagles remarkable run in Egypt and the goal he conceded in the

47th minutes was as a result of the assistant referee's misjudgment of Didier Drogba's offside positioning and the flabbiness and corpulence of the Nigerian back four. Enyeama kept the Eagles in the game during the first half with a bold save

against Drogba's well-taken set-piece. **Rating: 7**

CHIDI ODIAH: One of the young up starters in the team, who had an average tournament. His performance against Ivory Coast left a lot to be desired, though. Chidi 'Oh, dear, oh, dear' has penchant for unnecessary droolings. Often times, he will play himself into needless squagmires and as a result lose vintage ball possession. Again, the CSKA Moscow defender does not help his case by not passing the ball to some players (specifically Sani Kaita) during the Ivory Coast game. **Rating: 3**

TAYE TAIWO: This Olympique Marseille full back started this tournament on a high, but his form has dipped since his cracking goal in their opening game against the Black Stars of Ghana. He was very lethargic and lukewarm during the semi final match. Very inconsistent throughout the tournament. **Rating: 3**

JOSEPH YOBO: The Everton stopper had a below par outing. Considering his credentials and status, Yobo was simply a disappointment. The evident lack of understanding between him and Joseph Enakrahire in the centre of Nigeria's defence line, was the team's albatross. The disputed goal scored by Drogba came as a result of miscalculation and lack of tactical awareness. The Chelsea striker slipped away from Yobo's radar to beat the Eagles offside trap. **Rating: 4**

JOSEPH ENAKRAHIRE: Not as solid as he was in the Eagles first round matches. Enakrahire demonstrated his repulsive side on Tuesday with his lassitude and failure to hold back Ivorian incursions spearheaded by



Yobo was a huge disappointment

Drogba. **Rating: 4**

SANI KAITA: The 18-year-old Sparta Rotterdam midfielder marked his Nations Cup debut on Tuesday and had a relatively quiet game. He showed some flashes that made him one of the stars of the World Youth Championship in the Netherlands last summer. Just need to build on his confidence and composure. **Rating: 5**

JOHN MIKELOBI: Mikel wasn't in his right elements against the Elephants and failed to rise up to the occasion when the situation demanded. Maybe the lack of competitive football ahead of the championship had stolen some of his natural flair. However, he still has several years of football in him and the country should expect some brilliant things from this young prodigy soon. **Rating: 5.5**

OBINNA NSOFOR: The goal scorer in the Tunisia match was one of the culprits of the disappointing outing on Tuesday. He was pretty slow off the mark. And besides losing his mesmerising moves, the Chievo forward has as well forgotten to carry along his shooting boots from his hotel room. But as a young upcoming player, he has bright future in the squad.

Rating 5.5

NWANKWO KANU: He has been the Eagles joker throughout the tournament, coming off the bench to orchestrate decisive moments in matches. But the game against the Elephants witnessed Kanu's first start. It proved to be another gamble by the handlers which failed to pay off. The West Bromwich Albion forward was directed to play from the midfield and looked terribly out of sort. He was substituted by Julius Aghahowa. **Rating: 5.5**

OSAZE ODEMWINGIE: He apparently was weakest link in the team as he couldn't measure up to the very physical game. His languid frame made him easy prey for the Ivorians especially the ebullient Boka and Kolo Toure. He rarely did anything positive until replaced by Stephen Makinwa. Osaze shouldn't have played the Ivory Coast game. Period! **Rating: 3.5**

OBAFEMI MARTINS:

The Inter Milan's striker was a lone ranger until Makinwa and Aghahowa were brought in, but then it was too late. He was invisible and hardly touched the ball. A victim of poor service from team mates. **Rating: 5**

AUSTIN OKOCHA: Jay Jay had his first appearance in the tournament, but it was a sour experience for the Eagles captain. He was, obviously, match rusty, and failed to stamp his authority in the game. He had two decent attempts on goal, though. **Rating: 5**

JULIUS AGHAHOWA: He came in the second half to replace Kanu, but couldn't link up with Martins. It was difficult for him breaking the resolve of the Ivorian defence. **Rating: 4**

STEPHEN MAKINWA: Eguavoen's worst substitution. It was shameful for a player of his calibre to squander the chance and best opportunity for the Eagles to level up the game. **Rating: 3.5**

Rating keys: 10 (Out of the world); 9 (Excellent); 8 (Outstanding); 7 (Very Good); 6 (Good); 5.5 (Average); 5 (Below Average); 4 (Poor); 3.5 (Very Poor)



Martins could not realise his full potentials in Egypt because of the poor service from his team mates

Sports

Nations Cup filled with coffee for fans

As the Cup of Nations heads for its climax in Egypt, African fans in the UK are glued to the coverage.

There are no spare chairs in the room and everyone is facing one way.

final, African ex-pats have been following the 16 teams' progress over tea and coffee.

Skills and fans

The customers at the Dhuhulow Smart Cafe - all men - are mainly Somali, Eritrean, north African,

Egypt. "They have nice fans, I'm sorry they've gone."

On the big screen the fan's Ivorian counterparts, are putting on a fair show. Packed in a vast block, wearing matching orange, green and white costumes and hats,

weekend.

"A lot of things have changed in African football," he says. "Now, all the players are professional. Most of them are professional players in Europe, so the way they play has changed."

"When you play in many countries you get more and more experience."

Drogba scores for the Ivory Coast; the cafe atmosphere tenses, and picks up.

"The African tournament is brilliant," smiles Him Hamuje, a Somali who backs Ivory Coast to hold their 1-0 lead and go on to take the cup. He has watched many of the games being shown live.

"No-one knew African teams, but if they are watching live football they are becoming better known. No-one was interested, but in the last five years it has become more interesting. It's good for all Africans, for those growing up.

He has been impressed by the teamwork on display from many of the teams, but especially from the Ivory Coast.

"The quality of the players and the team working together," he says. "I believe they are better than Nigeria as well."

Ivory Coast is the sole team remaining in the Cup that has also booked a World Cup place.

Shouts erupt in the cafe as Bolton's Jay Jay Okocha comes on to make his first tournament appearance for

the trailing Nigerians. The talk turns to this summer's main draw - the World Cup.

World Cup worries

Many of the traditionally-stronger African nations have not made it through. The coffee bar's customers worry over how those that have will fare.

"We are disappointed that African teams are gone out of that competition, so we can't watch them," says Omar. "We expected Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal and Morocco to qualify."

"But I am happy to take these smaller countries, to take a chance. But, he cautions, "when you play for Africa you have to be strong."

Omar believes the cup has been a fantastic showcase for African football

professional, fit".

An African nation could make the semi-finals, Osama says - but he also thinks England have a good chance, although he does predict Brazil will win.

Back in this tournament, Ivory Coast's chances look good despite Nigeria's increasingly desperate attempts in the dying minutes of the match.

In the final they will face

Egypt from the other semi-final match in Cairo.

'A big party'

At the whistle this victory is enough to bring a wide smile to Abdul Traore.

An Ivorian, he says he grew up with a handful of the players celebrating in front of him on the screen - Arsenal's Kolo Toure and Emmanuel Eboué - and stars of the French Ligue 1.

He is proud of his country's success and hopes it may now be known for something other than its war.

"I am proud for my country, glad for my friends, my parents - I'm going to see them now. There'll be a big party - no work today."

"People will talk about my country other than about the war. It shows the joys of being in Ivory Coast," he smiles.

Culled from BBC News



Egypt's striker Mido, left, in a shouting session with his coach Hassan Shehata, right, as team captain Hassan Hassan intervened during their semi final match with Senegal

It is tense and quiet, save an occasional smattering of claps for the players up on the big screen.

Household names from UK football are muttered as they get involved - "Drogba!" "Okocha!" "Toure!"

This is no mid-week Premiership clash, but the first semi-final of the Africa Cup of Nations.

Ivory Coast taking on Nigeria is the latest match in the continent's tournament to pack this west London cafe.

Here, through the qualifying rounds to Friday's

Ivorian. Most support Ivory Coast in this West African tie. A few, sat together at the front, are behind the Super Eagles, Nigeria.

"I'm supporting Ivory Coast," says Osama Al-Shaikh, 35, from Gulf state Bahrain. "Because I like (Didier) Drogba (of Chelsea).

"He's professional, scores lots of goals and has good skills. I hope they get the African Cup."

"I've liked Cameroon in this tournament," says Omar Ishaq, 43, originally from Eritrea and backing Senegal in the other semi-final against

they are jumping up and down in the stands.

Band music and song from the crowd fills the stadium.

In the early rounds of the competition there was concern about low ticket sales, but today the Alexandria venue looks bustling.

Professional play

Omar believes the cup has been a fantastic showcase for African football - alongside and above the cream sportsmen from African nations playing in English, French, Italian and other top European leagues each

Mido thrown out of Egyptian squad

Mido has been thrown out of the Egypt squad at the African Cup of Nations and suspended for six months after a row with coach Hassan Shehata.

The 22-year-old Tottenham striker had a heated argument with Shehata after being substituted in Tuesday's semi-final win over Senegal.

Mido had to be dragged away by coaching staff after being substituted by Amr Zaki, who went on to score the winner.

He will now miss Friday's final when the hosts take on Ivory Coast.



Ivory Coast's Romaric Koffi, left, challenges Nigeria's Chidi Odiah for the ball during semi final match in Alexandria on Tuesday

Daily Trust Hotlines

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EDITORIAL

Assessing our GSM services

When the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) was introduced to Nigeria in 2001, many Nigerians enthusiastically scrambled to be a part of the new communication technology by massively subscribing to the first two GSM network providers - Econet (now Vmobile) and MTN. Although InterCellular had been in the mobile business since the early 1990s, many Nigerians could not afford the over N90,000 that it cost to subscribe to it. However, Vmobile and MTN networks were hardly less expensive when they initially broke into the mobile telephony market in Nigeria. The earliest subscribers paid exorbitant amounts to obtain both the cell phone and line.

The excuse that the providers gave for the high cost of their SIM packs was that the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) charged them exorbitant prices on their mast heads, and that in order to recoup the huge outlay invested on the mast heads, it was inevitable for them to shift the burden to subscribers by way of initial high tariffs. However, over four years after, the services of all the GSM operators are so notoriously inept that many Nigerians feel justifiably shortchanged.

Compared to what obtains in some other countries in Africa, the services that the network providers are rendering leave much to be desired. The networks are unreliable, their services are, in the main mediocre, and the customer relations are, to say the least, discourteous. For instance, two weeks ago, many subscribers to a major provider must have lost several thousands, if not millions, of naira. Throughout that period, services were off in most areas in Abuja and other states of the federation. People could not make or receive calls, and text messages were equally not going. At the end of the weekend, that network did not even have the courtesy to tender any apology, like they used to do some years back.

The positive changes that the various network providers have made in the personal and business endeavours of Nigerians, but we believe that by improving on their current shoddy operations they can make an even greater impact on the lives of Nigerians. There have been instances when people get charged for calls that neither the receiver nor the caller could hear or respond to, which neither makes neither moral nor commercial sense. And the increasing capriciousness of the networks can be disorienting for people who have been made to rely on these GSM networks for business and personal contacts.

That the progressive decline in the services of these GSM networks also highlights the incompetence or irresponsibility of government regulatory bodies saddled with the task of keeping guard over standards in the industry. Therefore government through the regulating agency (NCC) decided to be alive to its duties becomes more troubling when it is realised that the single greatest achievement this government touts at every available opportunity is its licensing of GSM operation in the country.

The National Communications Commission holds what it calls "Consumers' Parliament," but how effective have the parliamentary sessions been since they began? They have not succeeded in curbing the excesses of the mobile network providers nor have they addressed the real issues that bother Nigerian subscribers: high tariffs and epileptic services.

The Consumer Protection Council, another regulatory agency has a role in ensuring consumers get appropriate service at less cost.

But it is not only the government agencies that are complicit, through their inaction, in the extortion of Nigerians; the many consumer rights and NGOs in the country have been curiously silent in the face of the rape of subscribers by GSM service providers. Certainly, concerted effort to enforce a deduction in tariff accompanied by good service by the providers would show that they are alive to their responsibilities.

For the GSM revolution to continue to have any meaning in the lives of Nigerians there is an ever-present need to thoroughly overhaul its services and tariffs. And this requires the GSM service providers to embrace ethical business practices, and for government agencies charged with the responsibility of overseeing these operators to ensure consumers get a fair deal for their money.

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, February 9, 2006

Danish Cartoons: Intended insults, unintended consequences

By Khalid Baig

On 31 January, 2006 Carsten Juste, editor-in-chief of *Jyllands-Posten*, published an open letter to Muslims saying he was sorry that Muslims took offence from the cartoons (which his cultural editor had commissioned for the express purpose of causing offence). In that caricature of an apology, he did not admit that the paper had done anything wrong. Rather, he blamed the Muslims' poor understanding of the Danish culture for their getting so upset. Then he wondered, as did many media pundits, why Muslims were not buying his apology.

He also said in a separate comment that had he known the extent of Muslim anger, he would not have published those cartoons. Since then, the same cartoons have been reproduced by one newspaper after another in Europe. How could these "especially commissioned works of art" be reproduced by other papers? Only if *Jyllands-Posten*, the original copyright holder, gave them permis-

meaned only one thing: their unending right to insult Islam and Muslims and the unending obligation of Muslims to submit to that.

Then something unexpected happened. People in the Muslim world decided to take some action beyond protests. They decided to refuse to buy any products from Denmark. With just one company, Arla Foods, facing losses of 1.8 million dollars a day, the scene changed. That is when the newspaper and the government issued half-hearted and disingenuous regrets.

Islam Teaches Decency and Dignity
However, the media machine has framed it as a clash between Islam and the cherished European values of freedom of expression.

It is true that Islam teaches decency and prohibits provocations of followers of other religions. It teaches that we are responsible for every word we utter and will have to account for it in the Hereafter - (Al-Qur'an, 50:18). The Prophet Muhammad said: "Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should either say something good or keep quiet." Muslims revere all the Prophets of God, from Adam to Noah, to Abraham to Moses and Jesus (peace and blessing on them all), and finally, Prophet Muhammad. While Muslims welcome debates with other religions, they want to make sure it is a civilized debate. No ridicule, no insults. They are even prohibited from using bad words about the false gods of other religions, meant only to hurt the feelings of their followers. (Al-Qur'an, 6:108). Obviously it does not recognise the endless freedom to insult.

One will be hard-pressed to find comparable teachings in the Western world.

It is not that Europe is totally unaware of the idea of responsibility that should limit the freedom of expression. In every European country, there are laws restricting the limits of expression. There are laws regarding libel, hate-speech, and invasion of privacy, protection of national secrets, blasphemy, and anti-Semitism. However, there is a fundamental difference between Islam and the West. In Islam, the laws are based on eternal principles as laid down in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Holy Prophet. In the West, the laws and policies are a result of compromises between competing interests. Stated principles provide a veneer but not the foundation. For example, the U.K. had a law against blasphemy but when Muslims tried to invoke it against the blasphemy perpetrated by the Satanic Verses in 1989; they were told that the law protected only Christianity, not Islam. What is the moral principle here? Why is curbing insults against Christianity a proper limitation of the freedom of expression but curbing those against other religions is not? Because underlying the law is not a moral principle, but a compromise between Christian and secular forces.

This can take very interesting forms. Thus, on the one hand even objective inquiry into the history (of the Holocaust) is banned and people presenting an alternative view of history are sent to prison without anyone remembering freedom of expression; and on the other, the filthiest of insults are permitted - even encouraged - against Islam. Very principled indeed!

The implementation of the laws follows the same "principled" approach. Thus, Denmark has laws regarding blasphemy as well as racism. Both of these laws have been violated in the current case, the assertion of the newspaper that it broke no laws, notwithstanding. Section 266b of the Danish Criminal Code provides:

"Any person who, publicly or with the intention of wider dissemination, makes a statement or imparts other information by which a group of people are threatened, insulted or degraded on account of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, or sexual inclination shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding 2 years."

And its section 140, which deals with blasphemy, reads: "Those who publicly mock or insult the doctrines or worship of any religious community that is legal in this country, will be punished by a fine or incarceration for up to 4 months."

Similarly, section 142 of the Norwegian Penal Code provides for punishment for any person "who publicly insults or in an offensive manner shows contempt for any religious creed...or for the doctrines or worship of any religious community lawfully existing here."

That these laws provided no protection to the Muslims highlights the fact that despite their sizable populations, the Muslims carry no political weight in the European democracies.

Hence the importance of the economic boycott started by the grassroots in the Muslim countries.

The expressed worry of the pundits in Europe is that the Muslims do not understand their societies; their real worry is that the Muslims have begun to understand how these societies really work. The Muslims are realising that if they want to get any rights and respect there, they will have to show their weight. The boycott of products from offending countries is a result of that realisation and it is exactly the kind of step that, if continued patiently, can help Europe deal with its arrogance and Islam-phobia. Europe could then see that dealing with Muslims with respect is a good policy. And in a land where honesty is the best policy (not principle but policy), that is the best one can hope for.

This article was culled from the Internet.



Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen

sion to do so. That it should continue to let others reprint these despicable cartoons, while claiming that it had expressed its regret, is only fitting in a drama that continues to reveal the depths of hypocrisy in which Europe is mired today.

In a different setting, Jan Lund, the paper's foreign editor, was more open. In his *Guardian* interview, he said "We apologised for hurting the feelings of a lot of Muslims in this. But we don't apologise for printing the cartoons." (Translation: I am sorry your father was killed. But I am not sorry for firing at him.)

And in the theatre of the absurd, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, offered his own wise counsel. Even as the offending cartoons continued to be reprinted, he urged Muslims to accept the publisher's apology (which was never offered) and forget everything. "What is important is that the newspaper that initially published the cartoons has apologised, and I would urge my Muslim friends to accept the apology, to accept it in the name of Allah the Merciful, and let's move on."

It all started with a shrewdly prepared script. *Jyllands-Posten* would publish deeply offensive cartoons of Islam's holiest person, the Prophet Muhammad. If Muslims protested or tried to discuss it, they would be ignored. If the protests grew louder, that would be even better. They would gleefully present the images of the deeply hurt protesters from around the Muslim world without ever explaining what made them feel so hurt, so the audiences could easily draw the conclusions about these "extremists and fanatics." That would fit in nicely with the current narrative about Islam and terrorism. In either case they would be winning.

And so it began. Stunned Muslims called the editor for a meeting and were refused. When ambassadors from twelve Muslim countries tried to arrange a meeting with the prime minister, he also refused to meet them, saying the government had nothing to do with the regulation of the media. This was a lie, but in this holy campaign, that did not matter. Both did find the occasion to lecture the complaining Muslims on the virtues of democracy. Obviously, there was no place for a dialog in their "democracy." Democracy