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INSIDE



Plateau police unaware of arms seizure

The Plateau State police command has said that it was not aware of the recent interception of Jos-bound weapons announced by Governor Jonah Jang on Sunday.

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As at Tuesday, April 14

TOP GAINERS

Symbol	Price(N)	Gain
Oando	68.00	+3.00
Nestle	150.00	+3.00
BCC	23.96	+1.12

TOP LOSERS

Symbol	Price(N)	Loss
AP	80.70	-4.24
UBN	11.40	-0.52
CADBURY	9.60	-0.50

Cap. N4, 487, 672, 365, 487.57

NAIRA EXCHANGE RATE

	Selling	Buying
EURO	212	210
POUND	247	245
DOLLAR	180	178

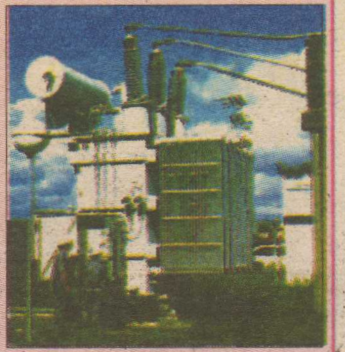
Source: B.A.T Bureau de Change, Lagos

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FG approves
N15bn for
transformers

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Yuguda crosses over to PDP

Deputy, Speaker, MPs stay put

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi & Abbas Jimoh, Abuja

Months of speculation regarding Bauchi State governor Malam Isa Yuguda's political plans ended yesterday when he formally defected to the Peoples Democratic Party [PDP] at a brief ceremony at the party's headquarters in Bauchi. However, in a sign of possible trouble for the governor, his deputy Alhaji Garba Muhammad Gadi, the Speaker of the state House of Assembly Alhaji Babayo Garba Gamawa and the majority ANPP members of the State House of Assembly all stayed away from the event.

The ceremony in which the governor registered again as a member of the PDP, which he left in 2007, was held at the party's state secretariat along Maiduguri by-pass. PDP chieftains including Secretary to the Government of the Federation Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed, Minister

Cont. on Pg. 5



One of the burnt cars during the disturbances at Gwada in Shiroro LGA of Niger State on Sunday.

Easter mayhem: 115 arraigned in Minna

One hundred and ten people suspected of involvement in last Sunday's Easter Day disturbances at Gwada in Shiroro local government area of Niger State were arraigned

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

by the police before a Magistrate's Court sitting in Minna yesterday. Twelve of the suspects are from

Minna while 89 were from Gwada. They were charged for inciting and causing public disturbance, mischief and theft.

The accused all pleaded not guilty to the charges but

the presiding magistrate ordered them to be remanded in prison until April 28 for further hearing on the matter.

Meanwhile, it was confirmed that two churches,

the Holy Trinity Gospel church and the Ebenezer Baptist church, as well as two cars parked at the premises of the Holy Trinity church, were vandalized in

Cont. on Pg. 5

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NEWS



Hajiya Turai Umaru Yar'adua (right), Ademola Rasaq Seriki, Minister of State for Defence (second left), Vice Admiral Ibrahim, Chief of Naval Staff (left), during the commissioning of two 38-metre offshore patrol vessels and dedication of new helicopters at NNS Beecroft Naval Base, Apapa, Lagos.

Fuel now N150 per liter as scarcity worsens in Kano

Fuel now sells above N150 per liter in most independent filling stations and black markets in Kano as the situation worsened in the state in the last 24 hours. Long queues spanning a kilometer have appeared in most filling stations, causing heavy traffic in major roads. Some filling stations that still sell are overwhelmed with area boys who enter after paying bribes. In most of the filling stations along B.U.K road and the city centre, hundreds of vehicles, and motorcycles lined up for fuel turns. Many filling stations have adjusted their billing system and gone beyond the normal N65 per liter. It is not yet clear why the situation continues to worsen even after the leadership of the independent petroleum marketers assured that over 150 trucks had arrived Kano. Alhaji Bashir Bala, chairman of IPMAN told newsmen earlier this week that over 150 trucks had arrived and would soon reduce the long queues. He said the increase of N2 on each liter by some importers had been responsible as marketers fear that selling the commodity at the N65 price was not feasible.

Cleric seeks punishment for religious fanatics

The Prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria, Dr Ola Makinde, wants the Federal Government to punish religious fanatics in order to stop religious crises. Makinde was speaking with newsmen yesterday in Lagos shortly after consoling the General Overseer of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Pastor William Kumuyi, who lost his wife, Abiodun on Saturday. The cleric said Monday's religious crisis in Minna was worrisome, regretting that lives were being lost regularly to religious intolerance. "Until the government makes scapegoats of some perpetrators of this act, this problem will not end," he said. The prelate lauded Abiodun's virtues, saying: "She died as a Christian and I want people to know that Christianity is a living religion and a way of life. "We do not need to brood over her death because she has gone back to her creator; she died peacefully and that is how Christians die," he said.

No fewer than seven persons died in 19 separate auto accidents during the Easter celebrations in Kaduna State. Mr Edward Zamber, the FRSC Sector Commander, told newsmen in Kaduna on

7 die in Kaduna auto accidents

Tuesday that the accidents left 55 other victims hospitalised in various health institutions under the command's eight functional units. He said Sabon Tasha unit

command recorded four deaths in four different accidents, while Kakau command recorded six accidents with one casualty. Zamber said Birnin Yero command

recorded one accident with two deaths and six injured persons, while Zaria had three deaths with six injured persons. Kafanchan, he added, recorded two accidents, in

which two persons were injured, while Birnin Gwari had two accidents, involving 28 passengers, with seven victims hospitalised. He attributed most of the

accidents to over-speeding, burst tyre, dangerous driving and wrong over-taking.

The commander said the commission had embarked on intensive public enlightenment campaign on traffic rules and regulations.(NAN)

HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality rates drop in Kano

Reports of hospital based surveys in Kano have shown that the rate of Human Immuno deficiency -Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) spread and maternal mortality have dropped.

The state's Commissioner for Health, Hajiya Aisha Isiaku Kiru said this while delivering a speech at the Community Participation in Social Sector (COMPASS) meeting in Kano yesterday.

"I am indeed delighted to announce to you that hospital based survey in the

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

state has shown that HIV/AIDS rate which was initially 4.5 has dropped to 2.2 while the same report indicates that MMR which was initially 2500 per 100,000 births has dropped to 1600 per 100,000 births", she said.

Hajiya Aisha added that the success recorded was a result of the special attention the state was giving the health sector.

She reaffirmed the state government's commitment improvement in health care

while commending the COMPASS project team members over the successes recorded. Hajiya Aisha further called on other organisations and donor agencies working in the health sector to collaborate with the state government in improving health care.

COMPASS project team leader, Hajiya Rabi Hussein said the project which lasted for four years had recorded huge successes in the areas of health and education at community level. Hajiya Rabi explained that the project had renovated and

equipped over 200 community health facilities while it supported over 550 primary schools across the state. She added that among the services rendered by the project, both health workers and teachers of primary schools had received series of training and re-training under the project.

Hajiya Rabi attributed the success of the project to the corporation of all stakeholders including the state government, traditional and community leaders, the beneficiaries as well as the project team members.

Doctors' strike paralyses medicare in Edo

Activities in all private and state government owned hospitals were yesterday paralysed in Edo

State as the strike by the state branch of the Nigeria Medical Association [NMA] began. The chairman of NMA, Dr Osahon Enabulele told newsmen that the strike

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

would be total, stressing that the exorbitant levies and charges by the state government was inhuman and unacceptable. A visit to most hospitals and clinics in Benin city showed that the strike was already taking its tolls on

patients. While the hospitals have refused to attend to new patients, those already on admission were quickly discharged as there were no doctors to attend to them. Reacting to the strike, Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr Moses Momoh said governor Adams Oshiomhole would meet

with the doctors today. The commissioner accused the leadership of the NMA of having ulterior motives and trying to cripple the state. The commissioner said the leadership of NMA was even trying to involve the Academic Staff Union of Universities [ASUU] and Nigeria Labour Congress [NLC].

NEWS

Plateau police unaware of apprehended cache of arms

By Andrew Agbese, Jos

The Plateau State Police command yesterday indicated it was not aware about the large cache of arms said to have been intercepted by security agencies in the state.

The governor, Jonah Jang, said at an Easter service last Sunday, that large cache of arms ostensibly to be used to blow up strategic buildings in the state had been intercepted.

The governor regretted that despite efforts to bring lasting peace to the state, some people were still bent on unleashing violence in the state.

However the police commissioner, Greg Angiating while speaking on the phone with our correspondent, asked if the arms in question were different from the ones confiscated from the 29 suspected mercenaries in Jos last year.

He said however that it is not for him to either confirm or contradict what the governor said in public but that the police will look into the matter and brief the press on the matter later.

Asked if it was the police that made the seizure, the commissioner merely said he would liaise with the state government and that the press would be briefed accordingly.

Efforts to get the army comment on the issue failed as the army spokesman when contacted said he has been transfer.

Efforts to get more details from the state government officials also failed as the state commissioner for information, Nuhu Gagara, when contacted, said he had not been able to get details of the seizure.

The permanent secretary, security, Istifanus Gyang however failed to pick his calls.

Governors' Forum appoints DG

By Muideen Olaniyi

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) has appointed Mr Asishana Okauru as the Director General of its National Secretariat in Abuja.

Also appointed by the Forum are Mr Abdullateef Shitu and Mr Mohammed Jibia as the Executive Directors Strategy and Research as well as Finance and Administration respectively.

A statement signed yesterday by the Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Kwara State, Dr Bukola Saraki said their appointments were ratified at its general meeting held on Monday January 26, 2009 as part of efforts to institutionalize its operations.

The statement said the membership of the NGF comprised current Executive Governors of all the thirty-six (36) states irrespective of party affiliation.

It added that the Forum's establishment was aimed at cross-fertilisation of ideas, exchange of information and sharing of experiences.

The statement said: "It also provides a platform for discussing issues of common concern, including but not limited to relations between the federal and state governments, state-state relations, state-local government relations, intergovernmental relations, fiscal matters, interface with the international community, as well as the provision of constructive interventions in matters of national interest that may arise.

"It is for this reasons and more that the Forum appointed a new management to execute its new direction," it added.

Yar'adua appoints new special adviser

By AbdulFattah Olajide

President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has appointed Alhaji Sani Idris Bagiwa as his Special Adviser on Special Duties.

A statement yesterday by the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Mr Olusegun Adeniyi said his appointment is expected to strengthen the Special Duties Unit of the presidency.

Adeniyi said the appointment of Alhaji Sani Idris who has had a distinguished career in the federal and state public services is with immediate effect.

The statement said he was with the Federal Ministry of Education where he served variously as Education Attache in the Nigerian High Commission, London; Special Adviser to Minister of Education; Interim Administrator, National Primary Education Commission; and Project Officer in the World Bank Education Project before his retirement from the Federal Civil Service.

It added that Alhaji Sani Idris has also served as Special Adviser to the Katsina State Governor on Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; Special Adviser, Special Duties; and Special Adviser, Higher Education.

Shell to pay N1m over oil spill fire

By Hamisu Muhammad

Royal Dutch oil giant Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) has been fined N1 million over failure to clean up oil spill sites in which resulted in an inferno that destroyed some part of Peremabiri community, in southern Ijaw Local government Area of Bayelsa state.

The financial penalty was imposed by the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) as required by its Act which stated that the fine should be paid within 14-day from the date of receipt of such a letter from the Agency.

A statement from the NOSDRA yesterday said apart from the financial sanction, Shell will also pay compensation to the victims in the community after determined the level of damage caused by the fire incident.

The Agency said it has already set up a team to ascertain the level of damage done by the fire in the community and which action will follow some.

When contacted yesterday the Corporate Affairs Department of Shell didn't ignore the incident but promised to comment officially on the issues today (Wednesday).

The NOSDRA accused Shell of negligence, saying that the incident occurred as a "result of the negligence and lackadaisical attitude of shell in effecting immediate clean up of spill in the community".

The statement said, the Director General of NOSDRA, Dr Bamidele A. Ajakaiye had personally written a letter to Shell management to remind them on the spill following a complaint received on 26th September 2008 from the community.

"A joint investigation was carried out on the impacted sites by concerned parties on October 7th, 2008. Following the joint investi-

gation visit, it was agreed that the oil company, based on the mandate of NOSDRA, will be required to immediately contain, recover and clean up the impacted sites".

According to the statement, "Failure by Shell to clean up the sites in Peremabiri Community within a rea-

sonable time frame is a contravention of section 6 (3) of the NOSDRA Act which informed the financial sanction to be paid by the oil firm within the next 14 days from the date of receipt of the letter from the agency".

In addition to that, the agency said Shell was directed to mobilize to impacted sites already destroyed by fire for immedi-

ate clean-up and remediation in order to prevent further degradation of the environment.

Daily Trust gathered that the 14-day deadline to pay the fine has already lapsed yesterday. An anonymous official from Shell confirmed that they received the letter on March 31st, 2009 but they are still processing for the payment.



From left: Emir of Machina, Alhaji Bashir Al-Bushir Bukar with Malam Abdul Dauda, Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Industrial Development, Niger Republic, at the venue of the 2nd Machina Cultural festival in Machina, Yobe State, at the weekend.

Pic: Afolabi Sotunde

FG approves purchase of N15b transformers

By AbdulFattah Olajide

The government yesterday approved the purchase of electricity transformers worth N15 billion to boost power distribution in the country.

The Steering Council of the National Integrated Power Project (NIPP) announced this after its meeting at the Presidential Villa, chaired by Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan.

Gov. Namadi Sambo of Kaduna State, who briefed newsmen said that the council considered plans to com-

plete power plants in order to improve on the transmission and distribution system.

The transformers to be bought include 19 units of 2.5 MVA, 209 units of 7.5 MVA injection transformers and 155 units of 15 MVA injection transformers.

Others are 190 units of 11 KV indoor switchgear, 122 units of 33kv switchgear, 173 units of 33kv instrument transformer and 295 units of 33kv control/relay panels.

Sambo noted that civil work on most of the transmission and distribution projects was in progress.

He also said that the council approved N330 million being balance for the payment of installation of 33 KVA double circuit line for improvement of power supply to the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

The Council the governor said also "approved the payment for the completion of the 33 KV double circuit lines that is improving power

supply to Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport in Abuja," after the council certified the project as been satisfactory.

"The work has been satisfactorily completed and is to be commission any time soon and the total payment is N330 million.

"The project consultant and the NIPP officials including the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) officials have been inspecting the job and have certified the job satisfactorily completed."

NEWS

11 banks float credit bureau

A consortium of 11 Nigerian banks have established a new credit bureau- Credit Reference Company (CPC) for the purpose of generating and supplying credit information on borrowers in the consumer and commercial segments.

The banks are Access bank, Bank PHB, Diamond Bank, First Bank, First City Monument Bank, Guaranty Trust bank, Intercontinental Bank, Stanbic IBTC bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Union Bank and UBA. According to the company's managing director, Tunde Popoola, the need to have financial structure providing information on borrowers and their history became

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

imperative especially after the consolidation exercise in the banking sector when huge fund was injected into the economy.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had in October 2008 issued a guideline on the establishment of credit bureau in the country with a minimum capital requirement of N500 million.

A licensed credit bureau, according to CBN is mandated to collect information on the background and credit history relating to the commitments of persons, enterprises and other organisations, in order to

determine their overall debt exposure and repayment behaviour.

Popoola said CRC is ready to carry on with the mandate as it has secured approval in principle from the apex bank. He also disclosed that the bureau has N1 billion capital based and that CPC is awaiting the CBN's inspection team. Popoola said in order to ensure a professional hint at operations, implementations, technical partnership was sought and acceded by Dun and Bedstreet which has over 160 years experience in credit bureau set up, installation and operations especially in emerging economies.

"D&B involvement is of

two folds. It is an equity investor in CRC. Its also a consultant in the areas of consumer and commercial credit bureaus. Its worldwide network is designed to yield business information that would allow CRC's customers gain access to the world's largest global commercial business information database which guarantees the highest possible quantity", he said.

Popoola said CRC is out to service institutions in the Nigerian banking industry, insurance, mortgage and microfinance sectors. He said the absence of an institution to provide credit history on individuals and corporate bodies has restricted access to credit to a few.

Residents of Bayelsa community flee, as JTF deploys troops

The people of Nembe, Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa, have been fleeing from the area following the killing of two naval ratings and the abduction of four others by militants.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the people were relocating from Nembe due to fears about retaliatory attacks by soldiers deployed by the Military Joint Taskforce (JTF) in the Niger Delta to the area to fish out those behind the act.

A military source told NAN that militants often used the Nembe creeks as a launch pad for their attacks.

The source said that the authorities had commenced the deployment of troops to the Nembe creeks to apprehend the three suspected militant leaders responsible for the killing and abduction.

However, the JTF's Spokesman, Col. Rabe Abubakar advised law-abiding citizens not be afraid because of the development, saying that the soldiers were only deployed to the area to maintain law and order.

Abubakar on Monday confirmed that there were two attacks at Tebidaba flow station, belonging to the Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC), and at the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) facility in the Nembe creeks.

He, however, said that the attacks were allegedly carried out by three militants, Ogunbus, Kitikata in Bayelsa and Fara Dagogo in Rivers.

FG inaugurates committee on job creation

By Yunus Abdulhamid

The minister of National Planning, Dr Shamsuddeen Usman yesterday inaugurated a nine member committee on employment generation "To generate ideas among key stakeholders on ways and means of generating employment opportunities in the Nigeria economy."

The committee consists of the National Planning Commission as the coordinating organ, the federal ministries of Labour and Productivity; Youth development; Commerce and Industry, and finance. Others are the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser to the President; National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Office of the Senior Special Assistant to President on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and the Nigeria Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER).

The committee has among others as its terms of reference; to examine the cause of the paradox of co-existence of high level growth rates of the GDP with persistent high levels of unemployment; identify the major causes of high unemployment in Nigeria, propose appropriate strategies towards improving skills development and productivity of labour force and to propose short, medium and long term measures aimed at boosting employment creation.

It is expected to finish its work

in two months time to make inputs into the medium term development plan being worked out by government as well as the Vision 2020 document expected to be out soon.

In his remarks, the minister said even though "The Nigeria economy has recorded a respectable 7% average GDP growth, the high growth rate has not translated into commensurate employment just as there is absence of credible data base on employment on sectoral and national basis."

Shamsuddeen disclosed that as part of the effort by the commission in collaboration with the NBS, NISER, ministry of labor and the World Bank, a comprehensive survey of employment survey situation in Nigeria will be undertaken.

According to the minister "The federal executive Council has approved the implementation anchored by the federal ministry of Labour and Productivity, the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) to run from 2009 to 2011. NIYEAP targets the creation of one million jobs for the youths on annual basis." Also speaking, the NBS Director General, Vincent Akinyosoye said the proposed survey will commence next month and end in December.



Senator Anthony Agbo (right) addressing the United Association of Physically Challenged Persons of Nigeria (UAPCP) during an Easter get together at Mgbo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State on Sunday. With him are representative of Community-based Rehabilitation, Mr. Frank Maas (left) and coordinator, Mgbo West Development Centre, Chief Joseph Ozibo.

JAMB releases UME results

The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) on Tuesday in Abuja released the results of its 2009 University Matriculation

Examinations (UME), with 548,543 candidates scoring 200 marks and above.

This was the first time in the history of the board that the UME results were released two weeks after the examinations were conducted.

Prof. Dibu Ojerinde, JAMB Registrar, said at a news conference that 72,196 candidates scored less than

160 marks.

The results showed that 16-year-old Irene Edem, from Cross River, had the highest score of 310 marks, followed by Igugu Obukohwo (23), from Delta, Henrietta Konye (18), also from Delta and Moses Raymond (47), from Bayelsa, with 308 marks respectively.

Ojerinde said that out of the 1,182,381 candidates who applied to sit for the examinations, only 1,145,961 candidates, representing 96.92 per cent, eventually wrote the examinations.

He said only 65 of the 71

visually impaired candidates who registered for the exams wrote the exams.

Ojerinde said 36,417 candidates, representing 3.08 per cent were absent, while 199 candidates sat for the exams in five foreign countries.

"Analysis by gender shows that 667,771 applicants are men, while 514,610 candidates are females.

"The figures show that 56.48 per cent of the total applications are males, while 43.52 per cent are females," he added.

The registrar said 23,819

cases of examination malpractice, which represented 2.07 per cent, were recorded during the exams, which showed a reduction when compared to last year's figure of 2.24 per cent.

He expressed happiness that no case of examination malpractice was recorded in any of the foreign centres.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) also reports that more than 80 handsets and other exhibits, seized from candidates at the different centres, were displayed at the conference. (NAN)

NEWS

Road crash claims 10 in Yobe

A road crash which occurred around 8.30 pm yesterday at Zotowo village along Damaturu-Damagun road has claimed the lives of 10 people with many others injured.

Two trailers with registration number XC 492 MAG and the other without a number plate collided head

By Hamza Idris

on and ten people died on the spot.

All victims have been deposited at Damagun General Hospital.

Yobe State FRSC head of Operations, Joel Tagwa confirmed the accident and attributed it to poor visibility, bad road and overspending.

Intercontinental, UBA, First Bank make Forbes top 2000

Three Nigerian banks, Intercontinental Bank Plc, First Bank and United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc have made the Forbes list of top 2000 world biggest companies.

A statement by Emeka Anaeto, head, corporate communications, Intercontinental Bank said the banks joined 248 other companies around the world to displace same number of companies that featured on the list in the 2008 ranking.

"This appears to be a confirmation of the 2009 global banking industry, which listed the three banks among top 500 banks in the world. The global banking industry research and ratings for 2009 has listed First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Intercontinental Bank Plc, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, Zenith Bank Plc and United Bank for Africa on the World's top 500 banking brands by the Banker magazine, a publication of the Financial Times of London.

"Nigerian banks made their first showing on the world's top 500 banks in 2007 when Intercontinental Bank came number 355 on the list while also emerging the fastest growing bank in the world. The bank has since then made the list moving up in 2008 to 334," Anaeto said.

He said that the banks that made this year's list had emerged as industry leaders consistently since the banking industry reforms introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2004.

He said, "Factors accounting for the drop off of the companies that were on the 2008 list but could not make the list in the 2009 ranking, according to Forbes, include mergers, weak financial performance and outright failure.

"For instance, Forbes noted that the former 97th-largest company in the world, Lehman Brothers, fell into bankruptcy, while the weakness in the financial markets led to governments

By Abbas Jimoh

nationalizing some big banks, such as Ireland's Anglo Irish banks and Iceland's kaupthing Bank.

"For Nigeria, the listing of three of the country's banks on the Global 200 current listing is a cause for cheers.

First Bank Plc is ranked at 1,375 while the United Bank for Africa comes on the list at number 1,560, Intercontinental Bank Plc completes Nigeria's showing on the list at 1,798."

"Explaining the methodology adopted in arriving at the final compilation of the 2000 biggest companies, Forbes says that companies must have a publicly traded stock in order to qualify for the Global 2000.

The Global 2000 companies have the top composite scores based on sales, profit, assets and market value.

"Forbes' ranking of the world's biggest companies departs from lopsided lists based on a single metric, like sales.

Instead, it uses an equal weighting of sales, profits, assets and market value to rank companies according to size. This year's list reveals the dynamism of global business.

The rankings span 62 countries, with the U.S. still dominant at 551 members, but that is 2000 fewer than in 2004, when we first published this global list."

"For the past few years, we have also identified an important subset of the Global 2000: big companies that also have exceptional growth rates.

To qualify as a Global High Performer, a company must stand out from its industry peers in growth, return to investors and future prospects.

Most of the 130 Global High Performers have been expanding their earnings at 28% a year or better—easy for a start-up, hard for a blue-chip," Anaeto said.

Yuguda crosses over to PDP

Continued from Page 1

of Police Affairs Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame and Northeast Zonal Vice Chairman of the PDP Mr. Paul Wampana all attended the ceremony.

The absence of the Deputy Governor, the Speaker and all the 21 ANPP members of the 31-member state House of Assembly, as well as the 11 ANPP members of the National Assembly from Bauchi State, however raised fears that the governor's defection could lead to a backlash from the party he abandoned, the ANPP.

Apparently explaining the absence of his former ANPP allies from the event, Malam Isa Yuguda announced to the gathering that those who were not with him at the ceremony had earlier told him that they would join him later. He pleaded with the PDP to waive its constitutional requirement that says any person seeking election must be registered with the party for at least two years before seeking election on its platform. This is necessary, he said, in order to attract ANPP chieftains in the state to come over and still be able to seek election under PDP's umbrella.

Only recently, ANPP's National Secretary Senator Sa'idu Umar Kumo said at a meeting of the party's National Working Committee held in Bauchi that both the Deputy Governor and the Speaker were not part of Yuguda's planned defection to the PDP. He said the two men would remain members of the ANPP even after the Governor's defection.

The Speaker of the Bauchi state House of Assembly had recently led all the 30 members to the Government House in Bauchi where they dumped all their official vehicles to protest deductions made in their March salaries in the name of repaying for the cars.

There was tight security around the venue of the de-camping event yesterday with the two roads leading to the PDP state secretariat closed to traffic. However, there was a carnival atmosphere at the secretariat as thousands of the governor's supporters turned up to cheer him. Security men only allowed a few of them to enter the secretariat.

The new state police commissioner Alhaji Atiku Yusuf Kafar had said at a press briefing on Monday that some people wanted to use the governor's formal defection to cause trouble. He said his police command was ready to address the situation.

Though the situation was calm at the time of going to press last night, security operatives had been stationed at strategic locations in the state capital a day before the for-

mal declaration of the governor which had been seriously debated by residents of the state capital.

Speaking soon after he registered with PDP, Governor Yuguda listed his reasons for leaving the ANPP and said the task before him was to continue telling the people of the state, who massively voted him under the ANPP, why he left the party until he succeeds in convincing them.

Neither the Deputy Governor nor the Speaker was available for comments yesterday, but the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) yesterday threatened to sue Governor Isa Yuguda over his defection to the PDP.

ANPP's national publicity secretary Emma Eneukwu told *Daily Trust* on phone that the party will contest Yuguda's defection in court and recover its gubernatorial mandate in the state.

"The party is consulting to contest the defection of Governor Isa Yuguda in court just like we doing in Zamfara State. The party must recover its mandate from both of them," Eneukwu said.

This is coming on the heels of the party's national chairman Chief Edwin Ume-Ezeoke's claim that he read about the purported plans of Yuguda to return to the PDP on the pages of newspapers and threatened vehement reaction if Yuguda should defect to PDP.

He said, "I don't know how they (defecting governors) are thinking," Ezeoke said, adding, however, that the party has not received any communication from Governor Yuguda concerning his resignation from the ANPP. So until he formally decamps, we want to believe it's not true. But if he finally moves to the PDP as we have read in the news, the party will react vehemently because the constitution is clear about it."

Ezeoke also said, "We sent half of our National Working Committee (NWC) members to meet with him in Bauchi but he refused to see them, and he no longer picks phone calls."

The ANPP has already sued Governor Shinkafi of Zamfara State, asking the court to compel him to vacate office for defecting to the PDP after having been elected on the platform of the ANPP. Shinkafi was welcomed into the PDP at a grand reception attended by President Yar'adua who presented the party's flag to the new convert in Gusau on January 8, 2009. Yuguda, who is a son-in-law of President Umaru Yar'adua, is expected to receive similar treatment shortly.

Easter mayhem: 115 arraigned in Minna

Continued from Page 1

the mayhem.

Police said the attack was carried out at two locations. The first phase was led by one Sule Usman who it is alleged used his motorcycle to disrupt the Boys Brigade band procession. It was also alleged that he used his mobile phone to call others who later joined him to disperse the band procession.

Iwa Galadima, narrating their ordeal, said after the band members took to their heels during the attack, the mob used the opportunity to destroy the band set and other things that belonged to the fleeing group.

He said if they had not taken to their heels when they did, the attacking group which was well armed with weapons of different calibrations would have maimed or even killed some of them.

The second phase of the attack was directed at the

churches where the mob destroyed all that they could find. The skirmish at Gwada later spilled over into Minna township where a mob attempted to disrupt church service at the First Baptist church located at Bosso area of the state capital.

Meanwhile the Niger state governor Dr Muazu Aliyu, who reacted in a press release signed by the Director General Media and Public Affairs, Malam Bala Ibrahim Abdulkadir, condemned the violence at Gwada, saying those behind the skirmish will not go unpunished. The full wrath of the law will be invoked on all involved, he said.

He called on well meaning people of Niger state to condemn the action, saying that there can't be meaningful development in the absence of peace. He admonished religious and traditional leaders in the state to be on their guard to curb any such occurrences, as it is capable of spilling over to other places with grave consequences.

Turaki: I'm fine, but in pain

By Ruby Rabi

Former governor of Jigawa state, Saminu Turaki who was involved in a car accident yesterday said he was doing fine and quite impressed with the kind of care he had received at the National Hospital.

Turaki, who has been moved from Intensive care unit to the private suite of the hospital, told *Daily Trust*

from his bed that apart from pains in his fractured arm, and some body pains, he is recovering quickly.

Speaking to family friends who paid him a visit, Turaki added that with the magnitude of the accident, he was quite grateful to God to have survived. He said that

the doctors have all been very nice and that he would under go some more tests tomorrow but that his fractured arm is making him very uncomfortable. The minister of state, health, Dr Aliyu Idi Hong who arrived at the hospital at about 8.00pm attired in a blue kaftan, to see the senator told *Daily Trust* that he was impressed with the

rate of recovery of the patient. He added that from the looks of things the Senator is out of danger, noting also that the level of health care is improving.

According to him, the National Hospital has all the expertise and equipment to cater for the former governor who he added was a close friend.

NEWS

Reps to review criminal justice system

The House of Representatives will review Nigeria's criminal justice system which aims to decongest prisons across the country and guarantee justice, Rep

By Tashikalmah Hallah & Nasidi A. Yahaya

Jerry Manwe has said. Manwe (PDP, Taraba State) chairman of House Committee on Interior said

the review will ensure quick dispensation of criminal cases, pointing out that the high rate of inmates 'awaiting trial' in Nigerian prisons is alarming and does not speak well of Nigeria's

criminal justice system.

According to him the review will re-appraise the country's criminal justice system and make it more effective, saying "we are worried over the nation's

overcrowded prisons".

He said the House will appropriate funds for the construction of more prisons across the country as well as ensure renovations of all the existing ones in line with international best practices.

"Since Over 60-70percent of inmates are awaiting trial, additional prisons need to be built across the country, there are provisions in the 2009 budget to reconstruct abandoned prisons", he said

The MP stated that the passage of Prison Amendment Act by the parliament will go a long way to solve the problems of

prison congestion, saying that adequate measures should be put in place to fast-track trials of suspects.

Manwe also said the House will soon consider the Bill which seeks to abrogate capital punishment, adding that hardened criminals must be punished to serve as deterrents to others.

He said: "the essence of punishment is to correct the criminals with a view to rehabilitate them. I therefore suggest that hardened criminals should be made to serve life jail-term instead of having them face the firing squad."



One of the major sources of water supply in Giri, a suburb of Abuja.

Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Oba Commends FG for allocating jetties to LGSG

The paramount ruler of Lagos, Oba Rilwanu Akiolu has commended President Umaru Musa Yar'adua for allocating four federal government jetties to Lagos state describing the gesture as a clear show of interest by the president in the development of the state.

Oba Akiolu made the remarks in his palace when the minister of transport, Alhaji Ibrahim Isa Bio paid

By Shehu Abubakar

him a courtesy visit in his palace. The minister was on a familiarization tour of establishments under his ministry in Lagos.

The deputy director press and public affairs to the minister, Mr. Kingsley Agha who was in the entourage of the minister told Daily Trust Oba Akiolu also solicited for the quick resolution of other pending

issues between the federal and Lagos state governments on the acquisition of properties in the state for public use. He said with the relinquishing of such houses, the federal government should revert the ownership to Lagos State government.

Speaking earlier, the minister told the Oba that Lagos is very strategic to the country's maritime industry saying, "Despite

the existence of five other ports in the country, what happens in Apapa and Tin Can Ports affect the whole of the country."

He informed the Oba that the congestion of the Lagos ports which the country grappled with in the past few months has now been overcome by the movement of overtime containers to Onne seaport in Rivers state.

Niger Delta ministry adopts transparency in consultancy bidding

The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs on Tuesday in Abuja adopted transparency in the opening of bids by various consultants seeking to enlist their services.

Mr Yahaya Abdullahi, the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, said the process would enable the ministry to engage consultants who would handle its projects as

provided in the 2009 budget.

"We are doing this in line with the provision of the procurement act, in conformity with the guidelines provided by government," he said.

Abdullahi promised that the ministry would adopt due process in ensuring that everybody who had applied received equal attention.

He said the consultants

would design projects for the Niger Delta in the areas of youth empowerment and infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, water and housing.

Mr Victor Igboanugo, the ministry's Deputy Director, Procurement, said the ministry offered a lot of opportunities for the region.

"It is a new ministry, and there are so many projects to be carried out

in the Niger Delta.

"The projects have yet to be designed. To be able to get a better picture of the place, the consultants have to go there and carry out the designs for all the projects," he said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that some 800 consultants will bid for the designing of the projects within three days. (NAN)

MMS registers over 400 informal miners

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

Over 400 informal miners across the country have so far been registered by the Ministry of Mines and Steel out of over 2000 that applied.

This was revealed yesterday at a two-day capacity-building workshop for journalist covering the Nigerian Minerals and Metals Sectors.

Responding to some questions, the Director Mining Cadastral Department, (MMS) Engr. Goni Sheikh said though investors are avoiding the mining sector, the so-called illegal miners are patronizing it.

He said apart from those registered, "Over 2000 have now applied for registration and they would be supported by the ministry in terms of providing them with both physical and financial to supports."

Engr. Sheikh said the ministry's decision to offer technical assistance and support to informal miners is in line with government's efforts at poverty reduction.

In his speech, Permanent Secretary to the ministry, Alhaji Isa Bello Sali, stated that the workshop is packaged to enable the ministry inform the media of its efforts especially in the wake of dwindling oil prices and the place of minerals and metals in the quest for diversification of the economic base of the nation.

Ekiti re-run: NOA plans peace forum

By Misbahu Bashi

The National Orientation Agency (NOA) will hold a Peace Forum for all political parties in Ekiti State over the forthcoming governorship re-run election in the state.

Director General of the Agency, Malam Idi Faruk said "The aim of the Forum was to ensure that people vote en-masse and shun all acts of violence during and after the election." Faruk said the success of the forthcoming election re-run is important to the development of the State because it is as an opportunity for the people to elect leaders who would manage their affairs.

In a separate development the Agency said consequent upon the reports of the outbreak of type 12 Cerebra-Spinal Meningitis (CSM) in Adamawa State, it has heightened enlightenment campaign on the nature and the spread of the disease. The Agency said 50 people found to have contact with the patient at the Hospital in Gulak, Madagali Local Government Area of the State.

The Adamawa State Director of NOA, Mohammed Ngada said people should avoid sleeping in crowded rooms with poor ventilations. He said such conditions promote the growth and spread of the disease. He said CSM vaccine is a means of preventing the disease.

NEWS

Police nab border bandits

From Bola Ojuola, Lagos

The police in Lagos have arrested some suspected trans-border bandits allegedly responsible for the stealing of vehicles from Nigeria to Benin Republic. The vehicles which include a Honda Accord car with registration number MQ 517 AAA, Honda Accord with registration number PP 986 KJA, Toyota Corolla with registration number CK 938 LSD, Toyota Corolla with registration number D 842 JJJ and Toyota Corolla with registration number RV879 KJA have been recovered. Lagos State police spokesman, Mr Frank Mba told Daily Trust that the recovery and arrest were made through the efforts of Nigerian police officers and their Benin counterparts. He said the vehicles were recovered in Benin Republic. Mba said the vehicles now in custody of the International police (Interpol), Alagbon, Ikoyi would soon be released to their owners. He called on owners of the vehicles to contact the Interpol office in Ikoyi or come with necessary documents for the recovery of their vehicles. He said the bandits would face the law.

... recover two corpses from salon

From Bola Ojuola, Lagos

The corpses of two teenage boys identified as Eze Oruwa, 17 and Clement were discovered in a hair dressing and barbing salon early yesterday in Ojodu area of Lagos. The two boys, Daily Trust learnt, may have died from fumes inhaled from a power generator kept inside the locked salon. The incident which occurred at number 2, Oremeji street, off Jide Sokoni street, Sabo in Ojodu left residents of the area in confusion as they gathered to discuss the incident. The boys, sources close to the area told Daily Trust had gone to sleep inside the salon with the generator on. The owner of the salon where one of the boys was working, Mrs Gbadume said Eze came to her house to collect the key saying he forgot it there.

She said she gave the boy the key, believing that he would go to the salon, pick up his own key and return her own key to her, but while waiting, she slept off, only to get to the salon the following morning to discover the dead bodies. She said she was more surprised that Eze did not sleep in the salon alone, but in the company of a friend, Clement who sold fast food in the area. Shocked to discover the corpse of the two boys inside the saloon, she raised an alarm. The Lagos State police PRO was not available for comment on the matter when Daily Trust visited yesterday.

Sokoto re-constitutes c'ttee on immoral activities

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, Sokoto

Against the backdrop of incessant complaints from the public on immoral activities, the Sokoto State government has inaugurated an 11-man Censorship Committee. Speaking during the inauguration ceremony yesterday, Governor Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko said the security and well being of the people were priorities of his administration, adding that he was quite aware of the complaints. Such activities he noted, are proliferation of video, satellite and internet viewing centres as well as video and CD rental houses where some uncensored and pornographic films are shown to the public, particularly youths and under aged children. He stressed that this was a matter of concern to him and all well meaning citizens of the state. Wamakko noted that he also observed a re-emerging trend of cultural dances and other activities which contravene the ethics of religion and culture. In his words; "It is against the background that I find it necessary to re-constitute a high powered committee, it is to monitor and check these illegal social activities and other harmful practices with a view to instilling acceptable values and discipline in the youths".

Customs lifts ban on training

From Hassan A Karofi, Kano

The Nigeria Customs has lifted the ban on training of its personnel in its training schools across the country after 15 years. Assistant Comptroller General of Customs in charge of personnel and training, Alhaji Salisu Argungu disclosed that 5000 officers would soon undergo training in all its centres. He said about 500 students would be allocated to Kano Training School.

"We are here to access the capacity of the college, we have 5000 now to train we are allocating 500 students to the training college in Kano in respect of what we have seen to avoid overstressing the existing facility", said Argungu. Alhaji Salisu Argungu who inspected facilities at the Kano Training School expressed happiness over the level of development on ground, pointing out that most of the dilapidated ones would be totally rehabilitated. The Assistant Comptroller said the service would mobilize funds from its federal allocation to fix such problems discovered in course of his facility tour. The Commandant of the Kano Training College, Alhaji Ali Wakili pledged to work with relevant authorities to provide the enabling learning environment.

NARTO denies sabotaging railways

By Austine Odo & Stella Iyaji

The National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) has refuted allegations that it is sabotaging the nation's railway system. The Association has also denied recent statements credited to the Minister of Transport, Alhaji Ibrahim Bio and Senate President, David Mark, linking road transporters to the problems in Nigeria's railways.

Reacting to the allegations while speaking with newsmen in Abuja yesterday, the Association's National Operations Coordinator, Alhaji Lawal Isa said those who blame transporters for the failure of the railways do so either out of ignorance or mischief, describing such allegations as "unfounded".

Chairman of NARTO, Alhaji Saleh Ali Nagero, Chairman ASA Nagero, retired Major Mohammed and retired Major Akiola and other officials of the Association said there was never a time in the history of the country when a transporter was appointed minister or even an aide to a serving minister to influence the decision making process in government to scuttle the development of the railways. He therefore wondered how the transporters come into play on the failure of the railways.

"Why did the system defy all expert interventions by the..."

national life? We are constrained to ask; who killed Nigeria Airways, Nigerian National Shipping Line, NITEL, National Freight Company, National Supply Company, manufacturing industries, Federal Mass Transit Scheme, the power sector, the textiles among others, is it Nigerian transporters?" he said. Citing possible reasons for the present state of the railways, Alhaji Isa noted that the situation was further aggravated by government policy direction which placed priority on massive road development between 1960 and 1970, without adequate attention on improving the railway system.

"This situation was rather..."

transport infrastructure and backed up by an effective national transport policy which seems to be practically non-existent in Nigeria", he said.

NARTO therefore called on Senate President, David Mark to initiate measures through which the Senate Committee on Transport for a full scale inquiry to unravel the mystery behind the allegations of sabotaging government efforts at resuscitating the Nigerian Railways, including the \$500 million railways contract to the Chinese during the Abacha regime and the \$8.3 billion second railways contract to the Chinese by the previous administration without appreciable result till date and to make the inquiry sub-



A woman about to cross a railway line in Jos.

Pic: Afolabi Sotunde

Sokoto to sack unqualified teachers next year

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

Chairman of the Universal Basic Education Board in Sokoto State, Alhaji Umaru Nagwari Tambuwal has disclosed that by next year, all unqualified teachers would be dropped.

He said, "By 2010, all unqualified teachers are not supposed to be with us. That is a directive from the National Council of Education".

The UBEC Sokoto boss who stated this in a chat with journalists in Sokoto said they were however embarking on massive training of teachers.

He expressed concern over what he noted as the falling standard of education in the country, saying, "it is disheartening that some NCE graduate cannot speak good English, not to talk of writing a comprehensive sentence. It is left for the stakeholders in education to find out where the problem lies."

On the Teachers Salary Scale (TSS) which is yet to be implemented in the state, the

chairman said government had reached an agreement with the teachers' union that the new salary scale would be implemented after the committee set up to verify teachers conclude its assignment.

Speaking on the achievements of the Board, Nagwari said the board had trained 15,000 teachers in different areas, adding that 769 NCE holders were recently employed.

He said it spent N34 million to provide some communities hand-pumps, boreholes and toilets among oth-

ers through a special programme code-named Local Communities Self Help Project.

According to him, the board has constructed 2,520 classrooms and furnished them while essential materials for teaching were also procured in the 23 local government areas of the state.

The state UBEC chairman called for more private sector intervention in education as according to him, government alone cannot do it.

NULGE orders Ondo workers back to work

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) Ondo State chapter yesterday ordered its members in the state to resume work today.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the chairman of the NULGE Caretaker Committee, Mr.

Services had all pledged adequate security for the council workers.

It would be recalled that Mimiko had on March 4, 2009 dissolved the executive and legislative arms of all the 18 local government councils in the state, saying the dissolution of the councils was as a result of the impending litiga-

tions restraining the former administration of Dr. Olusegun Agagu from conducting the local council election on December 15, 2007.

The council workers decided to stay at home in order to avert danger which was likely to occur by the forceful attempt of the sacked council chairmen to enter office.

NEWS

Power probe: Senator urges exposure of culprits

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Gusau

Senator Sahabi Ya'u Kaura representing Zamfara East federal constituency has advised that the lingering power probe by the National Assembly should be carried out to its logical conclusion and those found wanting be punished. Speaking to newsmen in Gusau, Senator Kaura posited that the measure became necessary because Nigerians had been talking of how to do away with corruption and the best way to do it is to expose whoever is found to be corrupt in whatever form and be punished. He said there should be no scapegoat and by the time Nigerians begin to toe that line, the country could do away with corruption completely or reduce it to the barest minimum. Commenting on complaints arising from states and local governments joint accounts, Senator Sahabi Kaura said the National Assembly was looking into the constitutional clause which made the provision and the issue would be taken care of in the constitutional amendment. According to him, the National Assembly is considering the possibility of sending money directly to the local governments. He however said that did not mean the local governments would be given blank cheques rather, the states would be given the responsibility to monitor the day to day running of the councils.

Jigawa to verify civil servants

The Chairman, Jigawa State Civil Service Commission, Alhaji Aminu Umar, on Tuesday said the commission would soon embark on the verification of workers' certificates. Umar announced this in an interactive session when he visited Buji Local Government Area. He said the workers would be expected to present their educational qualifications before a committee inaugurated by the commission. In his response, the Chairman of the local government, Alhaji Isa Gwadayi, thanked members of the commission for the visit and pledged his cooperation on the assignment. (NAN)

Father, son arraigned over assault on cleric

The police in Lagos yesterday arraigned a landlord and his son for allegedly assaulting a cleric and three others. John Abegunrin, 62, and Babatunde Abegunrin, 28, were charged with assaulting Rev. Folashade Obafunwa and three other members of the New Fountain of the Word Christian Centre, Ikeja. The accused were arraigned before Magistrate Teslim Elias in Ikeja on a five-count charge of assault and breach of public peace. The prosecutor, Mr Aruna Ebhodagbe, said the duo inflicted body injuries on Obafunwa, Mr Martins Olufemi, Miss Aderonke Martins, and Mr Ayo Afolabi on April 12. The prosecutor said the cleric and the others were former tenants of the landlord, and that the accused attacked and wounded them when they came to collect N70,000 owed their church by the landlord. (NAN)

Plateau govt reacts to call for suspension of Jang

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

The Plateau State government has reacted to the letter written by the Chief Emmanuel Mangni led faction of the PDP in the state calling for the suspension of the state governor, Jonah Jang from the party.

Mangni had in a letter to the national secretariat of the PDP called for the suspension of Jang from the party alleging among other reasons that the governor had been working against the interest of the party in the state. The state Commissioner for Information, Nuhu Gagara while speaking to newsmen in Jos, said the letter lacked substance and portrayed the Mangni faction as a group that does not know what it is doing.

Gagara said the governor had not committed any offence for him to be suspended from the party. He said the Mangni faction was only out to cause disaffection in the state and make the state ungovernable, adding that they would not go far. "What offence has the governor committed? The leader behind the letter had been suspended from the party. I strongly believe that the intention of the group is to cause disaffection and make the state ungovernable, we are watching them, they cannot succeed in their antics", he said.

Commandant cautions Liberia-bound soldiers on nation's image

The Commandant, 222 Armoured Brigade, Sobi barracks, Ilorin, Brigadier General Adamu Marwa has cautioned soldiers and officers selected for the United Nations peace mission to Liberia to ensure that they maintain the good name of the country by abiding by the rules and regulations. Marwa who stated this while

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

addressing officers and soldiers of the 222 Battalion who were to be inducted for the UN mission warned that any soldier found wanting would be punished in accordance with the regulations.

He appealed to the troops to conduct themselves as good ambassadors of the Nigerian Army and the country. He urged them to put the training they received into good use for the benefit of the country. The commandant commended the Federal Government for the support given to the soldiers and officers during and after the training.



From left: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Steel Development Alhaji Isa Bello Sali, Minister of Mines and Steel Development Mrs. Diezani Alison-Maduekwe and the Chairman of Mines Association of Nigeria Dr. Suny Ekozin at an interactive session in the ministry, recently.

Benue sacks boat operators over disagreement with gov's convoy

Barely a week after part of Governor Gabriel Suswam's convoy was held hostage by operators of local boats improvised to ferry passengers across the River Katsina-Ala at Buruku, the Benue State government has ordered the disbandment of the local maritime union.

The directive, according to the chairman, Mr. Alfred Akighir became necessary because the boatmen operating under the aegis of Tombu Maritime Workers of Nigeria, Bururku had "breached security" on the governor's convoy. The boatmen last week held the

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

governor's convoy with the occupants including top government officials in a boat for over 30 minutes to press for payment for conveying the over 20 vehicles across the river. The governor's Senior Special Assistant on Special Duties, Mr. Joseph Tsavsar was directed by the governor to settle the boat operators but the aide failed to pay the money, triggering the protest which culminated into the hostage taking. The council chairman who announced the disbandment, also announced on the state radio that the council declared one of the

leaders of the union, Mr. Ngutor Luter also known as "Kogi", wanted. He alleged that the union leader instigated the seizing of the governor's convoy and therefore directed the Divisional Police Station in the area to effect his arrest for alleged "breach of security".

Mr. Akighir also apologized to the governor on behalf of the people of Bururku, saying the council and the people regretted what he called "the behaviour of the canoe boys to the governor's convoy".

The governor, who led a convoy of over 20 vehicles,

was crossing to Buruku to continue the journey to Makurdi from Logo where he went to commission two electricity projects, one in Mchia, and the other in Wende when part of his convoy was held up on the river. Suswam who was the first to board one of the wooden boats touched down at the other bank and directed his aide, Mr. Joseph Tsavsar to pay N21,000 to the boatmen. The governor left as soon as his security vehicles with the occupants also crossed to join him. But Joseph Tsavsa who was detailed to pay for all the vehicles on the convoy, only settled for some.

Church urges revival of textiles

The Christian Evangelical Fellowship of Nigeria (CEFN) yesterday urged the Federal Government to revive the country's ailing textile industry, because of its strategic socio-economic importance. The church made the appeal in a communique issued at the end of its 26th National Easter Conference at Kakuri, in Kaduna South Local Government Area.

This contained in a communique jointly signed by the Chairman, Board of Trustees General Overseer of

CEFN, Mr John Achile and Rev. Malachi Ogakwu, respectively. The communique was made available to newsmen in Kaduna yesterday. The church also enjoined governors of the 19 states in the northern part of the country to redouble their efforts to "re-open these moribund industries", including textile mills and other manufacturing companies. It said resuscitating the textile sector would also rejuvenate the country's

economy by way of job creation, enhanced local taxes and social services. Similarly, the church urged the Federal Executive Council and the National Assembly to "implement pragmatic electoral reforms to strengthen the country's democratic process' While condemning frequent religious crises in parts of the country, CEFN advised that perpetrators should be punished and that citizens should not be discriminated against because of their faith. (NAN)

NEWS

Expert advocates review of agric strategies

Agricultural expert, Prof. Peter Okuneye, has called for a review of agricultural development strategies to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the sector.

Okuneye of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, made the call in Abuja recently even as he observed that the sector had recorded positive growth in recent times.

By Abubakar Ibrahim

However, he said various policies and programmes enunciated over the years, especially those funded by donor agencies and development partners had made little positive impact due to the method with which they were formulated and implemented.

According to him, studies have shown some advantages and weaknesses in the use of loans and grants from development partners for the

development of the country's agricultural sector.

"There is, therefore, the need to review the strategies

being adopted so as to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of various domestic and foreign resources committed

to agricultural development in Nigeria", Okuneye said.

He said the level to which intervention objectives

could move agriculture forward, depended on the intensity of investment by the government and foreign entities.

ECOWAS to adopt legal framework on mining

Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) is to create a draft on harmonisation of guiding principles and policies in the mining sector, ECOWAS director of Industry and mines, Mensan Lawson-Hechelli has said.

He made the statement during National Experts workshop organized by ECOWAS in Abuja yesterday, adding that the meeting is the first critical step in the finalization process to the adoption of the draft document by the council of ministers, next May, and then by the heads of states and governments, possibly next June.

He states that "ECOWAS ministers are expecting from you experts, based on your knowledge and expertise, to make contributions on the orientations of our programmes for the development of the mineral resource of mineral sectors in the ECOWAS region".

By Aisha Umar

He said the quest to enhance the contribution of the mineral sector towards the economic and social development of the African continent has been articulated by member states since times past. Almost all acknowledge that mineral products supports modern-day lives and mineral resources wealth can serve as the engine of growth and development that can sustain progress long after the minerals are depleted.

In his speech a representative from Oxfam African regional office, Ibrahim Aidara said revenues from extractive industries in West African countries form an important part of the national economies, he added that our governments, the mining companies and communities have long history of interdependence which unfortunately has seen its high and low points over the years.



Workers evacuating goods from an overturned trailer at Kaduna by-pass highway at the weekend. Pic: Abdulkadir Badsha Muktar

Resident doctors embark on strike

The Association of Resident Doctors of the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Yaba, in Lagos, on Monday embarked on an indefinite strike to press home its demand for employment of more doctors in the hospital.

Addressing a news conference in Lagos, the President of the Association, Dr Niran Okeowo, said that the association resorted to the strike because their members

were working under pressure following shortage of medical doctors.

Okeowo faulted the quality of healthcare services being provided in the hospital due to the dearth of doctors.

He said that the association had made several appeals to the management on the issue, particularly on the need to have an annual replacement for doctors who usually leave at the comple-

tion of their six-year residence training, but to no avail.

"The association has therefore decided to embark on an indefinite strike to protest against the quality of care that our patients receive due to the low number of doctors to attend to them," Okeowo said.

He said that the hospital had more than 80,000 registered patients with less than 30 resident doctors, adding

that 10 of the doctors would soon complete their residency programme.

"It is a bad situation. We need to improve on the quality of care for the patients as less doctors will have to attend to more in and out-patients," he said.

There are currently about 150 psychiatric doctors working in the country, according to sources. (NAN)

MCAN hosts seminar for women

The Muslims Corpers' Association of Nigeria (MCAN) is hosting a seminar for young Muslim women in Port Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers state. A statement by the organisation's president, Ismail Yusuf said the seminar begins April 17 and ends 19 at Al-Ustra Centre, Port Harcourt. With the theme; 'Muslim Sisters amidst Contemporary Challenges,' MCAN said the program is designed to sensitize and enlighten the youth especially young

By Yunus Abdulhamid

women on how to tackle challenges of womanhood in contemporary times. Guest speakers at the three day event are the Special Adviser to the president on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Hajia Amina Ibrahim and Dr Imam Kilani, a lecturer at the university of Port Harcourt. The statement read in part, "we believe that the nation cannot be developed without the contribution of our women folks who must

be taken as partners in progress. This is why this year's seminar is centred on our young women. "It is our hope that this year's sisters' seminar will help in the nation building especially in the current rebranding exercise of the federal government," the statement said. The MCAN seminar is an annual event of the group where participants are drawn from across the country and is rotated among the six geopolitical zones of the country.

Easter: Ebri wants Christians to pray for leaders

The national chairman of the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), Mr Clement Ebri, has called on Christians to pray for the country's leaders in order to have successful governance at various levels of government. In an Easter message, Ebri lauded Christians for the successful conclusion of the Lenten period and wished them peaceful celebration. He appealed to every Nigerian citizen to join hands with

government to facilitate speedy recovery of the economic malaise. The PPA National Chairman enjoined Christians to use the period of Easter to ponder over the present global economic meltdown and pray for quick recovery from the recession. He noted that the global economic meltdown constituted a major challenge to all Christians and non-Christians alike,

particularly as the country depended mainly on one product for its survival. Ebri expressed hope that the Christians will sacrifice like Jesus did to ensure that the country progressed. He urged them to pray fervently for the nation's leaders so that the Almighty may touch their hearts to allow for free and fair elections in order to entrench democracy and ensure peace and stability in the country.

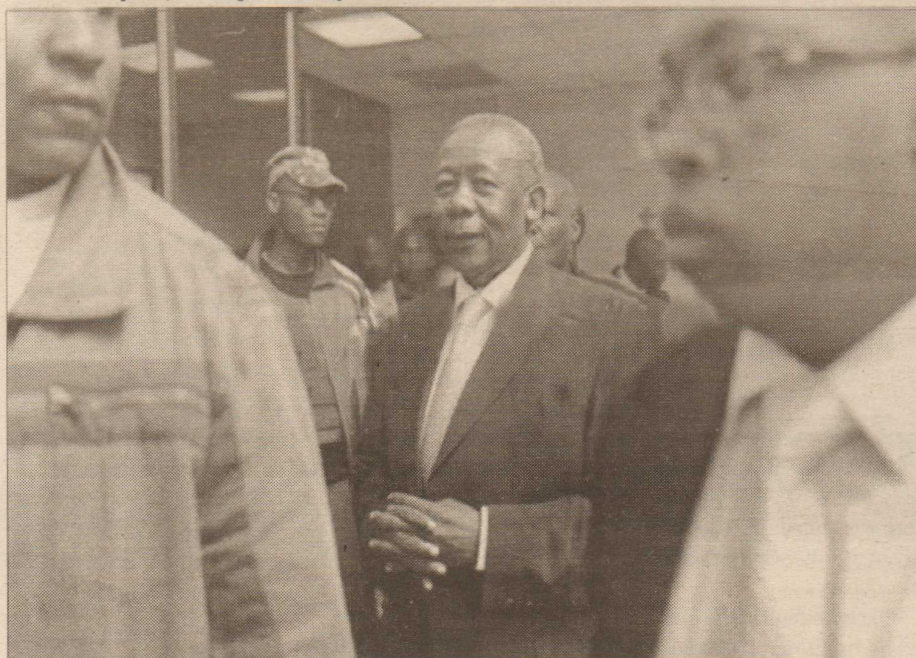
Photo News



Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Consultant Alex Opere (left) explaining a point at the FRSC training on the use of breathalyser in Abuja recently. Pic: NAN



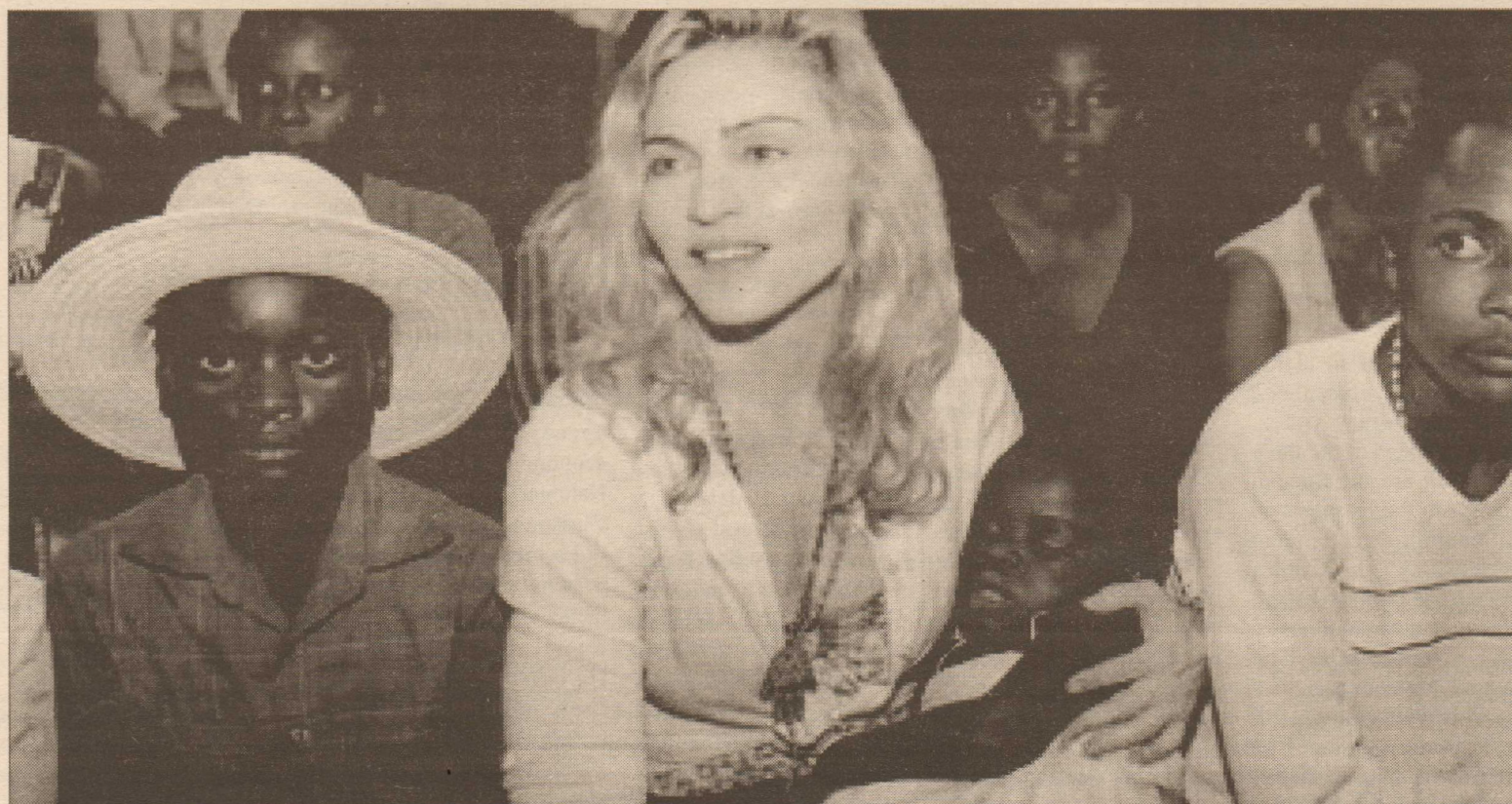
A Chinese cyclist makes her way along a street filled with white pollen falling from trees in Beijing on Monday. There are more than 300,000 pollen trees growing in the capital. Pic: AFP



South African suspended police chief and ex-INTERPOL head Jackie Selebi (centre) arrives for his corruption trial at the high court in Johannesburg yesterday. Pic: AFP



Mrs. Bola Fayomi (left), wife of Pastor Funso Fayomi of Redeem Christian Church of Christ, celebrates her golden jubilee with her 10-year-old son Timi at a thanksgiving service in Abuja at the weekend.



Madonna, the American pop star, cradling Mercy James in her arms. Madonna has launched a charm offensive as she steps up her bid to adopt the 3-year-old orphan from Malawi after a judge ruled recently that she was not eligible to adopt the girl because she has not lived in Malawi.

NEWS

Helmets: FRCS impounds 841 motorbikes

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Maiduguri

Over 814 commercial motorcycle operators who failed to use crash helmets have been arrested and their bikes impounded by the Borno State command of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). The state commandant of the FRSC, Mr. Donatus Edeh who disclosed this to newsmen yesterday said the arrest and seizure were effected from the commencement of the policy from January. The commandant said owners of the bikes failed to pay the fine of N2,000 for violating the policy and abandoned their bikes. Edeh who declined mentioning the amount realised from the operation pointed out that it was the headquarters of the FRSC that had the power to announce the fund realised from the exercise. "Our responsibility is only to arrest and issue tellers to offenders to pay N2,000 at designated banks," he said. Edeh advised motorcycle operators and passengers to abide by the law establishing the use of helmets as the agency would continue to monitor them, warning that defaulters would not be spared.

Plateau House begins investigation on closure of state varsity

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

The Plateau State House of Assembly yesterday mandated its committee on education to commence investigation into why the state university was closed down by government in 2007. Speaker of the House, Istifanus Mwanasat, after deliberations on the matter, agreed that there was a need to pry further into the matter and asked the House committee to liaise with the state Ministry of Education, and that of Justice to find out the state of the university. The committee has been given up to Wednesday next week to conclude its findings on the matter and report back to the House. Committee chairman on education, Wokdung Abbas had last month raised the issue of the closure of the university, saying it was time the House revisited the issue as he suspected that academic activities in the university may not have been suspended as claimed by the state government. The House while allowing deliberations on the matter yesterday after two attempts to reopen the matter failed, agreed that there was more to the alleged suspension of the university than meets the eye, stressing that it was incumbent on them to find out what is actually happening. Most of the members expressed concern on the plight of students and staff of the university.

Union urges action on Abuja-Lokoja road

Mr. Joseph Omotayo, Secretary, Idah Line, Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Jabi park, Abuja, on Tuesday called on the Federal Government to expedite action on the dualisation of the Abuja/Lokoja road. Omotayo told newsmen that the condition of the road was adversely affecting the operations of members of the union. According to him accidents resulting from the bad condition of the road had resulted in the death of many members of the union and their passengers. He said that the condition of the road had also led to drivers spending longer hours on the road, a situation he said, was not good for their health and safety of their passengers. Also speaking, Mr. Zaccheus Arowobusoye, Chairman of Lagos/Ibadan Zone, NURTW, Jabi park, called on the authorities to ensure that fuel was available in the country, particularly during festivities. He said commuter vehicles operators increased fares last Easter holiday because of fuel scarcity. He said fare from Abuja to Lagos rose to N4,000 from N3,700 during the holidays because of fuel scarcity. A commuter, Joy Okolie, told newsmen at Jabi Motor Park that fare from Abuja to Lokoja dropped from N1,000 to N750 after the Easter celebration. The Jabi motor park lacked the hustle and bustle it witnessed last Friday when many people were travelling for the Easter holiday and Monday evening when they were returning. (NAN)

'Wage increase 'll not solve workers' problems'

Dr. Adesola Adedayo, Chairman, Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area (LCDA) in Lagos, said on Tuesday that increasing the salaries of civil servants now would not solve their problems. Adedayo told newsmen that only new measures to improve social amenities and infrastructure nationwide would better the lot of the country's workforce. He recalled that salary increases had never solved the problems of workers. "Since the days of the Udoji awards, salary increases have never solved the problems of the workforce. What can actually ameliorate their situation are improvements in the level of visible infrastructure. "We can have free and quality education, free health services. These will certainly go a long way to reduce the pressure on the package that the workforce takes home," Adedayo said. On calls for the scrapping of the local governments, the council chairman urged the Federal and State Governments to modify the council system by improving on some identified bottlenecks, rather than scrapping them. He added that people at the grass roots had more access to their council chairmen and councilors than Federal or State Government officials. (NAN)

Benue Speaker escapes no confidence vote

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

Benue State House of Assembly Speaker, Mr. Tersser Tumba, yesterday escaped a vote of no confidence on him by members of the House's G-23 who are angling for his impeachment following allegations that he had been cornering resources meant for the running of the House.

Tumba who described the funds said to have been embezzled as "peanuts", told newsmen after an executive session that members of the G-23 had the right to "dig into

funds coming to the assembly."

He told newsmen that he allowed them to peep into the accounts of the assembly "for accountability and transparency sake", but added that "funds have always been judiciously expended, there is no misappropriation."

"Members of the G-23 are interested in knowing everything, especially what remains of the expended

funds, but it is just peanuts, I told them."

After the session which ran deep into yesterday's seating, members agreed to set up a committee made up of floor members and two members of the leadership to investigate the finances.

Floor members of the House, known as G-23 met all through the weekend, due to their dissatisfaction in the manner the Speaker distributed the March overhead for the running of the House to members.

The decision of the members was to pass a Vote of No Confidence on the Speaker at the sitting yesterday but some members prevailed on the House to investigate him before any action is taken against him.

Chairman of the G-23, Mr. Bayer Dzeremo told journalists that members were dissatisfied with the management of the resources of the Assembly and needed clarifications on some critical issues. He added that the members wanted comprehensive reports on certain financial issues involving the House and the State Executive Council.



Members of the United Association of Physically Challenged Persons of Nigeria (UAPCP) during an Easter get together for members at Mgbo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State on Sunday. Pic: NAN.

Don tasks journalists on investigative reporting

From Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

A senior lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University, Kano, Balarabe Maikaba, has tasked Nigerian journalists on in-depth reporting, saying investigative reporting was the vogue in advanced parts of the world.

Speaking on Pyramid FM programme *Siyasar Kano*, monitored in Kano yesterday, Maikaba said journalists, through this, would be able

to discover classified information that would be important for public knowledge.

He said journalists should not wait for a law to enable them access official information, saying rather, a journalist should display his journalistic acumen by digging out unreported or underreported issues.

Maikaba, a communication research specialist, stated

further that journalists nowadays reduce themselves to beggars by seeking gratification rather than sticking to the ethical standards of the profession.

"Journalism is respected in every part of the world, and when there is no news in any country, the country will be at a standstill," he said. The don said while journalists in the advanced countries were dignified, journalists in Nigeria are not. He lamented that

most Nigerian journalists were quacks who have no formal training.

"It is not just the ability to write or to broadcast that makes one a journalist but rather the underlying ethics that guide the conduct of the profession," Maikaba added.

He then said there was need for journalists to have rigorous trainings to be exposed to the rudiments of investigative reporting.

Adamawa donates N1m, materials to fire victims

The Adamawa Government yesterday donated N1 million cash and assorted relief materials to victims of fire disaster at the Yola Main Market.

Governor Murtala Nyako, who made the presentation, said the gesture was to cushion the effect of the disaster

on the victims.

Alhaji Sani Ribadu, Chairman, Yola South Local Government represented the governor on the occasion. Nyako said that the donation was not a compensation for the losses, but was meant to provide succour to enable the affected traders to re-

settle for business.

He warned members of the public against bush burning, building in flood-prone areas and careless handling of both domestic and industrial fires.

The governor urged the local government officials and those of the traders

unions to ensure judicious distribution of the materials by ensuring that only victims benefited from the gesture.

Ribadu, on his part, thanked the governor for the gesture and pledged to ensure equity and fairness in sharing the items. (NAN)

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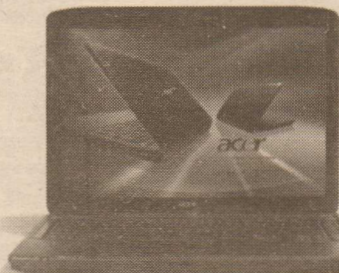
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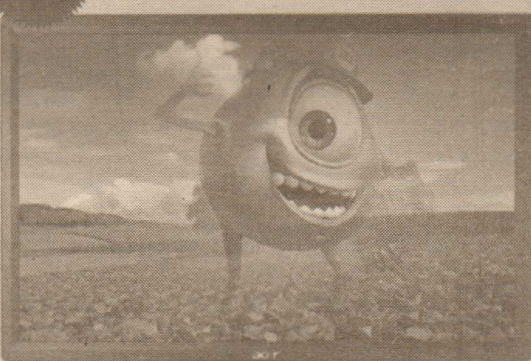
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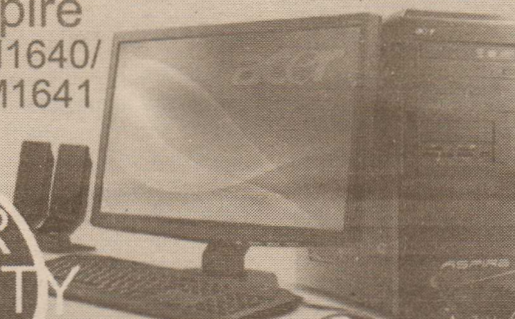
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OPINION

Nigeria and elite machinations

By Musa Ado Rimaye

Since independence, Nigeria has made only limited progress in the elimination of poverty which today afflicts over 70% of the population. As world's 11th largest oil producer, the economy remains overwhelming undiversified with earnings from oil and gas comprising over 90% of exports and 80% of revenues. Yet the country's oil wealth has failed to generate sustainable economic growth, better public services or improved living conditions for the majority of the people. Why?

The negativities in public administration that contagiously obscure meaningful socio-economic development are directly traceable to bad leadership. The art of leading according to S. L. A. Marshall in *Men Against Fire*, "is the art of dealing with humanity, of working diligently on behalf of men, of being sympathetic with them but equally, of insisting that they make a square facing toward their own problems".

The depressing economic condition in Nigeria which has been characterized by leadership incompetence, corruption, stereotyping, high level sycophancy, putting square pegs in round holes, poor public financial management, poor institutional development, inept infrastructural facilities, *Godfatherism*, caged judiciary, poor democratic credentials of most of the elected or selected public office holders is inimical to the growth and development of the country. The worst hit by the present economic quagmire is the North. Why?

Northern Nigeria is progressively becoming depressingly impotent in all indices of measurement except that of population and landmass. The Northern masses were not given education, a basic, fundamental tool for living even in ancient times. Northern political elite who controlled (for the most part since independence) state affairs failed to educate their people in western literacy. Instead, chose the simpler option of leaving them either ignorant or exposing them only to Islamic and Arabic literacy. Instead of being champions of modernity, development and progress are today regressing. Instead of facing challenges of science, technology, commerce, telecommunications and Internet, they are resorting to escapism and blame

logic.

Northern Economic Summit, Northern Education Summit, Chamber of Commerce and all that. Yet, the majority of northerners have nothing to show for it. The Textile Industries that were in Kaduna and Kano have become shadows of what they used to be due to draconian government policies made in most part by the northern elite. Decades of clinging to power has produced nothing but chronic poverty, unemployment, de-industrialisation and *almajirci*.

Educationally, the north is far behind. Public schools have become a caricature of modern school system in the north. The power elite have achieved their aim of killing and burying education in the north. A situation where a JSS II student can neither read a simple comprehension nor write a single sentence in English language is to say the least ludicrous. They have left the masses to their own fate. Private schools are beyond the pockets of the down-trodden who has to grapple with the rigours of meeting his basic needs just to stay alive.

As for political participation, the northern masses have become increasingly disenchanted due to arbitrariness and deception from the power elite. Democracy thrives only where there is freedom of expression and the right of choice, it would be inimical to the political process to continue to impose candidates on the people. The northern masses have been at the receiving end of elite's machinations. The power resides with the elite and the masses have for long been turned into robots, remote-controlled by the whims and caprices of domineering elite. The masses have every cause to feel dejected and depressed. There is poverty, going with high velocity. The future looks less rosy, but the elite living a flamboyant life style.

The above situation which came about as a result of bad governance led to a situation where as Dr. Mahmud Tukur says: "the wider population though possessed of pristine wisdom – but perhaps due to its material poverty, is forced to be opportunistic; to expect immediate reward in monetary terms

and instant gratification; is incapable of demanding for accountability, cannot stand up for its rights, is unable to resist abuse of office, corruption or oppression".

Most of the violence we have been witnessing was the consequences of poverty, lack of employment and frustration. Securing a viable polity – that is a Nigeria in which there is free movement of people, goods and services and a country in which residency and participation rights are guaranteed for all Nigerians wherever they may choose to live is what is urgently needed. This connectivity is important and has to be appreciated by elite which has the reputation of greed and selfishness.

The relatively smaller number of the elite, as a privileged group, is wont to using the enormous powers at their disposal to champion their narrow causes, at the expenses of the larger but less privilege groups. They drag by force or "favour" the lower classes in that selfish direction that finally produces disenchantment among the masses. The ordinary people are not really involved in the political activities. All along, it has been a game of the elite who only use the masses as tools in fixing up their political machinery; use them as cannon fodder when the push comes to the shove, and then, use money or muscle on them when the masses loose interest in a game that largely is none of their business.

The typical northern elite has forgotten or tends to forget that the responsibility for running the affairs of people has been vested in men not for the purpose of enforcing their own orders or imposing their own will on others, enslaving people, calling them to bow down their heads in submission, enabling them to construct spacious palaces by fleecing the weak and down-trodden; in short for the pursuit of their pleasure and self-glorification. Men who are at the helm of affairs should have a feeling that this is a burden laid on them that they may administer social justice.

Public office holders, who master the art of treasury looting in a way that does harm to society, should bear in mind that such privileges will not endure. All wealth and resources belong, as a rule, to society, and

they must return to society willingly or by force. Human society stands on justice and justice demands that resources be shared fairly among all members, where this is not done, society is bound to disintegrate, resulting in the dispossession and routing of the privileged groups.

Why don't we think of building a society in pursuit of an economically fuller prosperous life and which balances the material welfare with the spiritual values in which both the state and the citizens acquire wealth through fair means without exploiting others or subjecting others to wrong and injustice, but by promoting the good of others from what is earned or accumulated? A Nigerian society in which citizens are brothers and friends, and are bound by bonds of affection, nationalism and patriotism; such that no one group – tribal or religious – shall antagonize any other again; but each shall endeavour to understand, appreciate and support the other in a collective effort to enhance and protect the collective heritage of our country.

We need a new Nigeria in which equal opportunities of progress shall be enjoyed by everyone. A Nigeria where no individual or group shall suffer any disability that may in anyway impede the growth of his/her faculties or hamper the development of his/her personality. A society where a way shall be opened for all citizens to make as much progress as possible according to their individual in-born capacity and personal merits without prejudice to similar rights of other people.

Nigerians are ardently looking for a set of leaders who will build a society in which everyone is an equal participant; a society which cannot tolerate class divisions based on distinction of birth, tribe, religion and social position; a society where all citizens shall enjoy equal status. The only criterion of superiority in the much needed new Nigeria is personal ability and character. That is, individuals shall be assessed and recognized on the basis of what they do and not who they are.

Rimaye wrote in from 16, Abubakar Burga Road, Keffi, Nasarawa State. adorimayemusa@yahoo.com

The House and border dispute between CR and Ebonyi

By Ochadu O. Lawrence

It was with a rude shock and surprise that the Ukelle people of Cross River State received the news of the visit of the House of Representatives Committee on Inter-state Boundary on the 17th of March, 2009. The House committee was ably led by the chairman Honourable Samson Osagie. The committee first went to Ebonyi State and had an interactive session with the officials of that government.

The chairman then stated that the desire of his committee was for all those affected during the 2005 clashes, who are still displaced, to return to where they were before the conflict. Thereafter, Honourable Osagie led his committee in the company of Ebonyi State deputy governor Chigozie Ogbu and some members of Ebonyi State House of Assembly to the disputed area in Cross River State. There, they saw for themselves Cross River villages and communities such as Ijibolor I, Ijibolor II, Ogba, Ijama, Ipollo 1-5, Okpodon, Ntrigom, Benekaba, Adum, Ijegbeji, Ogomagoro, Ujokom, and Mfuma 1 and 2 all covering the disputed area.

In addition, they saw for themselves the presence of Cross River state Government in the Okom Enyi primary school located close to the real boundary and administered by Cross River State government, Ipollo Junior secondary school run by Cross River State, St. Judge's primary school owned by Cross River State government, and a 1.4 billion naira cross river state road

project running from this disputed area to another part of cross River State, Apiapum (Ipolo – Apiapum road project)

What is surprising is that the Chairman after his visit and with what he saw still insisted that the Izzi people have a claim on the land in Cross River State. It is also very surprising that this visit was made with Ebonyi State deputy governor and government officials without the equivalent invitation and representation of the governor and officials of Cross River State. This one-sided visit, coupled with the Chairman's utterances proposing to re-settle the Izzi people on Cross River State soil "for the sake of one Nigeria", has been viewed with so much suspicion as to what could have transpired between Ebonyi State government and this honourable committee of the House of Representatives.

The visit has provoked and fuelled anger among the Ukelle people of Cross River State which is capable of disrupting the peace currently enjoyed by the Izzi and Ukelle peoples.

In the previous dispensation of President Olusegun Obasanjo, for the sake of justice and fair play, all meetings with the Boundary Commission and committees were held with Cross River and Ebonyi officials at Ebonyi State, Abuja or some neutral ground. Such meetings looked at the historical facts and official boundaries. They did not seek to

impose a people on another for the sake of so-called one Nigeria. It is never done any where there is a dispute.

The judgement in Bakassi requested Crossriverians to live in Bakassi as Cameroonians under Cameroon government or leave. They left. The boundary was not shifted in favour of Nigeria because history and historical beacons were used and the whole world observed. History and historical survey data is available to prove that the disputed land is cross river state. Whether this data has been destroyed in the Nigerian Archiving system, it is still there somewhere in the world and we request the honourable chairman of the boundary committee to seek to use such data instead of political consideration or intangible approaches to take his decision.

Such decisions will not bring peace to the region. Cross River State people are peace loving and law abiding people. History has shown that they do not have a tendency to overrun a people and take their land.

What the chairman of the committee, Honourable Samson Osagie needs to know is this:

1. The authentic or the cross river state boundary had been there when it was Enugu state. Ebonyi State was created from Enugu and Abia states and those boundaries have been adjusted accordingly. The cross river state boundary did not have to shift or was not shifted by this creation.

2. If the claim by the Ebonyi State

government that the boundary between Cross River and Ebonyi states is at Mfuma River is true then the matter would have been resolved since 1995 as stated by the Ebonyi State deputy governor. There would not have been a war between the Ukelle people of Cross River state and the izzi people of Ebonyi State

What the chairman of the committee, Honourable Samson Osagie should do is to request that the beacons that were planted by the colonialists on the boundary between Cross River (or South Eastern state then) and the previous Enugu (or East Central state then) and presently Ebonyi State, which were uprooted be replaced or reinstalled. This will ensure that the Izzi people will live in Ebonyi State where they rightly belong and will bring about a lasting peace in the land. Nigerians travel and live in other peoples land but they do not seek that their state boundaries should be moved to that land. It is for the cross river state and the Ukelle people to decide whether they will accept Izzi people to live on their land or not. It should not be the decision of boundary committee. It was the decision of the Cameroon government that the Cross River people could live in Cameroon. It was not the decision of Nigeria, and the world simply advised but the people of cross River turned down the offer. Let us learn from the past and follow the path of justice.

Lawrence is of the Ukelle Development Forum, Abuja.

EDITORIAL

Amnesty for militants

President Umar Yar'adua's offer to grant amnesty to militants in the Niger Delta region ready to lay down their arms thereby making themselves amenable for rehabilitation and reintegration into the society is a kind olive branch aimed at pacifying the region without recourse to punitive action. The decision, coming after the white paper on the Niger Delta Technical Committee set up in December 2008 to find solution to the crisis in the Niger Delta underlined the seriousness of the resolution of the crisis. Thus, the President's declaration indicates the readiness on the part of the federal government to implement the proposals.

But sadly 24 hours after the declaration, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) rejected the amnesty offer and demanded for the release of their members currently in detention including Henry Okah who is standing trial for treason at a Federal High Court, Jos, Plateau state. The rejection of the amnesty by MEND amounts to a repudiation of the goodwill and the spirit of amicably settling a dispute that, everyone agrees is doing incalculable harm to the people of the Niger Delta and the nation. Therefore for patriotic reasons alone the rejection is unreasonable and flies in the face of good sense. The damage the criminal activities in the region are doing to the national economy is unquantifiable. According to the Presidential committee on Niger Delta the country lost 1,000 lives and a whopping sum of \$23.7 billion between January and September, 2008. It also revealed that attacks on oil installations resulted in several shutdowns and spillages with losses in revenue estimated at \$20.7bn. The additional sum of \$3bn was lost to bunkering. "If we were to buy peace, we would be spending less than what we are losing in the crisis" the committee noted. The figure was arrived at using an average of 700,000 barrels per day lost by the country between January and September, 2008 multiplied by each month's average.

Another report put the number of hostages taken so far at 300 since the crisis began in 2006. It is against this backdrop that we urge men and women of goodwill, particularly from the Niger Delta to prevail on the MEND and other similar elements to abandon their intransigence and seize the opportunity offered by government to return peace to the region. Its leadership therefore should do a rethink and imbibe the spirit of give and take. Time has come for the militants to set aside selfish interests and avoid any act that would derail the return of peace and progress in the region. Surely, the point of the devastation of the region through oil exploitation has been made and from indication well taken. That explains the frenetic effort at renewal through development and investments being undertaken which have culminated in the establishment of the ministry of Niger Delta and other structures to undertake development efforts. Peace should therefore be given a chance. The MEND and other such elements should reciprocate genuine attempt at re-establishing peace and order to the region so as to let industry and other enterprises to thrive.

The federal government, on its part, should hasten the implementation of the committee report. The newly created ministry for Niger Delta Affairs should see to the full commencement of infrastructural development in the region. Government should also hasten the establishment of the Commission on Disarmament and Rehabilitation as already proposed, while states in the region should endeavour and see to the establishment of community mobilisation and reintegration committees, especially in areas most affected by the conflicts and carry out development projects, such as health centres and schools. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other agencies in the region should do more in the provision of social facilities. There is also need for youth empowerments, education and job creation to enable them to earn a living.

The federal government should seek ways to engage the militants in dialogue in search of lasting peace in the region. It is hoped that the forth coming South-South summit slated for April 22-24 in Calabar, Cross River state would fashion out meaningful suggestions that will complement the efforts of the federal government in the restoration of peace and stability in the region.



Your Letters

Atiku is right, electoral reform will not work

Allow me to express my views on the altercations between the former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The electoral system envisaged by Nigerians cannot be achieved under this manipulated report of the electoral reform committee. Unless the head of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is selected by a neutral body and subjected to the scrutiny of the National Judicial Council (NJC) before passing to the National Assembly, no free and fair election will be witnessed in 2011.

I also make bold to say that until the nation's electoral body is free of economic paucity, it cannot provide a

level playing ground for contestants and aspirants who desire to be elected into public offices. Tampering with the original document submitted by retired Justice Lawal Uwais—by a select few who are well known members of the PDP like Michael Andoaka, Nigeria's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice—has exposed the government's insincerity as far as free and fair election is concerned.

If the government wants to be seen as serious, we should go back to the original guidelines submitted by Mohammed Lawal Uwais Committee, whereby the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission

should have the blessing of the NJC and the commission must have its own budget independent of executive strings and manipulations.

The truth is bitter and the way this PDP-led government is responding to constructive criticisms and descending heavily on the opposition is an ill wind that blows no good. If the rule of law, as being mouthed—though without action—by this government is true, then the report of the Uwais panel must be implemented wholesale.

Rule of law and good governance are all about truthfulness, transparency, forthrightness, maturity, tolerance of constructive criticism and service to the

people. But as it is Mr President seems surrounded by greedy persons who want to stay in power (or close to it) at all cost beyond 2011. They do not want change because of their own ulterior motives. Courageous Nigerians must stand up and support Atiku Abubakar who can say it and damn the consequences. No one wants to be ruled by people who claim to fight corruption with their mouths but short-change our commonwealth with their hands. Nigerians must team up and vote out PDP and its team of selfish leaders.

Emmanuel Y. Kwache, No. 30 Gambia Crescent, Bekaji Estate, Jimeta-Yola, Adamawa State.

Text us on 08059100257

PDP and Vision 2020

If after 10 years in power the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) cannot fix our energy problems, how possible is it for the same PDP to achieve the more complex Vision 20-2020 in about 10 years time?

Ambi O. Albert, 08082341039

Hameed Ali is right

I totally agree with retired Colonel Hameed Ali that politicians are responsible for the socio economic problems of the country. After almost 10 years of return to democracy they have nothing to show except corruption. They only use the military as scapegoats.

B. Ali, 08056220786

Nigerians are not fools

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should know that Nigerians are not fools. How can you trace money to the Swiss Bank and fail to get the name of the account holders?

Ibrahim M. Maiduguri, 08037182754

Yar'adua and G-20

The G-20 snub is Yar'adua's. It also means that the international community is in sync with the poor masses of Nigeria on the ignominious place of this under-performing illegitimate contraption. On this snub, Yar'adua and his side kicks are on their own.

BK Ahmed, Maiduguri, 07036659800

On Albishir's warrant

The hypocrisy of the West is manifesting itself again with the indictment and subsequent issuance of arrest warrant against Al-Bashir of Sudan. I look forward to the issuance of the same processes against the perpetrators of the genocide/holocaust taking place in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

Nasiru Mu'azu, Minna, Niger State, 08051788122

Haba Dr. Rafindadi

The reasons advanced by the chief medical director of ABUTH Dr Rafindadi for sacking Safiya Ahmad, a female nurse, for wearing hijab, are not convincing enough. The sacked nurse should be reinstated without further delay.

Ali, 08033850860

Dr. Rafindadi should be queried by his superiors for sacking Safiya Ahmad even without seeing the hijab in contention. To say that he does not have to see the hijab to take a decision smacks of a hidden agenda, which the public must know. Allah is watching.

Jafar, Kaduna, 08036460283

Atiku's payback time

After eight years of neglecting the North as VP, Atiku is now courting the region for the realisation of his selfish interest. The same people that made Atiku to betray us have now betrayed him too. This is surely a payback time for Atiku.

Birma, 08057448575

Opposing PDP not laziness

People should be cautious and courteous when commenting on issues that affect our elder statesmen. If Danlami Baban Takko can refer to people like Balarabe Musa as lazy politicians, it is very unfortunate. How can opposing the PDP be laziness?

Muh'd Tukur Mujaya, Sokoto, 08065327829

Shekarau must hear this

The dualisation of Kano roads and removal of illegal structures deserve commendation. However, KNSUPDA is rubbishing your work by allocating corner shops after removing the temporary structures. The spaces adjacent Roxy (BEWAC) and ECWA eye centre near Sabon Gari Stadium have been allocated out as corner shops.

I. M. Abdullahi, Bachirawa Quarters, Kano, 08033042167

Opinion

Election petition: Yobe's different scenario

Over the course of two years, a number of highly subjective analysts have tried to skew a correct understanding of the legal scenario surrounding the governorship election in Yobe state, which saw the late governor, Senator Mamman Ali and the current governor, Ibrahim Gaidam dragged to court over 12 times.

These writers, who had no scruples looking at the issues from a jaundiced, partisan perspective, always tried to show that everyone else was wrong, and that Senator Usman Albishir, who was replaced as governorship candidate in the last general election, was right and his place of 'victimhood' sacred.

Because many of the 'analyses' might have been assigned and sponsored, they create an impression of someone trying to use the media to put across a point; and the consistency of such 'analyses' coming out usually when a court session was impending only goes to prove this point.

Beyond the *Albishir-speak* that 'writers', such as Stanlely Nkwocha and Garba Deen Muhammad try to foist on us, it is pertinent to give a review of the tale surrounding the last election, and show why the decision taken to substitute Albishir as candidate for governor in Yobe State was a *fait accompli*.

Senator Usman Albishir's political antecedents speak of a politician who always must have his way. In 1999, Albishir, for example, used his connections with a former military ruler to deny a prominent Yobe politician and, at that time, a popular candidate his right to stand for election and be fielded as governorship candidate.

At that time, a political party and its entire leadership had resolved to field Mallam Garba Maidugu as candidate for governor, but when Bukar Abba Ibrahim, long standing friend of Albishir's, showed interest to contest, Albishir ensured that Maidugu was not only substituted but entirely decimated as a political force, so that he did not pose any legitimacy problem to the incoming Bukar Abba administration.

By Abdallah Baba

Eight years later, when Bukar Abba Ibrahim had nearly completed his term, it was Albishir's turn to try to ascend to become Yobe's governor, but unbeknown to him, nemesis was waiting to catch up with him.

Albishir himself appeared to know that unless he used his financial muscle and the connection of the Bukar Abba administration, things would not go his way. He knew how much of a political liability he had become in Yobe State by milking the outgoing Bukar Abba administration dry; a situation that led Yobe people to refer to him as 'Rainbow'. In traditional Hausa mythology, the rainbow always brings bad luck because of its capacity to soak the rains before they fall.

And so when primary elections were about to be held in the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) leading up to the 2007 elections, Albishir, with the connivance of the ruling powers in the state, ensured that all the delegates to the primaries were brought out of their localities to a Maiduguri hotel the night earlier, so that they could be 'refreshed' before the primaries began and thereby effectively compromised. The ploy actually was to bring contenders in the primary election to an 'agreement' where all eight of them wishing to contest for governor would stand down for Albishir. If this worked out, the 'caged' delegates would be 'released' from the Maiduguri hotel and allowed back to their homes because 'consensus' has been achieved.

But the plan only partly did the magic. While seven of the governorship hopefuls stood down, the late Senator Mamman Ali refused to give way, and insisted that the primary election had to go ahead. The delegates to the primaries had later spoken of how they were coerced and intimidated and 'bought' over by the powers that be to have Albishir foisted on them.

But so it happened that Albishir 'won' the primary election. The ANPP, however, under

whose platform Albishir wanted to be governor, was not very settled to the idea of fielding him. Even before the issue of the EFCC indictment of Albishir came up, there was a lot of unease within the party with regard to the likelihood of the opposition party, the PDP, going to court in the event of an Albishir victory to mount a challenge on the basis of the Nguru senator's court indictment over some business dealings. The PDP would have argued that Albishir was not 'clean enough' to be governor.

Along with the EFCC indictment, its original fears and its inability to get Albishir to talk over so many substantive issues, the ANPP decided, in keeping with its determination to form the Yobe Government House, to substitute Albishir with the person who got the next highest number of votes in the primaries, namely Senator Mamman Ali.

Interestingly, Senator Usman Albishir was not the only candidate called to defend himself before the ANPP prior to the 2007 elections. Prince Abubakar Audu, former Kogi governor, was summoned and he appeared to clarify issues of concern to the party. He was subsequently cleared to contest, and he won.

Having disregarded the party, Albishir went to a Maiduguri Federal High Court, which struck out his case for lack of jurisdiction. The court advised Albishir to return to the ANPP to sort himself out.

And this is the point that is very significant to the case. In his opinion article (which he posed as a piece of political analysis) titled 'Judicial Upsets: Will Yobe Be Next?', Stanlely Nkwocha, widely known to be an Albishir apologist for his consistently partisan support of him, acknowledged correctly that the Nguru senator went to the Maiduguri court but added curiously that "events that played out later saw Usman Albishir getting a Federal High Court, Kaduna judgment which ordered his reinstatement as the flag bearer of the ANPP..."

The truth is that when Albishir left Maiduguri, he went to the Court of Appeal, Jos and filed an appeal against the ruling of the

Maiduguri Federal High Court, but being in a hurry and desperate to get what he wanted, he jettisoned the appeal and went to the Kaduna Federal High Court, which gave a ruling in his favour. That ruling, though, was quashed by the Court of Appeal, Kaduna following an appeal by the late Senator Mamman Ali and the Supreme Court, to which Albishir went later, clearly pointed out that what he (Albishir) did amounted to 'Forum Shopping; the first time that the highest court in the land would use the term to refer to Albishir's desperation to get a judgment that was favourable to him.

That Albishir had returned to Jos and got a ruling which allowed him to file his appeal 'out of time' only scaled the issues back to the basics. Lawyers and legal experts know that this was like being in the jungle in the night in the middle of nowhere.

Without being legalistic since the matter is still in court, it suffices to say that even that ruling that Albishir can file 'out of time' is being challenged by the ANPP and INEC at the Supreme Court. The INEC legal team had gone to the Supreme Court last Thursday, just a day after the Jos appeal court ruling, to challenge the appeal court's decision.

Since the law is clear about what constitute an abuse of the court process, however, it remains to be seen how Albishir's 'Forum Shopping', clearly acknowledged and rebuffed by the Supreme Court, would be dealt with in the end.

While I concede that the judiciary in Nigeria has 'come of age' as some try to describe it, judges do not deliver rulings on the basis of opinions expressed on newspaper pages. The courts treating the Yobe governorship issue would only concern themselves with the specifics of the issue as tabled before them. This was why in nearly 13 different rulings by different courts on the Yobe election issue, the Yobe state government and the ANPP and INEC won.

Baba, a public affairs commentator, wrote in from Sabon Fegi Ward, Damaturu, Yobe State. babaa1960@gmail.com

Achike Udenwa's unintelligent gaffe

By Nafata Bamaguje

In a story captioned "Protection of local industries, not our business", *Daily Trust* of Thursday April 2, 2009 reports that Achike Udenwa our Nigeria's minister of commerce and industry speaking through a representative stated that "having joined the rest of the world to embrace globalization and its attendant tenets of open and competitive markets, we can no longer create artificial trade barriers in order to protect Nigerian industries".

It's alright to sermonize on the free trade ideal that Nigerian manufacturers should step up to the plate and compete favourably with their foreign counterparts, but such idealism presupposes a fair and level playing field among competitors. Is our so-called commerce and industry minister unaware of the peculiar problems bedeviling Nigerian manufacturers and other entrepreneurs that undermine their productivity vis-à-vis foreign manufacturers?

Epileptic power supply, prohibitively high bank interest rates, decrepit transport infrastructure (especially rail); insecurity of life, goods and property; leaky borders through which cheap imports are smuggled in; excessive taxation and levies by various government agencies at all levels of governance; thieving government officials who are forever devising new means of extorting our illustrious entrepreneurs, as well as custom and clearance bottlenecks that hamper import of machinery and other manufacturing inputs.

These are just a few of the factors militating against the competitiveness and productivity of Nigerian manufacturers.

Instead of our commerce and industries minister and his boss Umaru Yar'adua taking drastic measures to alleviate the difficulties faced by Nigerian industrialists so as to reverse the regressive de-industrialization that is ruining our nation; he blurts out the inanity that it is not government business to protect Nigerian manufacturers.

Pray, what is the point of our commerce and industry ministry if not to promote Nigerian

businesses (especially manufacturing concerns), and protect them from unfair competition? Unfair competition, because as already explained the odds are unfavourably stacked against Nigerian manufacturers.

Or is the commerce and industry ministry only for the benefit of foreign investors, which would be really idiotic because foreigners are unlikely to invest in our country if our own investors are having it so rough and our government doesn't care. Mazi Udenwa should immediately resign (or be sacked) as he obviously doesn't understand his ministerial job description. With all the frustrating disincentives to local manufacturing, is it any surprise that Nigerian entrepreneurs prefer to head for China to import toothpicks, candles and chocolate? Yes, chocolate made in China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are hawked on the streets here in northern Nigeria even though none of these countries grow cocoa. They import cocoa from us then sell us chocolate. And I erroneously thought we were long past such retrogressive neo-colonial economics.

It is disheartening that nearly five decades after independence, with more than enough stupendous oil wealth to industrialise this country, we like most African economies are still dependent on the export of primary commodities (oil, cocoa, copper, diamonds, cotton etc) for most our revenue. Hence we Africans groan miserably when the prices of these commodities fall, and whine pathetically about Western protectionism of their agricultural products at international trade meetings.

We Africans must do much more to promote (and if necessary protect) manufacturing, so that we can join the Asian tigers whose economies are no longer dependent on export of primary commodities. With Africa's largest market of about 160 million people that can sustain any industry, abundant energy reserves and other natural resources, Nigeria is well

placed to become Africa's industrial manufacturing hub.

To attain their present enviable level of industrialization, all the Asian tigers (Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia) implemented policies that protected and enhanced their local industries. Protectionism is also the major reason why China is emerging as an economic superpower.

Furthermore, effective protectionism (with well policed borders) is a strong incentive for foreign manufacturers to invest in local production, as they would be worse off in the Nigerian market just exporting finished goods to us. This was how way back in the 1980s, the late President Reagan by raising import tariffs to protect America's auto industry, compelled Japanese auto makers to set up production plants in the US of A.

Thus it should be obvious to our commerce minister that other nations have no qualms about protectionism if it is in their national interest, GATT and other international trade agreements notwithstanding. That is why America recently voted 25 billion dollar bailout for her three largest indigenous auto manufacturers (GM, Ford & Chrysler), even though there are other foreign auto manufacturers in the United States.

Contrast America's protectionist bailout of her big three auto-makers with the collapse of virtually all Nigeria's auto assembly plants. Way back in the late 70's and 80's Volkswagen, Steyr, Leyland and Anammco all had auto assembly plants here in Nigeria, but they have all been shut down. Going by current news reports, Peugeot automobile in Kaduna, Nigeria's sole remaining auto assembler is also about to become an industrial carcass.

And it's not just Nigerian automobile assemblers that are afflicted by the de-industrialization bug. Berec once manufactured batteries in this country, but that is no more thanks to cheap Chinese imports and epileptic power supply amongst other chronic problems

our inept corrupt leadership have been unable or unwilling to fix.

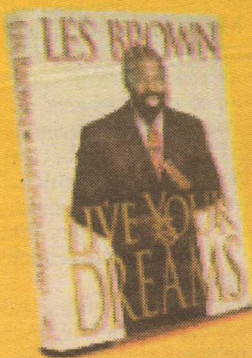
Then there is the *ad nauseum* oft-repeated decimation of our textile industry, the belated ineffective federal bailout notwithstanding. Unilever and several other manufacturers have already indicated intention to relocate from Nigeria to our more industrially friendly neighbours. Many of the other surviving industries operate well below capacity.

Nothing better underscores the stupidity and ineptitude of our so-called leaders, as the fact that for decades we have been wastefully flaring natural gas that could have been used to generate abundant cheap electricity for robust economic growth. Instead we chronically suffer from incessant power outages that have crippled our industries and rendered our economy prostrate.

Without a sound manufacturing industrial base, all the unintelligent gabble in government circles about promoting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) won't amount to much. Hence all the poverty alleviation programmes over the last decade have been ineffective and failed to achieve desired economic impact because of the undue emphasis on SMEs. Large and heavy manufacturing industries on the other hand, with their exponential multiplier effects tremendously boost SMEs.

Thus someone in the corridors of power should please drum it into the thick skulls of our minister and his boss, that an underdeveloped de-industrialized economy like ours requires protectionism, direct government investment and enticing incentives to revive and expand manufacturing, which as earlier stated has numerous beneficial multiplier effects - poverty alleviation, eradication of unemployment with its associated ethno-religious strife, economic prosperity and technological advancement among others - all of which are instrumental to the success of the hyped Vision 20:2020.

Bamaguje writes from Daura, Katsina State.



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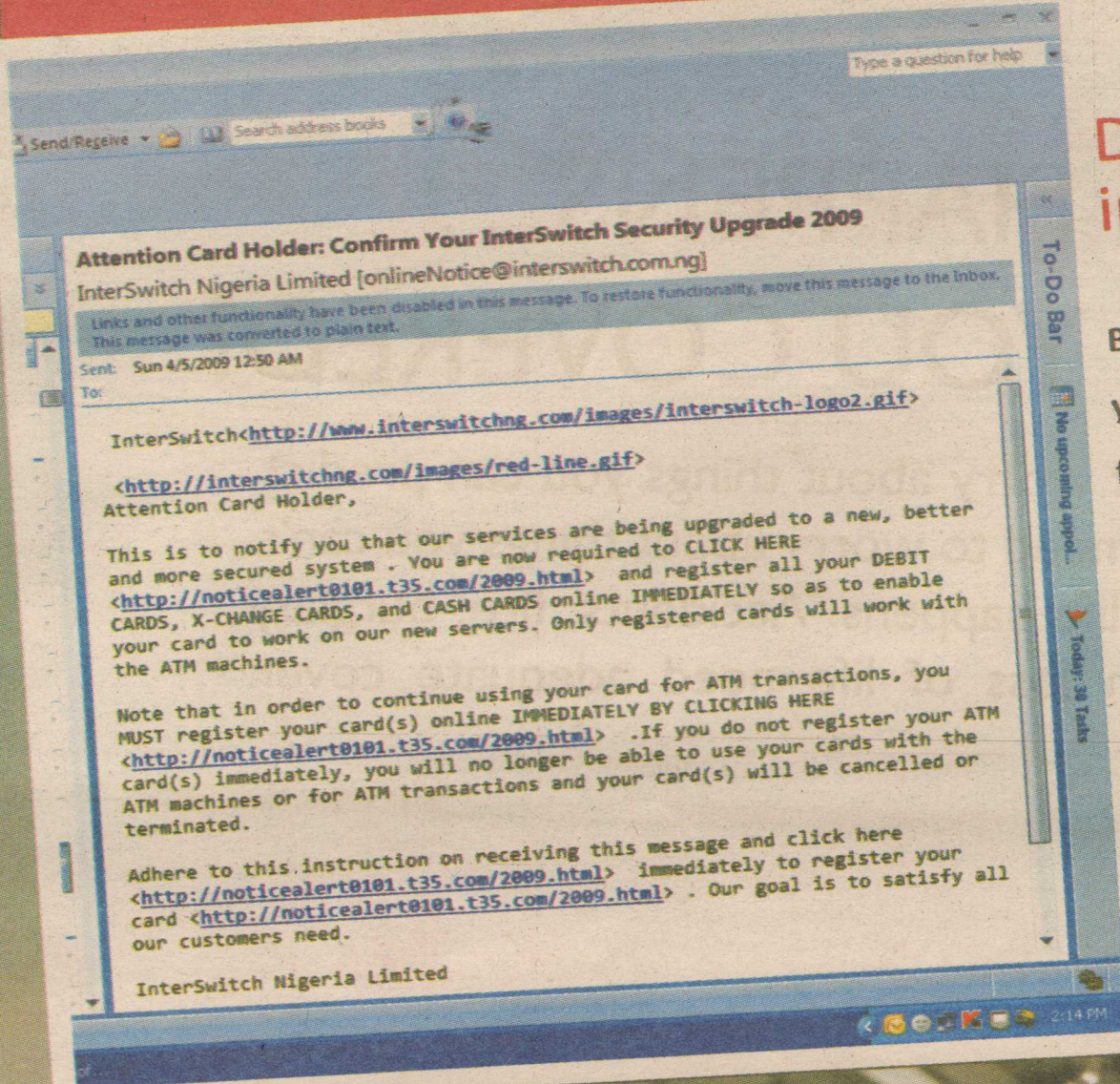
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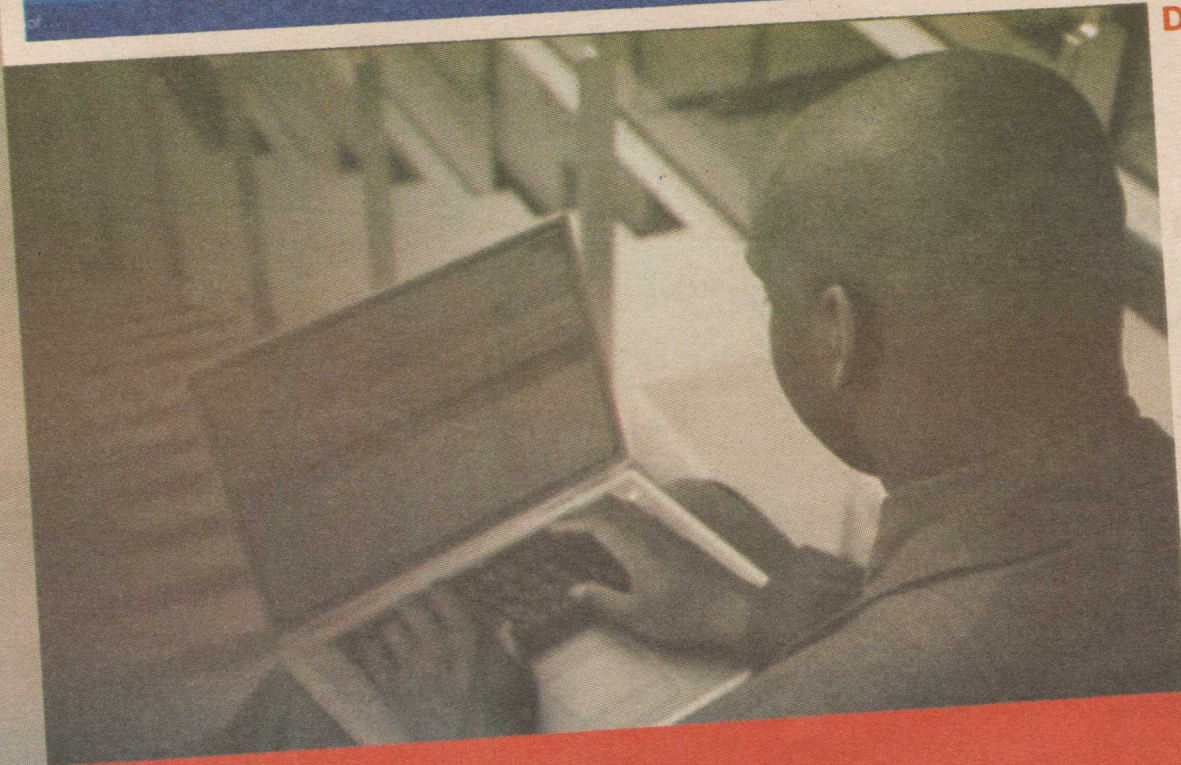
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Her Excellency,
HAJIYA (DR.) TURAI UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA
The First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Her Excellency, **HAJIYA AMINA IBRAHIM SHEKARAU**, wife of the Executive Governor of Kano state welcomes Her Excellency, the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, **HAJIYA (DR.) TURAI UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA** to the **OPENING CEREMONY OF THE GLOBAL AGRIC EXHIBITION, KANO 2009**, organized by the Kano Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KACCIMA) in collaboration with the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA).

DATE: 16th April 2009
VENUE: Kano Trade Fair Complex
TIME: 9:00a.m Prompt

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Mama, maraba da zuwa Kanon Dabo

Signed:



HAJIYA AMINA IBRAHIM SHEKARAU
Wife of the Kano State Governor

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA REPORT



Kpatcha Gnassingbe in Lome in 2006. Two soldiers died and three were wounded when elite troops stormed the home of Togo President Faure Gnassingbe's brother to thwart a possible attack on the government, press reports said yesterday.

Togo raid to ward off security threat, two killed

Two soldiers died and three were wounded when elite troops stormed the home of Togo President Faure Gnassingbe's brother to thwart a possible attack on the government, press reports said yesterday.

The special forces on Sunday night overcame troops on guard duty at Kpatcha Gnassingbe's home, which they partially looted, shooting inside and around the house, witnesses told AFP on Monday, but they gave no casualty figures.

The office of the head of public prosecutions, Robert Bakai, said the raid was to arrest "military men suspected of trying to undermine state security," in a statement read on the small west African country's state television.

The president has postponed a trip to China because of developments, sources close to him said.

Bakai late Monday reported the arrest of several people, including five soldiers, but did not say whether the arrests were carried out at Gnassingbe's house, while authorities mentioned no casualties. "It was a heavily armed unit of the (elite) Rapid Intervention Force. They neutralised the soldiers who were watching over the house," one source close to the president's brother told AFP on Monday.

"Mr Gnassingbe was there, but not in the rooms targeted by the attackers. They encircled the building and were firing in all directions for at least three hours," the source added.

"According to reliable sources, the attack left two dead and three wounded," the weekly *Le Regard* said, while the *Liberty* tri-weekly and *Le Correcteur* weekly also gave the same toll. *Le Forum*, a bi-weekly, gave the names of one soldier killed and another who was seriously injured, reporting "several dead and badly wounded."

The walls and some doors and windows were damaged, an AFP correspondent said. Spent cartridge cases lay in the bedrooms and around the entrance to the house. Senior officers of the Togolese Armed Forces have declined to comment on the incident.

A former defence minister between 2005 and 2007, Gnassingbe was elected the member of parliament for Kara, about 420 kilometres (260 miles) north of Lome during legislative elections in October 2007.

Police say missing Gambia journalist is dead

Gambian journalist Chief Ebrima Manneh, who has been missing for nearly three years, is no longer alive, a senior police source at Gambia's notorious Mile Two prison said yesterday.

The police source, who would not give his name saying he would be arrested or killed if he was identified, said he last saw Manneh at the prison sometime last year when he was taken away by a plain clothed officer in the middle of the night. "That was the last day I set my eyes on him and to the best of my knowledge, Chief Manneh is not alive", he told AFP.

Manneh, who worked for the pro-government newspaper the *Daily Observer*, disappeared in July 2006 after being picked up in the newspaper building by men who said they were with the Gambian intelligence service NIA.

Sources at the newspaper say Manneh was targeted because he was working on an article which criticized the Gambian government for a foreign news organisation.

The Gambian authorities have always denied they were holding Manneh in custody.

Last week in a first public reaction to an Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) court ruling in June last year ordering Banjul to release Manneh, Attorney-General and Justice Minister Marie Saine Firdaus said she had no knowledge of the journalist's whereabouts.

"It is rather unfortunate and disappointing to hear the Attorney General and Minister publicly saying that Chief Manneh is not in the custody of the State," the police source told AFP. "Chief Manneh was sometime last year seen at Mile Two central prison under the escort of a plain clothed officer who whisked him away at around 2 am," he added, saying that the situation had gotten out of control.

After the case was taken to a regional court by a west African media watchdog, ECOWAS ruled that Gambia had illegally arrested and detained Manneh, and ordered his release. The Attorney-General announced last week that Banjul would appeal the ruling.

Somali pirates hijack Greek ship

Somali pirates seized a Greek merchant ship yesterday, showing no sign of halting their attacks despite losing five of their men in robust rescue operations by the French and US navies.

Pirates snatched the MV *Irene*, a Greek-operated merchant vessel flagged in Saint-Vincent and the Grenadines, in at least the ninth hijacking in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean since the start of the month. "It's a Greek ship, it was seized early today," Andrew Mwangura, from the Kenya-based East African Seafarers Assistance Programme, told AFP.

The 35,000-tonne bulk carrier was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden, the European Union's naval mission in the area said. Its 22 Filipino crew is believed to be safe.

On Monday, the head of the group that seized the US ship *Maersk Alabama* vowed to retaliate for the deaths of three pirates in the military operation which rescued an American captain held on a lifeboat over the weekend.

"The American liars have killed our friends after they agreed to free the hostage without ransom... this matter will lead to retaliation and we will hunt down particularly American citizens travelling our waters," Abdi Garad said by phone from the pirate lair of Eyl. "We will intensify our attacks even reaching very far away from Somalia waters, and next time we get American citizens... they (should) expect no mercy from us."

The captain of the US ship was saved when Navy Seals fired three shots, one for each pirate, bringing an end to the

high-seas drama which prompted US President Barack Obama to call for renewed vigour in anti-piracy efforts.

"I want to be very clear that we are resolved to halt the rise of piracy in that region," he said on Monday.

According to sources close to the pirates, French ships were also prime targets following the rescue of the *Tanit* yacht in which one hostage was killed, together with at least two pirates. French commandos had already launched rescue operations in two previous cases over the past year, killing and capturing pirates.

So far Somali pirates have never executed hostages and sought to release ships in exchange for ransoms.

International Maritime Bureau (IMB) head Noel Choong backed the tough approach against the pirates, whose relentless attacks have disrupted one of the world's busiest maritime trade routes. "We support the robust response against the pirates," he told AFP. But he admitted that revenge attacks were a risk.

"It may spark retaliatory action by the pirates. It may increase violence against the ships and crew members," Choong said. The latest releases and hijackings bring to at least 17 the number of ships being held by Somali pirates and to more than 250 the number of crewmen held hostage.

Following a surge in attacks in 2008, which saw close to 50 ships being seized and millions of dollars paid in ransom money to the pirates, naval powers upped their response.

Hutu rebel 'hit list' in DR Congo

A Hutu rebel group in Democratic Republic of Congo is said to have drawn up a "hit list" of those who helped a military operation against it.

A UN official in eastern DR Congo told the BBC that the joint attack this year by the Congolese and Rwandan armies had failed to neutralise the rebels.

Capt Karl Fuller said 800 fighters had tried to attack the village of Pinga in eastern DR Congo on several occasions. FDLR leaders are accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsis.

After years of mutual animosity between DR Congo and Rwanda, the two armies worked together in an operation against the FDLR (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda) in January.

But Capt Fuller said the five-week joint operation had only succeeded in scattering the rebels. We managed to repel them but the intention was to come and loot and obviously to kill.

"They've been here for the past 10 years, so they know this area, it's known to them and they have fled their specific strongholds to the mountainous areas and they were not found," he told the BBC. "They did not manage to neutralise them at all."

The South African added: "There's [civilian] elements here that have physically told the RDF [Rwanda Defence Force] when they came in: 'This is where the FDLR strongholds are, go there and take them out.'

"But now they've come to hear of it, the FDLR has even put out a hit list."

Trust International

MIDDLE EAST

Japan signs nuclear energy deal with Jordan

Japan agreed to provide Jordan with support for its nuclear energy programme as the Middle East state plans to launch its first atomic power plant in 2017, officials said.

The five-year accord was signed in Tokyo as Jordan's King Abdullah II was making a three-day trip to the Japanese capital, said an official of Japan's energy agency.

Under the deal, which can be extended for another five years, Japan would help Jordan draft a development programme for construction of nuclear power plants and help develop necessary infrastructure, the official said.

Japan would also help Jordan train nuclear power plant workers and introduce safety measures and regu-

lations, he said.

Japan, Asia's industrial powerhouse but poor in energy resources, is one of the world's leading users of atomic energy with more than 50 nuclear power reactors. Earlier in the day, King Abdullah had lunch with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo.

The king was later scheduled to hold talks with Prime Minister Taro Aso.

King Abdullah, who arrived here on Sunday, met Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone on Monday and urged Japan to play a role in stalled talks over the Middle East peace process.

This is his sixth trip to Japan since becoming king in 1999, following a visit in December 2006.

Iran puts US reporter on trial for spying

US-Iranian journalist Roxana Saberi, who has been detained in a Tehran jail since January, has been put on trial on charges of spying for Iran's arch-foe the United States, an official said yesterday.

"Yesterday, the first session of the trial was held and she was given an opportunity to speak in the court to present her defence," judiciary spokesman Ali Reza Jamshidi told reporters.

He said Saberi, who has been held in the notorious Evin prison in Tehran, is accused of "spying for foreigners... for America."

Saberi, a 31-year-old with dual Iranian-US nationality, risks the death penalty if convicted. Iran's decision to put Saberi on trial comes despite calls by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her release and US President Barack Obama's diplomatic overtures to Iran.

Jamshidi said the verdict was expected in one or two weeks. He also dismissed remarks by US State Department spokesman Robert Wood who said last week that the charges against Saberi were "baseless."

"It is really funny that someone comments on a case without even seeing it," Jamshidi said. Saberi was reportedly initially detained for buying alcohol, which is prohibited in the Islamic republic.

Last week Tehran's deputy prosecutor Hassan Haddad said Saberi was carrying out "spying activities under the guise of being a re-

porter."

"The evidence is mentioned in her case papers and she has accepted all the charges. She has been arrested under the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said. In March, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hassan Ghashghavi said Saberi's press identity card was revoked in 2006 and that since then she had been working "illegally" in the country.

Haddad said Saberi had entered Iran as an Iranian citizen and Iran was unaware if she had any other citizenship. "There is no evidence that she has another citizenship and the investigation is still on," he said.

US-born Saberi has reported for US-based National Public Radio (NPR), the BBC and Fox News, and had lived in Iran for six years. Her parents, Reza and Akiko Saberi, have come to Tehran to pursue her case and have met her in the prison at least once.

Her father told NPR after seeing his daughter that Saberi wanted to see her lawyer to point out that some of the statements she made were "under pressure, under threat."

Last month, the parents appealed to Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for her release, saying she was in a "dangerous" mental state.

Iran, which does not recognise dual nationality and has had no ties with the United States for three decades, has detained several Iranian-Americans, including academics, in recent years.

Lebanese ex-general accused of spying for Israel

A retired Lebanese general was arrested on suspicion of spying for Israel, a senior Lebanese security official said yesterday.

The ex-general from the General Security Department of the Interior Ministry's detention centre is among several arrests in recent months that appear to be part of a stepped up campaign in Lebanon against those suspected of gathering information on Hezbollah militants for Israel.

The security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case, said the retired general told interrogators he had worked for Israel for more than 10 years and regularly met with his Israeli contacts at European destinations.

He also allegedly used the business he owned, which managed foreign domestic workers, as a cover for intelligence work, the official said.

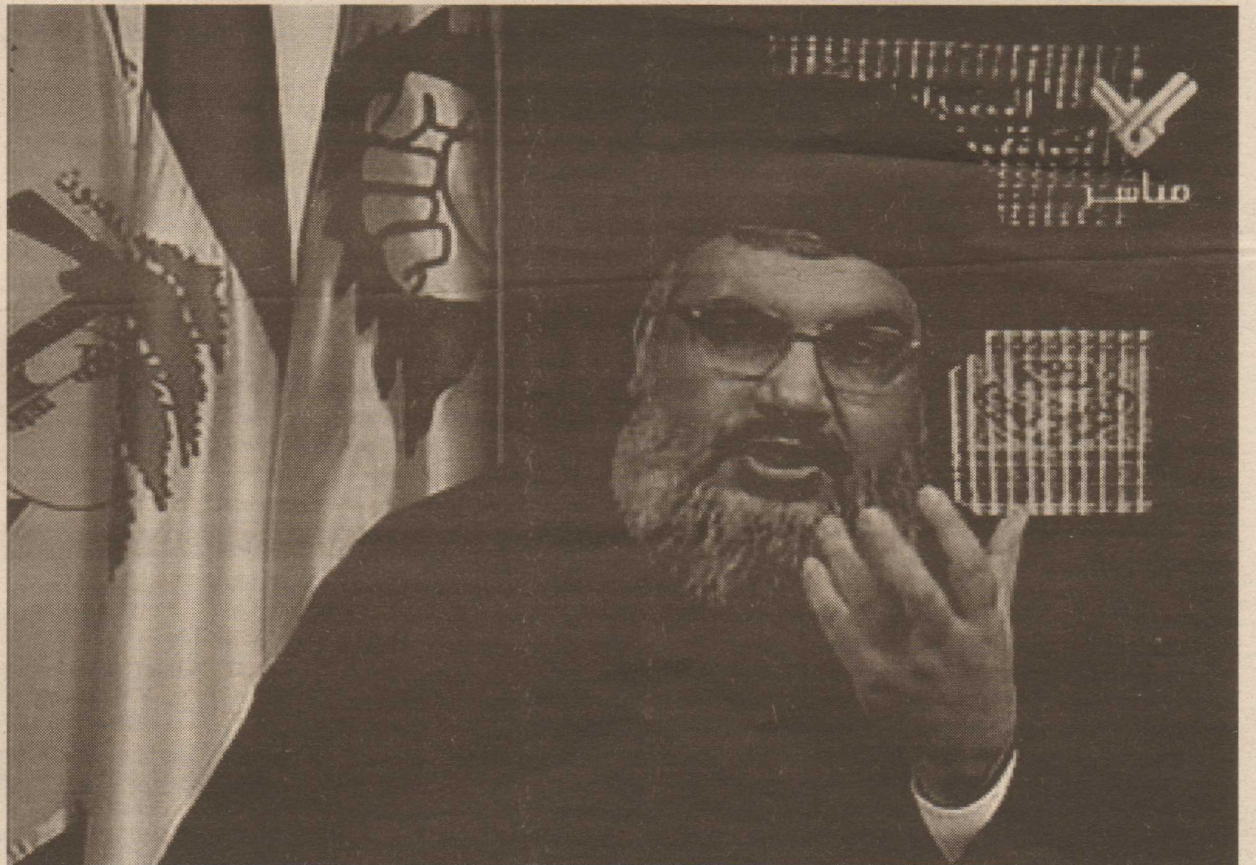
Israeli government officials would not comment on the allegations. The man's identity was not immediately clear.

The Lebanese security official said the ex-general had been under surveillance for three months and was arrested on Saturday. His wife also was questioned, he said. No other details were provided.

Lebanon considers itself at war with Israel and bans its citizens from having any contact with the Jewish state. Israel and Hezbollah fought a brutal 34-day war in Lebanon in 2006. More than 1,200 people in Lebanon — most of them civilians — and 159 in Israel died in the conflict.

Since the end of the fighting, Lebanese officials have alleged Israel continues to recruit and operate spies. Several arrests were disclosed in November and February.

Israel does not generally comment on Lebanese allegations of its spying activities.



Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

Egypt accuses Iran as police hunt 'Hezbollah cell'

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit accused Iran of using the Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah to gain a foothold in Egypt, in a newspaper interview published yesterday. "Iran, and Iran's followers, want Egypt to become a maid of honour for the crowned Iranian queen when she enters the Middle East," Abul Gheit told the pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat.

Strained ties between regional heavyweights Egypt and Iran, which broke off diplomatic relations almost 30 years ago, have deteriorated further since Egypt last week accused a Hezbollah cell of plotting attacks in the country.

Security officials have said 25 members of the cell were arrested, with Egyptian police scouring the Sinai peninsula for the remaining 24 suspects.

The manhunt has prompted the Israeli military to put its troops on high alert along its border with the Sinai peninsula. Referring to Iran, Abul Gheit said that "I wish I could see their eyes and their faces when their lower lips drop in astonishment at what the... public prosecutor will include in his report."

"(Iran) used (Hezbollah) to gain a presence in Egypt and to say to Egyptians: we are here," he added.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said on Friday that one of those arrested, a Lebanese named Sami Shihab, was a Hezbollah agent charged with smuggling weapons to Palestinian militants in the Hamas ruled Gaza Strip.

But Nasrallah denied that the cell — which he said con-

sisted of no more than 10 members — was planning attacks in Egypt. The Egyptian press has given conflicting accounts of Shihab's confessions, including that he admitted to planning three simultaneous attacks on Israeli tourists in Sinai.

The state-owned Al-Ahram newspaper quoted Shihab as saying that Hezbollah ordered bombings in retaliation for the assassination of senior military commander Imad Mughnieh in a Damascus bombing in February 2008.

But a lawyer for some of the suspects said Shihab confessed only to being ordered to scout the movement of Israeli tourists and shipping through the Suez Canal after Mughnieh's death.

"He then received new orders to stop the tracking of tourists and the canal," the lawyer told AFP, requesting anonymity. Hezbollah has repeatedly vowed to avenge Mughnieh's death, which it blamed on Israel.

Hezbollah, backed by Iran and Syria, is a vocal supporter of Hamas and has lashed out at Egypt for closing its border crossing with the Palestinian enclave, the only one that bypasses Israel.

Israel last week told its citizens to leave the Sinai, a popular destination for Israeli tourists during the Jewish Passover holiday, because of a threat of attacks or kidnappings by Hezbollah.

Egyptian security forces were on Tuesday combing parts of central Sinai for other alleged members of the cell, including a Hezbollah commander.

Trust International

ASIA REPORT

N/Korea vows to restart nuclear reactor, end talks

North Korea vowed yesterday to restart its nuclear reactor and to boycott international disarmament talks for good in retaliation for the U.N. Security Council's condemnation of its rocket launch.

Russia, voicing regret over the move, urged Pyongyang to return to the negotiating table. The Foreign Ministry called the U.N. statement "legitimate and well-balanced," and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said all sides must stick to the current disarmament process. China, the North's main ally, appealed for calm. In Washington, a senior U.S. official called the decision "unfortunate."

"It will further isolate the North from the rest of the international community, and the North will have to deal with that," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

North Korea's denunciation of the council's "hostile" move came just hours after all 15 members, including Beijing and Moscow, unanimously agreed to condemn the April 5 launch as a violation of U.N. resolutions and to tighten sanctions against the regime.

The U.N. statement, issued eight days after the launch, was weaker than the resolution Japan and the United States had pursued but still drew an angry response from Pyongyang, which called it "unjust" and a violation of international law.

North Korea claims it sent a communications satellite into space as part of a peaceful bid to develop its space program. The U.S. and others call the launch an illicit test of the technology used to fire an intercontinental ballistic missile, even one eventually destined for the U.S.

A Security Council resolution passed in 2006, days after North Korea carried out an underground nuclear test, prohibits Pyongyang from engaging in any ballistic missile-related activity — including launching rockets that use the same delivery technology as missiles mounted with warheads, Washington and other nations say. The council on Monday demanded an end to the rocket launches and said it will expand sanctions against the communist nation. The council also called for quick resumption of disarmament talks.

Asia-Pacific countries meet in Indonesia on Rohingyas

Asia Pacific ministers met yesterday on Indonesia's resort island of Bali to discuss people smuggling and the plight of Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority, officials said.

The two-day ministerial conference in Nusa Dua is being co-hosted by Indonesia and Australia and has attracted representatives from more than 60 countries.

It is the third such meeting under the so-called Bali Process on people smuggling, people trafficking and related transnational crime.

"It is hoped that the Bali Process will become a vehicle for change where mem-

ber countries can seek solutions and solve problems in addressing the challenge of people smuggling," the Indonesian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Indonesian officials have said the Rohingya issue would be discussed at the forum after hundreds of Rohingya migrants were rescued in Indian and Indonesian waters between December and February.

They had been abandoned at sea with few provisions by the Thai military and scores are feared to have died as they drifted in rickety boats for weeks before reaching land.

Thailand, which is on

the steering group of the Bali talks, has admitted it towed migrants out to sea but denies violating their human rights.

It argues that the Rohingya Bengali-speaking Muslims who are denied citizenship rights in mainly Buddhist Myanmar are illegal economic migrants who pose a regional problem which must be solved multilaterally.

Bangkok had proposed a meeting on the issue with Myanmar and Bangladesh but Indonesia pushed for a broader dialogue with other Asia-Pacific countries under the Bali Process framework.

The Bali Process was

first convened in 2002 to tackle the influx of illegal migrants into the region from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.

Australia's delegation was led by Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and included Immigration Minister Chris Evans and Home Affairs Minister Bob Debus.

"Recent boat arrivals to Australia and other countries in our region demonstrate that we are not immune from the conflict and insecurity that drives irregular movement," Evans said in a statement.

"People smugglers remain active and willing to exploit the displaced and vulnerable."

Thai riots halt after deaths; leaders face arrest

Leaders of demonstrations that plunged the Thai capital into chaos called off their protests yesterday after the rioting killed two and injured more than 120. Police issued warrants for 14 people, including the ousted prime minister at the heart of three years of turmoil.

The swift and unexpected resolution ended with a final crowd of 2,000 die-hard protesters dutifully lining up for waiting government buses to take them home.

There were no confrontations with the combat troops ringing the anti-government demonstrators' last stronghold, nor any visible anger. Many looked broken, tired and almost in shock. Four of

the protest leaders surrendered, said the country's deputy police commissioner. They were seen taken away to nearby police headquarters.

"This is not a victory or a loss of any particular group," Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said in a televised address. "If it is victory, it is victory of society that peace and order has returned."

The protests were only the latest in a long-simmering conflict between two rival groups that was set off by the 2006 coup that removed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra from power.

His supporters, the "red-shirts," are drawn largely from the impoverished country-

side where his populist policies had broad backing.

They took to the streets after protests of their rivals — the yellow shirts — brought the country to a halt last year by occupying the seat of government and the capital's airports.

Those demonstrations, led by a mix of royalists, academics, professionals and retired military who oppose Thaksin, only broke up after court rulings removed his allies from power. Abhisit was later appointed prime minister.

During last year's protest, the security forces refused to crack down on the demonstrations. By contrast, an army spokesman said earlier yes-

terday that troops were ready to move against the protesters, who had been encamped around Government House since March 26.

Abhisit said yesterday's retreat did not end the threat posed by the red-clad protesters, who are demanding his resignation and new elections. "The operation under the state of emergency is not completed," he said.

Some protesters threatened to regroup after the arrest warrants were issued. The warrants cited the protest leaders, including the absent Thaksin, for creating a public disturbance and illegal assembly, which carry prison terms of up to seven and three years respectively.

Afghan Taliban execute couple for eloping

A Taliban firing squad killed a young couple in southwestern Afghanistan for trying to elope, shooting them with AK-47s in front of a crowd in a lawless, militant-controlled region, officials said yesterday. The woman, 19-year-old Gul Pecha, and the man, 21-year-old Abdul Aziz, were accused by the militants of immoral acts, and a council of conservative clerics decided that the two should be killed, officials said.

The two had hoped to travel to Iran, which borders their home province of Nimroz, but their parents sent villagers to bring them home, said Sadiq Chakhansori, the chief of the provincial council. Once back home, the pair was either turned over to the Taliban by their parents or the militants took them by force, the officials said, providing slightly varying accounts. Riflemen in the remote district of Khash Rod shot them Monday, said Chakhansori.

"Unfortunately, Khash Rod is an area that is almost out of the control of the government," said Gov. Ghulam Dastagir Azad. "We don't have coalition or Afghan army forces there like we do in other districts."

The U.S. has 38,000 forces in Afghanistan, and President Barack Obama recently announced that the U.S. would send 21,000 more troops to the country this summer.

But in remote and dangerous regions of Afghanistan, Taliban fighters operate what are sometimes referred to as shadow governments, where militant leaders serve as government officials and run their own police units and pseudo court systems.

The conservative Taliban movement ruled Afghanistan from 1996-2001 and put in place harsh social rules that forbade unmarried men and women to talk or meet in public. Women were not allowed out of their homes without a male relative, and girls couldn't go to school.

Taliban fighters have widened their influence the last three years and now control many remote districts in Afghanistan where there are not enough U.S., NATO or Afghan forces to establish a permanent presence.

The Nimroz governor decried the fact that a three-person council of clerics operating outside the state's judicial system would level the death penalty.



Thai anti-government protesters show surrender gesture against a line of soldiers outside the government house in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.



NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION (NDIC)

PLOT 447/448 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, ABUJA, NIGERIA

PRESS RELEASE

PURPORTED ARREST OF MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION BY THE NIGERIA POLICE

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation has been inundated with enquiries since the news item carried on NTA Network at 9pm on Friday 3rd April 2009 to the effect that its Managing Director, Mr. Ganiyu Ogunleye was arrested over a so-called controversial ₦500million interest waiver on the sale of Karu International Market. The same spurious news was carried by virtually all newspapers on Saturday 4th April 2009. We had thought that with the clarifications made to journalists by the Managing Director that he was neither arrested nor detained when they accosted him on Saturday 4th April in Kaduna where he had gone to attend a wedding ceremony, the enquiries would abate. Even though his explanation to journalists was carried on NTA Network News at 9pm on Saturday 4th April, enquiries are still being made on the veracity or otherwise of the purported arrest. In the circumstance, the Corporation is obliged to set the records straight by explaining its position on the embarrassing incident.

2. By a letter dated 27/02/2009, the Commissioner of Police (Special Investigation Unit - SIU) invited the Managing Director "to interview the Commissioner of Police" on Tuesday 3rd March 2009 at 10am in respect of a petition captioned "**Fraudulent Dealings with Public Fund by the Interim Management Committee (IMC) in Charge of Fortune International Bank (In-Liquidation).**" The letter further stated that "**Investigation so far has unearthed a lot of issues that need clearance from your office.**"

3. On March 2, 2009, The Nation Newspaper carried a story captioned "**Police summon NDIC Boss over \$30million Failed Bank's Cash.**" The paper alleged that "**the \$30million which was recovered depositors' fund had been declared missing.**" It is intriguing how the invitation got published by The Nation, more so that the letter of invitation did not mention the \$30million issue.

4. Given that the issues involved were purely official, three Heads of Departments namely Director-Legal, Head-Claims Resolution and Head-Asset Management, who had detailed knowledge of transactions relating to Fortune Bank, honoured the Police invitation on 3rd March 2009. The issues raised with the three officials included recovery of \$30million dollars, recovery from Earth Airline, recovery from Nasarawa State Government in respect of Karu International Market as well as the mandate of the IMC. The three officials provided detailed explanations to all the issues raised with them while the Director, Legal Department made a written statement on the issues raised.

5. On 1st April 2009, another letter of invitation was received from the Commissioner of Police (SIU) which directed that the Managing Director should personally appear before him unfailingly on 3rd April 2009 because he "failed to honour the first invitation on the same matter." The Managing Director replied the Commissioner of Police's letter the same day. In his response, he affirmed that, "three competent very senior officers of the Corporation did honour the first invitation, given that the said letter of invitation was not personalized to him. It is noteworthy that no specific allegation was made against him in the letter of invitation.

6. On 3rd April 2009, the Managing Director honoured the invitation extended to him. After oral interview with the Commissioner, he was also requested to make a written statement, which he did. He was accompanied by the Head of Communication and Public Affairs Unit and a Principal Manager from the Legal Department. The two accompanying officers

witnessed most of the proceedings. Indeed, the three of them left the Force Headquarters together. The Managing Director revealed that issues similar to the ones raised with the officials that went on 3rd March 2009 were raised with him. Curiously, towards the end of the discussion, the Police brandished a document purported to be a warrant of arrest, which had been prepared in anticipation that the Managing Director would not honour their invitation.

7. Against the foregoing background, the news item on NTA Network News at 9pm on the same day to the effect that the Managing Director of the Corporation had been arrested over ₦500million interest waiver on the sale of Karu International Market came as a rude shock as he was in fact in his residence when the news was carried. The news item was credited to the Force Public Relations Officer, Asst. Commissioner Emmanuel Ojukwu. The same story was carried by virtually all newspapers on Saturday 4th April 2009 along with the declaration of Mr. Kenny Martins wanted in connection with the Police Equipment Fund.

8. Without prejudice to the on-going Police investigation, the Corporation wishes to make the following clarifications:

8.1 Contrary to the information disseminated, the particular transaction was not a sale of Karu International Market but the recovery of the credit facility granted to Nasarawa Investment and Mining Company (NIMCO) Limited to develop the Karu International Market. The debt had become irrecoverable. It was included in the list of 39 credit facilities totaling ₦22.24billion which Fortune Bank forwarded to EFCC for recovery under cover of its letter captioned OBTAINING BY FALSE PRETENCE dated December 2, 2004 signed by Mr. Fidelis Tilije, the erstwhile Managing Director. The debt of NIMCO was then put at ₦1.8billion which was later disputed by the Nasarawa State Government for alleged fraudulent and illegal charges.

8.2 In recognition of NDIC's status as Liquidator of banks, Nasarawa State Government (NSG) approached the Corporation with a proposal to pay only the principal and requested that all the accrued interest be waived. In May 2008, both the NDIC and the CBN-appointed IMC met with the State Government team led by the Deputy Governor, Chief John Abdul. After protracted negotiation, the NSG finally agreed to pay the principal sum of ₦698.9million in full and also 40% (or ₦359.7million) of the accrued interest both totaling ₦1.058 billion within 90 days in full liquidation of the debt.

In August 2008, NSG forwarded an Intercontinental Bank Plc Manager's Cheque No.00000900 for the agreed sum of ₦1,058,658,065.60 in full settlement of its indebtedness to Fortune Bank. The cheque was forwarded by the Corporation to the IMC for lodgement into the bank's account. The IMC confirmed receipt of the instrument, which it said was lodged into Fortune Bank's account at Fidelity Bank Plc. The Corporation obtained the approval of the Hon. Minister of Finance for the negotiated settlement. If the EFCC had been able to recover the debt connected with Nasarawa State Government submitted to it in 2004, there would have been no need for NDIC's intervention in 2008. Without being immodest, NDIC should be commended for the debt recovery, rather than being scandalised.

8.3 The list of debtors submitted to EFCC in December 2004 included Suffolk Petroleum Limited (an associated company of the Chairman of Fortune Bank). As at December 2004, the debt of Suffolk Petroleum to Fortune Bank was put at ₦16.22billion. It is possible, the

alleged \$30million recovery by EFCC took place in that context. As a Regulatory Institution, NDIC is aware that Wema Bank also laid claim to the \$30million recovered by EFCC. It is our firm view that any enquiry in respect of \$30million should be directed to EFCC and not the Corporation.

8.4 It is also pertinent to disclose that NDIC intervened in the recovery of the debt owed to Fortune Bank by the companies related to the erstwhile Chairman in November 2004 before the referral to EFCC. But the erstwhile Chairman was very uncooperative. In this connection, we reproduce below extracts from the letter of the erstwhile Managing Director of Fortune Bank dated December 1, 2004 to the Managing Director of NDIC to illustrate the circumstances that led to the failure of Fortune Bank:

"I would like to place on record that this bank has not received even one kobo from my Chairman since this bank, wherein he holds 94% interest, went out of clearing four (4) months ago despite his companies' magnitude of indebtedness, which is now over 70% of the bank's portfolio.

I am shocked that the same Chairman who has variously been briefed in series of my memoranda on the attendant pains of our numerous depositors, employees and their dependants will have the courage to seek NDIC's approval of an 18-month repayment plan. Please find attached my internal memo dated 27 September, 2004."

Furthermore, by a letter dated August 1, 2005, Fortune Bank informed NDIC that debts owed by the Group of Companies related to the Chairman had been reduced to ₦4.5billion by the Board. This was rejected by NDIC through its letter dated 17th October 2005. It should be noted that the bank's action violated Section 20(2)(e) of BOFIA under which a bank must obtain written approval of the Central Bank of Nigeria before it can remit in part or whole a debt owed by any present or past director. It is therefore, incontrovertible that the bank sought NDIC's assistance in 2004. We are of the firm view that an investigation of those who caused the failure of Fortune Bank would be of greater benefit to the Nigerian economy and a valuable input into the vision 20-2020 Economic Agenda of the present Administration.

8.5 It is on record that NDIC had assisted several banks in debt recovery over the years. In this connection, in 1997, NDIC facilitated the recovery of debts owed by Federal and State Governments and their agencies to all banks in Nigeria. In that exercise, the various governments paid only the principal amount of ₦3.1billion and got 100% interest waiver. Furthermore, the Corporation's proactive stance facilitated the recovery of over ₦10billion when it oversaw the Interim Board of Bank of the North from 2003-2005. Interest waiver is a normal incentive in debt recovery or loan work-out by banks. Simply put, interest waiver is debt relief for borrowers.

9. In conclusion, the Corporation wishes to assure its numerous stakeholders of its resolve to vigorously pursue its mandate of depositor protection regardless of the distractions by mischief-makers.

HEAD
COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT
NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

APRIL 8, 2009

Trust International

WORLD REPORT

Man jailed for spraying urine, faeces on food in UK

An unemployed chemist was jailed yesterday for spraying a mix of urine and faeces on food, wine and children's books in several British stores. Sahnoun Daifallah was sentenced to nine years in prison after being found guilty of four counts of contaminating goods.

The 42-year-old carried a mix of his waste in a container of weed killer concealed in a laptop bag, a court found. Using the nozzle, which poked out of the bag, Daifallah

was able to spray large areas, leaving a powerful stench and causing tens of thousands of pounds (dollars) worth of damage.

Daifallah, an Algerian, targeted a bookstore in the south England town of Cirencester on May 14, dousing hundreds of books — most of them in the children's section. Two days later he struck in the nearby suburban area of Quedgeley, where a customer spotting him squirting the frozen french fries at a supermarket.

Daifallah then drove four miles (six kilometers) to another supermarket, where an employee in the wine section noticed him acting suspiciously and reported an overpowering stench. Both supermarkets were closed for two days for cleaning. Shoppers reported suffering from rashes and nausea.

The stores involved declined to comment on the case. Local police said the products weren't handled by customers. Police were able to identify Daifallah using security camera footage. When they raided his home, they found a stockpile of the substance and plans to spread it. Plastic bags containing excrement were marked with the names of cities on them. Daifallah represented himself at Bristol Crown Court, where he pleaded not guilty.

Judge Carol Hagen said Britain's security agencies had labeled him a high risk to public safety. Authorities have already begun deportation proceedings.

Brazil breadbasket teeters with economic meltdown

A year ago, Brazil's breadbasket saw what resembled a gold rush as farmers scrambled to increase acreage amid record demand for soy.

Today, much of the region is on its knees, victim of a double whammy of a financial crisis and a punishing drought.

Standing in his field of withered soy, Antonio Gallego oversees a few farm hands harvesting a crop that grew to just 8 inches (20 centimeters) instead of the normal 6 feet (2 meters). He says he'll lose \$40 per acre (\$100 per hectare) on this year's investment.

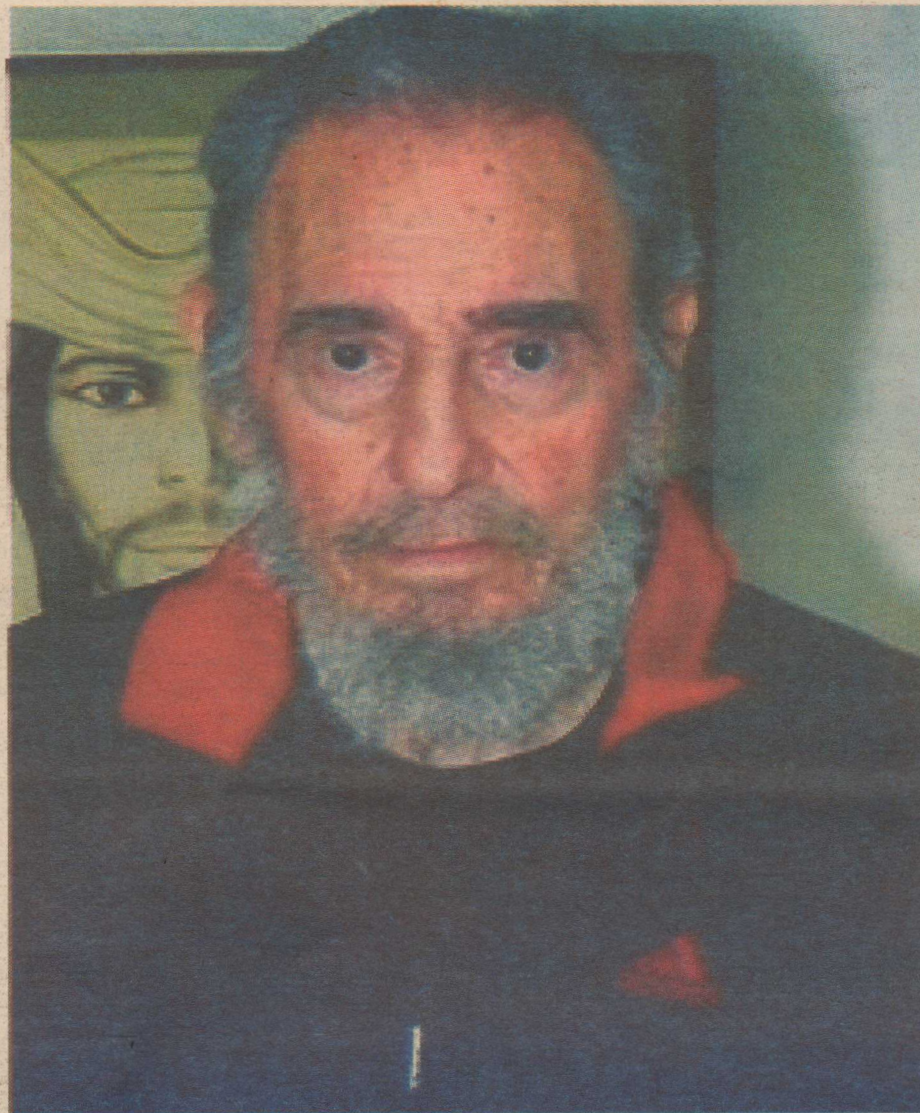
"This year is just a total loss, and the only thing we can say about the future is that it's uncertain," said Gallego, 43, son of the first settlers to farm this little-developed corner of Brazil a few decades ago.

"I can't increase acreage because there's no credit. But if I decrease, I can't pay the bills."

Early last year, high oil prices, low food reserves and growing consumer demand in developing nations sent food prices soaring, causing riots from Haiti to Pakistan. As in other agricultural regions, Brazilian farmers and ranchers drove to increase production, raking in huge profits as soy and other commodity prices skyrocketed.

Today, grain and beef prices have plummeted. And with sharply reduced foreign orders for Brazilian iron ore, steel and automobiles, Latin America's largest economy could fall into recession this year.

In this sun-baked town with no traffic lights, where tractors and harvesters rumble down the main drag, most farmers say they are losing money on yields from 20 percent to 60 percent below normal.



Former Cuban president Fidel Castro.

Castro insists US go further, lift 'cruel' embargo

Fidel Castro says the Obama administration did not go far enough in softening sanctions, and criticized it for leaving in place the embargo that bars most trade and travel between the two countries.

The White House said Monday that Americans will now be able to make unlimited transfers of money and visits to relatives in Cuba. Under Bush administration rules, Cuban-Americans were eligible to travel here only every three years and send up to \$300 to relatives every three months.

Monday's action eliminated those limits in the hope that less dependence on their government will lead Cubans to demand progress on political freedoms. Castro responded in an online column Monday night. The ailing former president wrote that the U.S. had announced the repeal of "several hateful restrictions," but had stopped short of real change. "Of the blockade, which is the cruelest of measures, not a word was uttered," he wrote.

Castro noted that several U.S. senators favor lifting the trade embargo and urged Obama to seize the opportunity.

"The conditions are in place for Obama to use his talent in a constructive policy that ends something that has failed for nearly half a century," he wrote. While analysts say the

U.S. policy change could usher in a new era of openness between the two countries, few here think it will mean the end of the trade embargo, which has choked off nearly all U.S. trade with the island for 47 years and counting.

"I'm not hoping for much more from Obama," said 43-year-old office worker Layna Rodriguez. "I don't know that he can do much more since to him, the important thing is what the Americans in his country do."

But many Cubans are happy that relatives in America will now be able to come whenever they want, stay as long as they want and send as much cash home as they can. About 1.5 million Americans have relatives in Cuba, which turned to communist rule after Fidel Castro seized control in 1959.

For Olguita Sierra, the shift in U.S. policy allowing Cuban-Americans to make unlimited trips and money transfers to the island came a month too late. The 72-year-old's son Sergio lives in Miami and had not been eligible for a trip to Cuba until next year. His request for an emergency visa was pending in March when his father passed away.

"What hurts me most is that my husband died just a little while ago without seeing him," Sierra stammered, tears welling in her eyes. "If only Obama had made this decision sooner."

EU to sue Britain over Internet privacy

The European Union started legal action against Britain yesterday for not applying EU data privacy rules that would restrict an Internet advertising tracker, called Phorm, from watching how users surf the web.

The EU regulators also warned that they could force social networking sites like Facebook or MySpace to hide minors' profiles from search engines. The European Commission said Britain should outlaw Internet traffic interception and monitoring unless users give explicit consent that their behaviour can be tracked and analyzed.

It said it had received numerous complaints about BT Group PLC, which tested Phorm in 2006 and 2007 without informing customers involved in the trial. Phorm analyzes Internet users' behaviour so it can target them with advertising that might appeal to them.

"Such a technology in the view of the European Commission and European data protection law can only be used with the prior consent of the user," said EU spokesman Martin Selmayr.

Regulators sent a first legal warning to Britain yesterday, asking it to explain or change the way it interprets EU rules, because it currently allows interception when it is unintentional or when a tracker has 'reasonable grounds' to believe that consent was given.

Britain has two months to reply. The European Commission can issue more warnings before it can take a government before an EU court, where it may be ordered to change national law or face daily fines.

BT sought consent from users when it again tried out Phorm from October to De-

cember 2008 in an invitation-only trial. The company says on its Web site that the trial didn't keep or pass on information that could identify users and what they did. It gave no comment on Tuesday on the EU statement.

Internet companies, privacy advocates and regulators disagree on what kind of traffic data is personal — such as IP addresses that give a location — and whether storing information on a crowd of people might evade strict privacy rules because they cannot be identified individually.

Phorm plans to work with three Internet operators reaching 70 percent of Britain's broadband market — BT Group PLC, Virgin Media Inc. and Carphone Warehouse Group PLC's TalkTalk. Virgin and TalkTalk said they wanted to try out the technology but would do so only with users' consent.

Phorm said in a statement that its technology did not store personal data or browsing history and was "fully compliant with UK legislation and relevant EU directives." It said it did not expect that the EU action against Britain would have any impact on its plans. "In anticipation of any changes that may be made to the law in future, our system offers unmissable notice and clear and persistent choice to consumers," it said.

Britain's Information Commissioner's Office, which is charged with protecting personal information in the country, said it could not comment on the EU move.

Separately, EU Media Commissioner Viviane Reding said that social networking sites needed to move fast to step up default privacy settings, especially for younger users — and she would table new EU rules if sites didn't act.



Federal Housing Authority

(Established Under CAP 136 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990)
INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

VERIFICATION AND REGULARIZATION OF PLOT ALLOCATIONS UNDER THE SITES AND SERVICES SCHEME IN FHA ESTATE SHARADA, KANO

1. FHA Estate, Sharada, Kano has been facing myriad of problems ranging from illegal plot allocations, development of structures without approval and general bastardization of its master plan, and in particular its sites and services scheme. Many of these illegal structures should be pulled down but Management has chosen to be compassionate and would therefore just impose penalties on all illegal allocations that can be accommodated in the master plan as **condition precedent** for regularization. Full payments of these penalties must be made before issuance of title documents.
2. In order to ensure equality and fairness in the exercise, plot allottees under the sites and services scheme are invited to come forward to verify the status of their allocations at **FHA ZONAL OFFICE, HOUSE 20, 202 ROAD, 'B' CLOSE, SHARADA ESTATE, KANO.**
3. The **VERIFICATION and REGULARIZATION** exercise would commence from **Wednesday, 15th to Wednesday, 29th April, 2009, from 9.00am to 5.00pm daily.**
4. Allottees would be attended to, on different dates based on their location in the Estate as shown below. They are therefore to come forward only on such dates:

Date	Location in Sharada Estate
Friday 17/04/09	1 st Avenue, 101 Road, 11 Road, 12 Road, 13 Road and 14 Road
Saturday 18/04/09 - Monday 20/04/09	2 nd Avenue; 201 Road, 21 Road
Tuesday 21/04/09 - Wednesday 22/04/09	3 rd Avenue: 301 Road, 302 Road, 31 Road, 32 Road, & 34 Road
Thursday 23/04/09	4 th Avenue: 41 Road, 42 Road, 43 Road, & 47 Road
Friday 24/04/09 - Saturday 25/04/09	5 th Avenue: 50 Road, 501 Road, 502 Road, 503 Road, 504 Road, 51 Road, 511 Road, 512 Road and 514 Road
Monday 27/04/09	General (all locations)

5. Allottees are required to come for the verification and regularization exercise with the following:
 - Original letter of Plot Allocation
 - Original Receipts of Payments
 - Original approval letters for Fencing and Building Plans
 - Any other relevant documents such as Deed of Assignment, Conveyance, and Consent to Assign, etc.
 - 3 No. Passport photographs

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This is the only opportunity for the verification and regularization exercise by the Authority. Any allottee who does not participate in the exercise would have his/her **ALLOCATION AUTOMATICALLY REVOKED**, and FHA shall not enter into any further correspondence on the matter.

For further clarifications required please contact any of these numbers:
08033118837, 08037001759, 08033154998, 08054151583

SIGNED
MANAGEMENT

MAI IDRIS ALOOMA POLYTECHNIC GEIDAM (OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR)

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ETF 2008 NORMAL CAPITAL AND LIBRARY
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION TO TENDER FOR ETF FUNDED LIBRARY COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLY OF BOOKS AND JOURNALS

The MAI IDRIS ALOOMA POLYTECHNIC GEIDAM, YOBE STATE is inviting interested contractors to bid in the pre-tender qualification exercise for its ETF funded library construction project and Books/Journals supplies as separate packages. Both the projects fully funded by the ETF are of moderate scopes.

1) **THE SCOPE OF WORK** involved in the projects and their corresponding non-refundable pre-qualification tender fees payable to validate the bids are enunciated below:

Lot No.	Project	Pre-qualification fee	Scope of work
ETF/08/01 and ETF/08/02	Construction of library complex and furnishing	₦50,000	Work entails the construction of a modern library complex integrated with ICT facilities and furniture. The moderate scope edifice will have a seating capacity for 500 students, and will have support offices.
ETF/08/03	Supplies of Books and Journals to the library	₦20,000	Work involves the procurement of books, journals and reference materials that cut across various disciplines.

2) PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested contractors are invited to submit the following pre-qualification documents:

- Evidence of Registration with Corporate Affairs Commission
- Evidence of Registration with the Polytechnic
- Tax Clearance Certificate for the three (3) years.
- VAT Registration Certificate.
- Certified copy of Articles and Memorandum of Association
- Evidence of Financial Capability including ability to start without mobilization fees.
- Audited Account of the bidder for the last three years.
- If applicable attach list of plants and equipment and their evidence of ownership.
- Verifiable list of similar and other jobs successful executed with their locations, including copies of letters of award and completion certificates.
- Knowledge of location will be of added advantage.
- List of names of key professionals to be involved in the project, especially those involving installations stating their qualifications and professional registration(s).
- Receipt of non refundable pre-qualification processing fees of sums indicated against the projects (above) to validate the bid.

Original of documents i-iv above must be produced for sighting during the opening session:

The complete pre-qualification bid must be in sealed envelop and clearly marked "PRE - QUALIFICATION TO TENDER FOR LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION / BOOKS AND JOURNALS SUPPLY" (stating project as may be applicable).

3) SUBMISSION

The pre-qualification bid must be returned to the Office of the Registrar, MAI IDRIS ALOOMA POLYTECHNIC P.M.B.1020, GEIDAM, YOBE STATE, *two weeks* from the date of this advert. All bids will be *opened on the same day and venue by 2pm* in the presence of the bidders or their representatives.

NB

This is not an invitation to tender, full tendering procedures will be applied only to bidders that have been pre-qualified and found capable of executing the project, upon the payment of non refundable **full tender processing fees** of amount equivalent to the pre-qualification fees in respect of each of the lots. Please note also that the Polytechnic is not bound to accept tenders sent by courier or post.

DANLADI INUWA
REGISTRAR.

BUSINESS TRUST

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*wins 2009 best ICT airline
—Page 32

● **Stock Market Report**
—Page 34 & 35

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Brief

'Recommendation on capital market is ambiguous'

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

The Nigerian stock Exchange (NSE) has been described as a vague recommendation by the national committee on review of capital market structure and processes asking the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to exercise its regulatory power over the Self Regulation Organisations (SROs) with maximum effectiveness.

The committee had at the weekend recommended total overhaul of NSE trading platform and also recommended an extension of the trading hours in the market among other things.

But NSE in a 20 page reaction made available to *Daily Trust* yesterday said as much as the exchange could implement trading duration far in excess of what is recommended, it is fallacious to conclude that an extension of the trading hours would automatically translate into improved turnover and market liquidity, adding that the decision to extend trading hours should be market driven and arrived at in consultation with operators.

"There is no ambiguity regarding the place of SEC in the market. The commission does not licence operators, but registers them," it said.

The committee had recommended that NSE should move to a 6-hour trading day (from 9.00 am to 3.00pm) on the date it switches on the new quote-driven system as this would provide sufficient time for trading and concurs with other trading hours around the world.

'Intercontinental first to make full disclosures'

By Abubakar Buba

Intercontinental Bank Plc has become the first in the Nigerian banking industry to disclose comprehensive information about its financials.

According to a statement the bank which received positive analysis of its financials and overall operational stability by Renaissance Capital, a leading emerging markets investment bank, is confirmed to have enough capital to absorb current asset risks over the long term.

Currently celebrating its 20th year, Intercontinental Bank is said to be one of the new generation banks to have reached the exclusive top tier of Nigerian banks both in terms of asset base and deposits.

"Intercontinental Bank is committed to being the leader in providing full and accurate financial disclosure and we are pleased that Renaissance Capital acknowledges our bank as being at the forefront of strict corporate governance," said Group Chief Executive for Intercontinental Bank, Dr. Erastus Akingbola.

Glo wins Nigeria's global ICT award

By Jibrin Abubakar

Chairman of telecoms giant, Globacom Limited Dr. Mike Adenuga Jr. was last weekend in Lagos inducted into the Hall of Fame of Legends of Technology.

At an elaborate ceremony attended by eminent Nigerians, captains of industry, music and movie stars and held at the Banquet Hall of Eko Hotel, Dr. Adenuga was described by the former Petroleum Minister and a pioneer in the Nigerian ICT sector, Chief Don Etiebet who doubled as chairman of the occasion, as a dogged entrepreneur and a trailblazer in the technological development of Africa.

Globacom, the brain child of Dr. Adenuga, was also conferred with Nigeria's Global ICT Award for its rapid expansion across Africa.

The Legend of Tech, conferred on distinguished Nigerians during the annual Information Technology Merit Award, is the product of an independent survey of entrepreneurs in the telecoms industry, the Titans of Tech, a media and telecoms research organisation. The organisation has the endorsement of the Federal Ministry of Information and Communications. The award is a lifetime award meant to celebrate pioneers and revolutionaries in the industry.

In the citation on Dr. Adenuga, the organisers of the award said that the Chairman of Mike Adenuga Group with substantial interest in oil, telecoms, banking and real estate was instrumental to the building of a network that had become the fastest growing in Africa and the 3rd fastest growing in the world. Since it launched its operations over five years ago, Globacom has activated over 20million subscribers in Nigeria alone, with operations in Benin Republic and Ghana. Globacom's submarine optic fibre cable, Glo 1 also stretched from Bude in UK through Portugal and 16 African countries to Lagos, Nigeria. Glo 1 also has a dedicated link to New York in USA.

'Islamic finance, solution to global meltdown'

By Muideen Olaniyi

An Islamic scholar said the lasting solution to the continuing meltdown in the global financial system is to embrace the Islamic option, which has already been popularised in the United Kingdom through Islamic banking.

Ustadh Abdul Jaleel Solahudin, who is the head of Burhan Islamic Organisation said in a pre-

The scholar said for Nigeria to also get out of the financial crisis it must stop interest system.

Daily Trust can report that as part of effort by the CBN to stimulate the economy, it recently cut interest rate to 22 per cent as against 30 and above. The CBN also said service

was handed over to him; dignity was restored while peace and harmony reigned supreme. In order to attain this lofty station, there is the need for the world leadership to consider the Islamic option."

The Amir of Burhan Islamic Organisation said Islam totally forbids the use of interest in whatever form, even if it is being shamelessly

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day," he added.

He said another problem as identify by Islam is short-selling as found in the stock market today.

"It is stipulated in Islam that you should not sell a product that is not seen. As



Mr. Phillips Oduoza, Deputy Managing Director, South, United Bank for Africa Plc (Centre); Mr. Martin Anyanwu, Group Director, Marketing and Corporate Relations, United Bank for Africa Plc (Left); and Mrs. Onari Duke, CEO, EMPRETEC Nigeria Foundation, at the media presentation of UBA Growing Businesses, in conjunction with EMPRETEC Foundation and United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in Lagos yesterday.

sensation weekend in Abuja that the G20 meeting had recognised the Islamic point by agreeing on \$1.1 trillion to restore credit, growth and jobs in the world economy at the same time cutting interest rate, called Riba or usury in Islam.

In February, the Bank of England cut its official bank rate for the fifth month in a row to just 1%.

He said one of the solutions to the global meltdown is to introduce interest free finance system.

Daily Trust can report that the Jaiz Islamic bank that offers a whole package of Islamic financing is yet to start operation because it could not meet the N25 billion capital base required by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

charges should not exceed 2 per cent, leaving the total interest rate at 24 per cent.

He said: "Islam is a religion and a comprehensive way of life that stands as a solution to both individual and communal problem. It covers both the spiritual, moral, social, economic and political life of man. As humanity lays gasping in the agonies of death from the eastern bloc to the west, Islam stands as the panacea to the problem. This is because the world today is a replica of the political and economic condition of the pre-Islamic world. By the birth of Islam in the late 6th century, the world's glory was restored; humanity was returned to fame. His leadership status

implemented and depicted as being attractive in the world today.

He also said the world banking system which is based on usury tries to lure individuals and nations into borrowing when in distress.

"This is embarked upon at the expense of production and investment. When there is poor cash flow, there is reduction in aggregate demand and so consumption is beaten down leading to starvation.

"A very high interest rate attracts saving thereby reducing investment. Like we all know; disposable income is shared between consumption savings and investment; when people fix-deposit their cash, unemployment results as we have in the world to-

an alternative, according to Dr Chapra the system of Zakat established by Islam should be embraced with enthusiasm.

"Islam also urges lenders to give respite to the borrowers in case of strained circumstances like being jobless, ill or some unforeseen incidents, and even to write off the debt if it becomes extremely difficult for the borrower.

"Islam encourages individuals and communities to shun wasteful spending but rather increase saving and investment. The Prophet (SAW) said while advising a person borrow less and you will live like a free person.

"Umar bn Al-Khattab says; beware of debt because it may be cause of worry in the beginning and bankruptcy in the end," he said.

FEATURE

How port congestion is managed elsewhere

Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) is always in the news, nearly always for the wrong reasons. Right now the problem is congestion at the ports, Lagos ports in particular. NPA simply can't get the cargoes off the busy Lagos ports.

The NPA is the government agency that operates the ports of Nigeria. The major ports include Lagos Port Complex and Tin Can Island Port, both located in Lagos. There is the Calabar Port, Cross River State, Delta Port in Warri, Delta State, Rivers Port, located in Port Harcourt, and Onne Port, near Port Harcourt.

As far back as mid 2007 when he was still the national president of the Association of Nigerian Licenced Customs Agents (ANLCA), Chief Ernest Elochukwu, had worried aloud about congestions at the ports. He blamed it then on mismanagement.

Elochukwu told *News Agency of Nigeria* in Port Harcourt in June 2007 that if things were done properly, Nigeria would not be experiencing congestion in some ports while some others were lying bare. He wondered why ports in Lagos and Port Harcourt were always congested and others underutilised, and challenged the government to work out measures that would ensure full utilisation of all the ports to ease traffic in the congested ones.

It disturbs him that up to now, the problem of congestion in the busy Lagos and Port Harcourt ports remains. He said this much in the interview with *Daily Trust* published on the opposite page.

Port congestion appears however to be a common problem in African countries. When some of the countries met in a regional consultative workshop last year in Kenya, the worries expressed were similar to those applicable to Nigeria. The countries which participated in that workshop in September 2008 included Angola, Djibouti, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and the host country, Kenya.

A pre-workshop statement by organisers of the workshop, the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA), read in part, "Congestion within African ports has become a major issue hampering the development of trade and movement of cargo within our region. Statistics

By Onimisi Alao

show that the sharp increase in containerized traffic has not been met with simultaneous expansion of port facilities within the countries, which has further complicated these matters. With this in mind, PMAESA, mandated by the 20 member countries to help in seeking ways of resolving some of the problems that plague African Ports, has decided to organize a consultative workshop for leading port CEOs and other stakeholders to look at these common problems."

During the official opening ceremony of the workshop, the Kenya Minister for Transport, Hon. Amb. Ali Chirau Mwakwere, who delivered the welcome address sounded like he had Nigeria in mind.

He said, "The impressive attendance by policy makers and ports managers at this PMAESA workshop is a testimony that we all share similar concerns on the issue. This is why we must work together to seek lasting and sustainable solutions to the challenges of port congestion for the benefit of our economies. Statistics reveal that the sharp increase in containerized traffic has not been met with simultaneous expansion of the physical facilities as well as automation of operations in our ports. There is an urgent need to seek long-term solutions to address the challenges resulting from increase in traffic to our ports. Some countries have embarked on long-term expansion of their port handling capacities, while others have strived to improve on their mechanized handling capabilities. Others have chosen the option of concessioning their ports to private managers in an effort to increase efficiency and improve on cargo handling."

"Delayed off-takes of cargo from the ports due to unnecessary bureaucracies as well as the decrepit infrastructure especially for ports handling vast transit traffic has led to exorbitant costs for both the ports operators and their customers. It is important for a consultative meeting like this one to put challenges of



congestion in perspective in order to formulate the necessary remedies to tackle congestion."

He gave an example of the port of Mombasa, which he said was "over-saturated in terms of the number of containerized cargo viz a viz the available capacity." Mombasa container terminal, he said, "is designed to accommodate 250,000 TEU annually, but is at present receiving in excess of 600,000 TEUs".

The Port Congestion Workshop in the PMAESA Region which was held from 25 - 26 September 2008 at the Nyali Beach Hotel, Mombasa, made observations that again sounded Nigerian.

The observations, captured in the communiqué of the workshop, included the facts of increased container traffic volumes not consistent with infrastructure; long container dwell times, caused among others by poor off-take by rail and the use of ports as storage areas; lack of adequate capacity and poor inland transport infrastructures, especially rail and road, among others.

The workshop recommended reduction of dwell time by introducing punitive measures to discourage shippers from using ports as storage areas, continued dialogue of Port community/stakeholders forums; creating of extra port stacking capacity; computerizing of port operations; encouraging 24-hour operations; educating port customers on cargo clearance procedures, introducing and using punitive measures to discourage shipping lines from delaying submission of documents; making acquisition of appropriate handling equipment mandatory; making training and motivating of staff compulsory, and so on.

The communiqué made the whole lot of recommendations and concluded in these words, "Ports affected by congestion should establish an advisory board. The forum should encompass all cargo interveners, namely port operator, rail operator, shipping lines, cargo owners, freight forwarders and a technical task team. These boards should look at all the issues holistically and most importantly set key performance indicators so that they

are focused in their activities, identify and deal with critical impact problems in the short-term, such as reducing dwell time. Communication with stakeholders will be essential while addressing congestion."

That is an account of how some countries are congregating to solve a common problem even as individual countries, as the Kenyan Minister of Transport hinted somewhere in his speech, should be trying in their own respective ways to assuage problems that may be peculiar to them.

There are examples too to learn from the more developed countries. The United States and Britain also suffer the problem of congestion. It will appear that how distressing the congestion becomes will depend on the attitude and method of those saddled with the responsibility of easing it.

The authorities in the US had reason recently to enlist the consultancy of an expert in port decongestion to suggest relief measures for the country's congested seaports.

Christopher Koch, President of World Shipping Council on Port and Maritime

Transportation Congestion, made this observation, "With growth of volumes of international commerce, the pressures on the transportation infrastructure are being felt more acutely. The most important challenges to the efficient movement of America's commerce are the strains, bottlenecks, and inefficiencies in the landside transportation infrastructure that interfaces with maritime transportation."

He suggested what he believed would be the right approach against port congestion: "Today, the most substantial prospects for improving intermodal transportation management, improving the predictability and reliability of freight shipments, and lowering costs to American consumers and companies through more efficient transportation will be found in the efforts to enhance the ability of ports and marine terminals to handle increased trade volumes efficiently, improve the ability of railroads to efficiently and reliably move cargo between ports and inland points, improve road connections between ports and intermodal freight facilities and the National Highway System, ensure that the nation's highway system can accommodate the economy's increased demand for transportation of freight, determine what opportunities may exist for efficiently moving cargo by waterborne modes that presently moves by road or rail."

He concluded, however, by asking the authorities not to expect so much in the short run and threw a challenge to all Americans, "There is no simple or single solution to these challenges, nor can a single programme or statute address all that needs to be considered or done. But we all have a part in finding and developing the solutions."

In Britain where industry players say growing international trade is congesting seaports, the authorities found an answer in the Port of Ipswich, owned and operated by Associated British Ports (ABP), which designed a combined storage and handling operation mode which Bryan Boreham, Manager of China Shipping Group, a major corporate facility user of UK ports, said offered the Group an important safety valve. "and enables us to return containers to circulation as quickly as possible."

Lessons abound to be learnt from other countries, and many will hope that Nigeria will join the rest of Africa and the world in efforts at sanitizing the seaports. Specifically, as Nigeria's own Sir Ernest Elochukwu would advise, "It is what the Federal Government wants the ports to be; once there is that focus that the ports are going to be an arena of economic activities, it is going to help the government and the people."

INTERVIEW

Seaports alone can sustain the economy—*Elochukwu*

Sir Ernest Elochukwu, outgoing President of Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), speaks in this interview on intractable congestion currently bedevilling the country's seaports, how the ports are not being made to fully benefit the economy, how certain policies aimed at improving the ports are failing, and sundry issues. More importantly, he offers his own ideas on how the ports can be resourcefully managed.

By Francis Okeke

What is your view on the performance of the economy with regards to activities at the sea ports?

I think the performance of the economy within the context of the sea ports in 2008 revolved much on moves aimed at making clearance of cargo efficient. The Presidential Committee on the 48 hours of cargo clearance did a very good job, it did an extensive work and submitted its recommendations to the President. The President promised that the recommendations would be given speedy implementation. Well, that is as far as it went because the things that were recommended to make the ports efficient had not been acted on by way of implementation before the year ended.

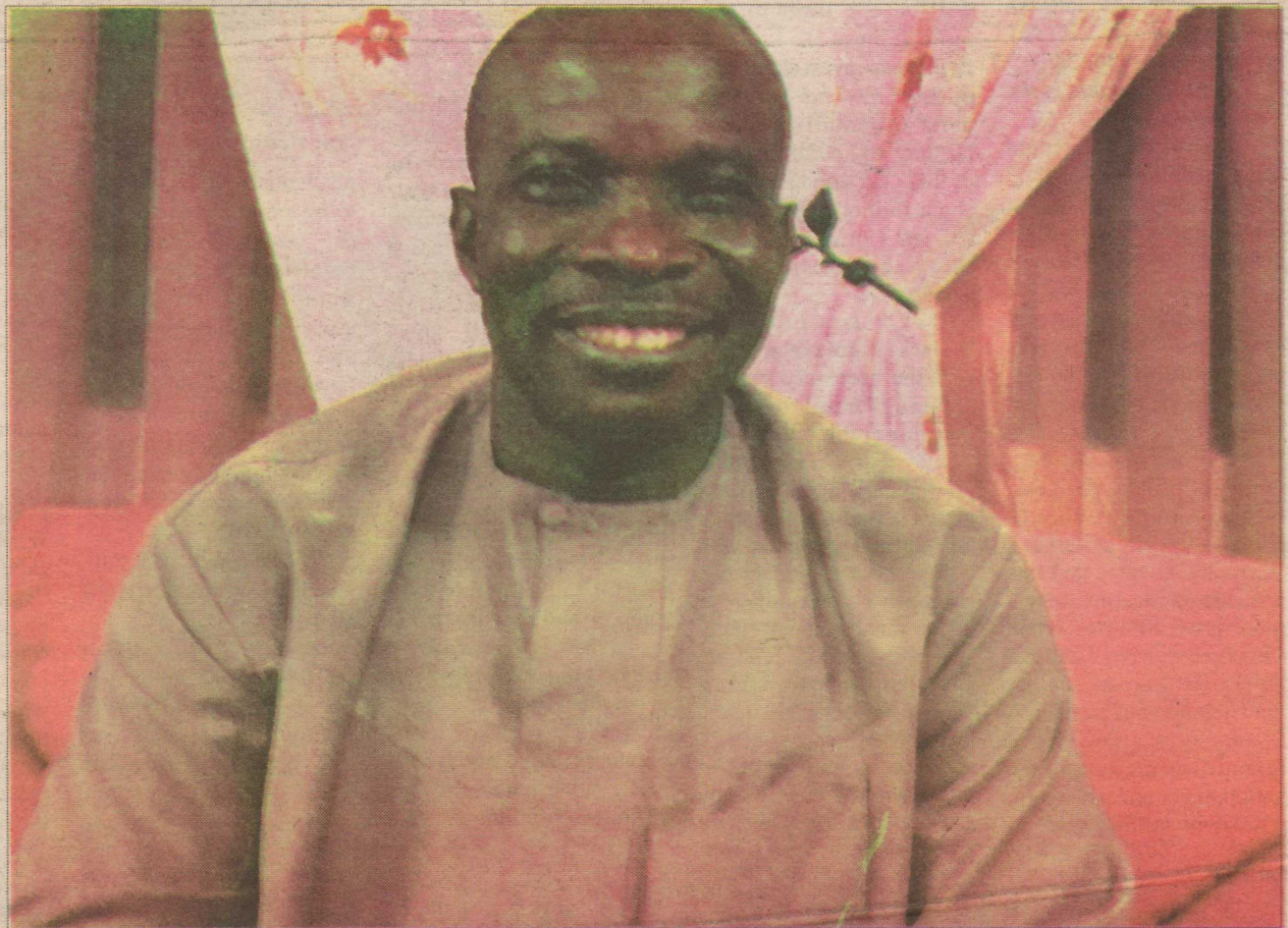
Before there could be action, I suppose, there was a major change in the Federal Cabinet and with the change also came certain challenges and these are the things that are of utmost importance to us not only in the port sector but also in the economy as a whole if we must realise the Vision 2020.

It is a very big dent on the way we operate that we don't have continuity culture and because changes are made and there is no proper structure that enables the new person coming in to take off from where the last person stopped, we find that most times recommendations that had been made would either not be implemented well or not implemented at all. In which case, we go through with a new round of study and another round of recommendations and this has been like a vicious circle in operations at our ports. The issue of port reforms have been on since the 1980s and it becomes a kind of challenge to ask ourselves why the reforms have not worked, because it would be almost unrealistic for us to think that we are running a continuous reform. It is not that reform is a be-all and end-all issue, but then a particular reform should have parameters for assessing whether it is succeeding and should also have timetable of completion; it should be like a project.

We have not had such case where we can say yes, this reform that was embarked on has achieved may be 60%, 80% or 90% of its targeted result. We have not been able to say, therefore, that having achieved this or that, if we embark on the next one, we now know what we are going for because that other one must have been put in the kitty. What I am trying to say is that we have a big problem and that problem is that the Federal Government has not realised the importance of the ports to the national economy. The ports have always been looked upon as something on the side. Perhaps, it is because we have the dollars which were coming in leaps and bounds. But with the present reality, it is high time the government took the ports more seriously and if the government should take the ports more seriously than it is taking it now, then there is a need for a system overhaul of what is going on there.

We find that many of the problems that have been identified in the past were not limited to the effort of the Presidential Committee on 48 hours clearance; it had been a kind of thing that had been recurrent in the past. Examples are the issues of multiple checks, long list of prohibitions and unduly high percentage of duty tariffs. These are things that had been on and had been identified for a very long time. So, the issue becomes the will to effect the change and that is where the importance of the ports to the national economy comes in.

If the government takes the ports seriously, then virtually everything that goes on there will be structured and fine-tuned for performance. Right now, it is like when there is problem, that when the government looks at the ports; as soon as that particular problem recedes, the government forgets about the ports. This is unfortunate because there are some countries whose economies are dependent solely on the ports operations. Such countries regard themselves as blessed for having ports connected to the global waters. There are ports that are merely serving courts; receiving cargoes from somewhere and sending to others and they create efficient systems that make those ports



Sir Ernest Elochukwu

the desire of ship owners and cargo owners. Don't forget that we are talking of logistics handling; industries need to know how they get the raw materials that they need, businesses need to know how they get their inventory. You see, the world is a planned world. The world outside Nigeria is planned; it is only in Nigeria that things are not really planned. It is like we just move and whatever we receive on daily basis, we feel okay with. In other parts of the world, plans are made, targets are mapped out and efforts are made towards meeting those targets.

So, nothing has been achieved from the latest port reform effort by the Federal Government?

Well, I find it a bit difficult to grade the efforts but, to be on the safe side, let's say there has been 50% implementation of the port reforms. For instance, the destination inspection, the ASSYCUDA ++ project, the accelerated cargo clearance. All these were introduced but on implementation, the 50% is just to be generous.

I am inclined to believe it is worse than this but then this is our country, we don't want to start painting bleak pictures but definitely, we have a big problem. The government should look at the port as a source of revenue to the nation as well as an economic front to really know what is going on at the ports towards the expressed interest and aims of the government.

Look at the port concessions; when they were done, they were done with the best of intentions. The aim of the concessions, for example in Apapa and some others, was to firm up operations. It was generally agreed, and it is the truth, that the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) was not running them efficiently with regard to cargo management. When these concessioners came in, they were supposed to have a kind of timetable for the implementation

of the terms of the concession because part of the terms of the concession was that there must be provision of cargo handling facilities, for instance. This is the aim of putting things into private hands; to bring private capital, expertise and management into the aspects previously mishandled by government establishments.

Right now, it is not monitored. While some of the concessioners have done something, many have done nothing; all that has happened is that the charges which Nigerian importers were paying under NPA have gone higher and not commensurate with services being provided, neither are they in line with what is obtainable in ports of neighbouring countries.

That is one of the reasons for the unattractiveness of the Nigerian ports to importers. Another thing is that there is a system problem. The system we are operating here is clumsy. It is centred on individuals; it gives individuals who should be drivers or implementers of the programmes a whole lot of licence to do whatever they like. When we blame the government, it is because government sets the standards and parameters. Those parameters, when they are set and maintained, there will be less chance of abuse. For instance, if the ports have to have the restriction of people who are supposed to be at the ports, it is the duty of government to provide security but if they allow just anybody to get into the ports, then there is the possibility of abuse. The main problem is that there is no clear-cut policy that this is what the Federal Government of Nigeria wants the ports of this country to be. When I use the word policy, we know that this country does not lack in policy but we are talking about implementation and effective monitoring to get results. Every system in Nigeria is good on paper.

AGRIC BUSINESS

N200bn agric loan may be hijacked by...

-Dr. Adiya

Can you describe the nature of your farm?

My farm is called S. G. Adiya Farms established almost ten years ago and the biggest farm in the Northern part, especially within Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara states respectively. We are into poultry broilers meat and also producers of water. We at the same time produce milk.

Are you a sole proprietor?

Of course, these farms solely belong to me and I am not in partnership with any organization or individual.

How profitable is the Farm business?

This business I would say is a life investment and a profitable business, but the major problems confronting big time farmers like myself is lack of government patronage and assistance. We definitely believe that with the intervention of the state and federal government this farm business would be a more profitable business, the government should come to the aid of farmers across the country and this will make the business a more profitable one when compared with oil, it will to a large extent create job for our teeming youths and also avenue for the government to earn more revenue for the nation in general. If Nigeria would be committed to

Dr. Abdullahi S. G. Adiya is the Chairman/CEO of S. G. Adiya Farms Limited Sokoto. In this interview, he speaks on his farm, problems affecting the agricultural sector, the effect of the global economic meltdown on farmers and the CBN's move to make available N200bn to big farmers.

From Rakiya. A. Muhammad & Abdulfatai Abdulsalam, Sokoto

farming today and do away with oil, if the various stakeholders could come down to base and provide the necessary assistance to farmers at all levels, the sky will be our limit in this farming business. I think a farmer can invest about N50 million into his business most especially poultry farming and before the end of that year you can realize about 1 billion naira.

All you are saying is that the business is profitable?

Yes it is a profitable business if government can give the necessary support requiring for its growth and development. You see whatever aspect of farming you embark upon whether poultry, fishing, livestock farming and what have you, if there are support, morally, financially from your government, you will surely succeed. Let's assume we have zero percent in terms of loan, banks can also come in to rescue, the farmers with all these incentives put in place would be ready to do a profitable business and

explore so many avenue within their environment. If you look at my farms there was a time that I was having over 80 staff, I sold eggs of about N2 million every day, when you multiply that by 30 days, that is a huge amount of money, then in a year that will be marvellous in terms of profitability.

Not all farmers get these adequate supports and we run to the Banks and find terrible charges. Like in my business when I had the problem of bird flu two years ago, the Federal government was quick enough to assist through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the World Bank, all these incentives sustain business anywhere. I was paid close to N32 million to cushion the effect of the loss I incurred in the business, this is a good development and I remain thankful to the Federal Government and the World Bank for this total support and assistance.

How much do you make monthly as profit from this business?

Before the global economic meltdown at least N20 million, but recently we make N4.7 million and as a



Dr. Abdullahi S. G. Adiya

result, many of my staff had to be retrenched till when the situation improves. Farmers across the country were highly affected by this global economic meltdown and I think the federal government would come up with some intervention programmes for farmers to address this ugly situation.

How many employees do you have?

We had about 83 staff, which is our staff strength all together

Are they full time or seasonal ones?

All fully employed staff, but today I only survives with about 23 staff in the farm due to the global economic crisis.

How much do your employees earn?

I paid a salary of N19,000.00 - N20,000.00 monthly

What are the problems you face in this sector?

The major problem is lack of equipment, the equipment and necessary machines for this sector are very costly, if the federal government can assist through loan in this direction we would appreciate it. Other problem is the expatriate. we should be assisted by government to invite these expatriate to come and assist us in this business by educating us further on the way forward, the world is now a global village and we keep on seeing new development in the area of farming changing day in day out and advanced technology now coming in.

CBN is making available N200bn credit facilities to big farmers. What is your comment on this?

It's a good development per say, but the problem remains that government come out with a good policy while those responsible for implementation will fail the country. Now, this policy is meant for quick revival of the farmers but now you see

everybody now becoming a farmer over night so that they grab and go because the Federal government is giving out N200bn.

You see under this dispensation some of the key government associate will come over and hijack the whole exercise for their selfish reason and they will now take away the money and by so doing the "real and actual farmers" would be denied.

My call now is that government should strive hard to ensure that this project goes to the real farmers most especially at the grassroots level and they should liaise with all states representative to ensure proper identification of the real farmers. I am saying those farmers that were in existence before this decision and the government should go to those that registered accordingly, if the government will be sincere on the project.

If the government truly wants to help farmers in this country, they should ensure proper screening of all submitted applications in order for them to be able to ascertain the fake and the real farmers in every state of the country.

Opengate MFB grants N7m loan to boost agric

Determined to boost agricultural production in Nigeria, Opengate Micro Finance Bank (MFB) has extended N7 million low interest credit facilities to more than 20 farmers and distributors in rural communities around the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The loan which has a repayment period ranging between 3 and 6 months is targeted at subsistent farmers who encounter problem in the course of storage and transporting agricultural produce from hinterlands to market places in Abuja during the rainy season. Beneficiaries of the loan are mostly in cooperative groups.

Managing Director of Opengate MFB, Mr. Nureni Yusuf said that the loan will

By Abubakar Buba

assist farmers in the rural areas to sell their goods without fear of running at lost due to problem of storage and transportation.

He said that the country lost a lot of revenue annually to spoilage of agricultural produce due to the inability of farmers to properly store them, adding "food security in Nigeria is threatened because perishable items get spoiled when farmers cannot get buyers for their farm produce immediately".

Mr. Yusuf added the process of distributing agricultural produce to the end users in the city will be facilitated as the loan will help solve the problem encountered in the course of transportation and marketing.

"We liaise with middle men to reach out to farmers in rural communities of Abuja who lack enough fund to fast track the marketing of their goods. So

far, we have given out a total of N7 million to farmers and people who act as middle men in the chain of distributing the goods to the end users", he said.

He said that the gesture is part of strategies by the bank to reduce incidence of poverty in the country and boost agricultural production.

Mr. Yusuf advised government to extend more funding to MFB's in order to reach out to people in the grass root who cannot access credit facilities.

Germany to ban genetically modified maize

Germany is to ban the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) maize - the only GM crop widely grown in Europe.

The decision, announced on Tuesday by German Agriculture Minister Ilse Aigner, is a blow to the US biotech firm Monsanto, which markets the maize.

Monsanto's variety, called MON 810, is resistant to the corn borer, a moth larva which eats the stem.

MON 810 is controversial in the EU. Several countries have banned it, defying the European Commission.

Ms Aigner, a member of the conservative Bavaria-based Christian Social Union (CSU), said she had concluded that "there is a justifiable reason to believe that... MON 810 presents a danger to the environment".

The variety has been allowed in Germany since 2005. Ms Aigner said the decision to ban it now, based on new data, was purely scientific, not political. She also said it was a specific case, and not a fundamental deci-

sion against all GM crops.

In March EU governments resisted European Commission pressure to get bans on MON 810 lifted. The commission wanted Austria and Hungary to allow cultivation of MON 810. The variety is also banned in France

and Greece. The UK was among a handful of countries that supported the commission's position, the AFP news agency reports.

Germany was planning to sow MON 810 on just 3,600 hectares (8,892 acres) for this summer's harvest, mostly in its eastern states. BBC.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Newspapers to suffer decline in advertisement

Worldwide advertising spending could fall by 6.9% this year to \$453bn (£304bn), according to media agency Zenith Optimedia.

It put the decline down to the current economic problems, which it said had both hit corporate confidence and put consumers off making major buys.

The agency said newspapers would suffer most, with advertising revenues down 12%, as people turned to the internet.

The internet would be the only medium to attract

higher advertising spending.

"Since we released our last forecasts in December the global ad market has taken a substantial turn for the worse," said Zenith Optimedia, whose own customers include British Airways, Hewlett Packard and Nestle.

It predicted that television would boost its proportion of advertising budgets to 38.6% from 38.1%, but the total spent on TV advertising would fall by 5.5%.

Zenith Optimedia also predicted that spending on internet advertising was set

to rise 8.6% as shoppers hunt online bargains.

Earlier this month online monitoring firm Hitwise found that visits to classified advertising websites were booming, with visits to such sites in the US up 84% on the same time last year.

Newspapers have been particularly hit by the downturn, from smaller titles in the UK to large papers in the US.

In February, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation announced a \$6.4bn quarterly loss, as falling advertising revenues forced it to cut \$8.4bn from the value of assets. BBC.



Newspapers

Poland to seek \$20bn IMF credit

Poland's government is to ask the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$20bn (£13.44bn) credit line to help tackle the economic crisis.

Finance Minister Jacek Rostowski said it would increase bank reserves and make Poland "immune to the virus of the crisis and speculative attacks".

He said the move would increase state bank reserves by about a third.

He said it was not "emergency funding" but rather "a supplementary reserve" available to the Polish central bank.

At the G20 meeting in London in early April, a decision was taken to boost the IMF's lending resources by up to \$750bn.

The IMF's managing director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, said: "I am very pleased by this positive response from Poland to the invitation I extended to strongly performing economies to use this new instrument to bolster international confidence."

Poland is the second country after Mexico to take advantage of the IMF's flexible credit line, established to let better-run economies gain access to money with fewer conditions attached.

Once a credit line has been established, a country

can draw on it without having to meet specified IMF policy goals.

The Polish zloty was unchanged after the announcement, and Polish central bank Monetary Policy Council member Halina Wasilewska-Trenker said: "The IMF's credit line means more stability for the zloty."

Meanwhile, economist Marta Petka, of Raiffeisen

Bank Polska, said it was a positive move by Poland.

"Since the moment the credit line facility was created and after a positive experience of Mexico, Poland was named as one of the first countries to receive this form of financing."

She added: "This is a good information because it creates a buffer for the

finance ministry in terms of acquiring financing.

"Because the IMF clearly states the facility is aimed at countries in a good economic condition, it will increase Poland's credibility."

The Polish government recently adopted a stimulus plan worth 91.3bn zlotys (\$31.4bn; \$20.6bn) to kick-start the economy amid the global slowdown. BBC.

Goldman Sachs sees strong results

Goldman Sachs has reported a \$1.8bn (£1.2bn) net quarterly profit, beating analyst expectations.

In contrast, the previous quarter had seen the firm post its first quarterly loss since going public in 1999.

The bank also said it would place \$5bn worth of its stock on the market, to raise funds to repay an emergency \$10bn loan provided by the US government.

Some analysts say the earnings results suggest the worst could be over for finance firms.

Last week US bank Wells Fargo surprised investors by saying it expected a record net profit for the quarter.

Goldman Sachs' earnings per share in the three months to 27 March were \$3.39, around double that forecast by analysts.

Keith Wirtz, president of Fifth Third Asset Management, said: "The simple fact that they doubled expectations is really great news. It's another sign, another brick on the wall that the financial sector has gone through the worst."

Analysts also said it showed how Goldman Sachs had managed to exploit recent volatile economic conditions, and the less crowded marketplace.

Analyst Gary Townsend, chief executive officer of Hill-Townsend Capital, added: "I think for [Goldman Sachs] the principal issue is going to be how much of the market they are seizing in the absence of competitors that have fallen by the wayside."

"What we are seeing here is the competitive

advantage that Goldman has, asserting itself as others have disappeared."

Revenues for the first quarter hit \$9.43bn, boosted by the strength of its fixed income and currency departments. The investment banking division meanwhile saw its revenues fall for the period.

The loans that the bank is seeking to repay is part of the White House's \$700bn Troubled Asset Relief Program (Tarp).

Goldman Sachs is one the firm's undergoing "stress tests" by federal authorities to determine their viability.

"If permitted by our supervisors and if supported by the results of the stress assessment, Goldman Sachs would like to use the capital raised plus additional resources to redeem all of the Tarp capital," the company said. BBC.

Philips posts \$76m loss

Dutch consumer electronics giant Philips has reported a first quarter loss of 57m euros (\$76m; £51m), but it says there will be no fresh job cuts. The firm had previously announced it was shedding 6,000 posts in 2009.

The loss compares with a 294m-euro profit a year ago. Sales were down 17% to 5.1bn euros as the downturn hit.

Philips said reductions in its cost base went well in the quarter, and that savings would exceed 500m euros on an annualised basis by the end of 2009.

Amsterdam-based Philips is the world's biggest lighting maker, as well as being Europe's biggest consumer electronics producer.

"We remain convinced that Philips will come out of this recession as a stronger company," said chief executive Gerard Kleisterlee.

"The portfolio of leading businesses we have built up is clearly not immune to the market woes we are now experiencing, but it is certainly more resilient than the portfolio we operated in the previous downturn." BBC.

Singapore economy in record fall

Singapore's economy shrank by 19.7% in the first quarter of 2009 compared with the previous three months, its biggest quarterly contraction on record. Official estimates also showed the economy had shrunk by 11.5% compared with the same period a year ago.

The government now expects the country's GDP to contract by between 6% and 9% this year, much more than the previous estimate of between 2% and 5%.

Singapore has been hit by a fall in exports during the economic downturn.

The country's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) said the economy's performance was much worse than expected.

"MTI's earlier forecast had factored in the likelihood of a weak first quarter, but the advance estimates indicate that actual GDP growth will undershoot earlier expectations by a significant margin," it said.

Manufacturing output fell by 29% in the first three months of the year, compared with the same period last year, pulled down by sharp falls in exports, which fell by an estimated 17% in March.

"With most of Singapore's key trading partners still in recession, the manufacturing sector will remain weak for the rest of the year," the ministry said.

Tai Hui at Standard Chartered said: "We still expect to see some signs of stabilisation at the end of 2009, although admittedly mild." BBC.

AVIATION BUSINESS

Dana begins flights to Enugu April 16

Dana Air Thursday, April 9 completed 150 days of scheduled flight operations with a record of full load flights in its 140-seat MD83 aircraft from Abuja to Lagos on Wednesday and Thursday.

The managing director, Mr Jacky Hathiramani who disclosed this said 'the airline which will begin its Lagos-Enugu route on Thursday April 16 is impressed with the consistent full load being recorded by the airline.'

'We are being encouraged and challenged to improve daily on our services whether in-flight or on the ground so as to continue to meet the expectations of our passengers and customers,' he stated.

The airline recently took delivery of another Boeing MD83 aircraft increasing its fleet size from two to three, with a fourth expected within this quarter.

According to Mr.

*wins 2009 best ICT airline

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

Hathiramani, "We have put all necessary infrastructures in place and concluded recruitment and training of our Enugu staff. We are now ready to deliver to our Enugu-bound passengers the same high quality air transport service that has become synonymous with Dana Air."

At present, Dana Air operates eight flights daily on the Lagos-Abuja-Lagos route. Apart from Enugu, the airline also intends to extend its operations to the cities of Kano and Port-Harcourt in the next couple of months.

In another development, Dana Air, won the Information Communication Technology, ICT award for Best ICT-driven airline of the Year 2009.

The ICT Award, which

was conferred by the National ICT Merit Award Technology Africa, NIMA on Thursday, April 9, is for an organisation in the forefront of technology deployment and adoption in the country.

The executive secretary of NIMA, Mr Don Pedro said 'the ICT award is designed to celebrate hi-tech most important and shakers, trailblazers, individuals, organisation and institutions who are at the forefront of technology deployment and adoption in the country.'

According to him, 'I have flown with Dana Air and I will tell you that their ICT compliant is worth celebrating and more so they desire to be complimented because of their service to Nigeria air travellers.'

'It is good to note that DANA AIR has made booking easier for its customers by providing the online

booking system, where any prospective traveller can make his booking online anywhere to save the stress of rush or inconveniences' he added.

The Managing Director of the airline Mr. Jacky

Hathiramani acknowledged the award as 'humbling, especially being a new airline in the country.'

He said recently while launching the airline's online booking that, "Passengers flying with us for busi-

ness or pleasure will be able to enjoy our world-class in-flight service and experience greater convenience through our online booking and payment system." The award to DANA AIR was presented by, Admiral Alison Madueke (rtd).



Inside a private plane

Arik Air spreads wings to Gombe

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

Nigeria's largest commercial carrier, Arik Air is spreading its wings to the new Gombe Airport Terminal with commencement of commercial flights into the north eastern town as from Sunday, April 19, 2009.

Announcing the commencement of operation into Gombe Airport, Arik Air's General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Suraj Sundaram, said the airline will operate between Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja and Gombe four times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday) using one of its sleek Bombardier CRJ900 aircraft. The flight will depart Abuja at 11.10am with the return trip leaving Gombe at 12.30 pm.

Arik Air's CRJ900 aircraft is configured to carry 74 passengers (12 business and 62 economy class) in order to allow for more leg room and aisle space than any other similar category aircraft. The leather seats throughout are both comfortable and luxurious, and the quite environmentally friendly aircraft provides for a relaxing, stress free journey.

Sundaram said the airline's decision to add Gombe to its growing list of destinations is borne out of the desire to enable guests from the north eastern town a seamless connection to Abuja, while ensuring safe, reliable and modern air transport services to the communities in and around Gombe.

"The addition of Gombe on our route network is a testimony to our commitment to the growth of Nigerian aviation and in line with our promise to fly to all state capitals and key markets in Nigeria where there are functional airports", Sundaram stressed.

Gombe, carved out of the old Bauchi state in 1996, is one of the major producers of cash and food crops in Nigeria and is blessed with abundant resources. The city thus becomes the 19th Nigerian airport to be serviced by Arik Air.

Sundaram disclosed that a promotional fare of N15,000 in economy class and N28,500 in business class, will be charged by Arik Air for a one-way ticket on the new route.

The new Gombe International Airport, built by the state government, was opened for flight operations in November last year and used for the airlift of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) had last year expressed satisfaction over aeronautical facilities at the airport. These facilities include a 3.3km runway, apron, fire vehicle, water hydrant and perimeter fence which met international standard.

Arik Air is Nigeria's leading airline with a modern state-of-the-art fleet of 26 aircraft servicing 21 airports with over 100 flights a day and employing a work force of 1,300.

Air France KLM down by 9.4%

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

by strike action in the French Antilles, recording a drop of 16.9 percent. Capac-

ity was reduced by 6.0 percent. The load factor declined by 9.8 points to 75.2 percent too.

Conditions on the European network remain tough.

Traffic fell by 9.8 percent while capacity was down by 1.0 percent, leading to a 6.1 point drop in the load factor to 62.9 percent.

Bad economic conditions have continued to take a toll on airline operations and capacity. March witnessed a decline in some airlines traffic and seats capacity among certain airlines.

Air France KLM passenger traffic went down 9.4 percent with capacity reduced by 2.9 percent.

The company says, "despite an almost 3 percent reduction in capacity, traffic declined by 9.4 percent, affecting all the networks. This decline was accompanied by a significant deterioration in unit revenues."

It noted the load factor was down by 5.5 points to 75.5 percent.

On the Americas network, AirFrance KLM traffic fell 6.9 percent with a 1.6 percent reduction in capacity. The load factor remained high at 80.7 percent but this nevertheless amounted to a 4.6 point decline.

Also on the Asia network, capacity was strongly reduced (-6.4%) but traffic fell by 10.7%. The load factor therefore declined by 3.9 points, albeit remaining at the high level of 82.7%.

Traffic on the Africa and Middle East network dropped indeed dropped by 5.6 percent while capacity was virtually stable at -0.1 percent. The load factor stood at 74 percent or -4.3 points.

As in February, traffic on the Caribbean and Indian Ocean network was impacted



ANDAL SCIENCE ACADEMY

GWARZO ROAD, KABUGA, KANO
P. O. BOX 12856, KANO - NIGERIA



JS 1 & 2 Entrance Examination

2009/2010 Session

Andal Science Academy, a unique boys boarding secondary school, equipped with modern facilities: Air conditioned hostels & classrooms; PC for each student in the class; internet facilities and standard sports facilities, invites applications into JS 1 & JS 2 from suitably qualified candidates for the 2009/2010 academic year.

Entrance Examinations into JS 1 & JS 2 for the 2009/2010 session will be conducted on Saturday, 25th April, 2009 at the School Premises.

Application Forms Available At:	For Enquiries:
Abunde Memorial School, Maidugui	Call: 0882 530 0905, 0887 070 9626
Andal Science Academy, Kano	Mail: info@andalscience.com
Mary Travis School, Inuwa Wada Road, Katsina	Visit: www.andalscience.com
Madi International School, Yelo	
Oceanic Bank Plc, Martali Muhammad Way, Kano	
Turaki International School, Mahali GRA, Katsina	
Download the form from www.andalscience.com	

Completed Application forms should reach the Principal on or before Monday, 20th April, 2009.

The examination will commence at 9:00am while Registration begins at 8:00am and closes at exactly 8:55am. No candidate shall be allowed into the examination hall after the close of registration at 8:55am.

...WE ASPIRE TODAY TO INSPIRE TOMORROW

FINANCE BUSINESS

CBN forex policy hurts North -NU

The Chairman, Management Committee of the Northern Union, Chief Patrick Adaba has said that the new Bureau de Change policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria has destroyed many northern foreign exchange dealers just as he observed the high level of poverty and underdevelopment today in the North due to the weak productive base of the economies in the zone.

Adaba who is also a former deputy governor in Kogi State made this known at a press briefing on Thursday saying that his committee just concluded a tour of Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa states to appreciate the developments there as well as meet with government, political and community leaders and in the process met with state governors, traditional rulers, opinion leaders and the press.

"We observed during the tour the high level of poverty and underdevelopment in the

By Abubakar Ibrahim

North. It was then that we recalled Professor Charles Soludo's statement that poverty is a northern phenomenon. We also observed that more could be done in the areas of infrastructure and services such as roads, housing, water, power, health and education. We noticed the alarming rate of desertification and above all, a general decrease in agricultural products in some states caused by deforestation", he said.

However, he commended the Kano state government's effort in integrating the almajiri into the mainstream formal education system, Sokoto state for agriculture and water resource management, Zamfara for construction of more school classrooms, Katsina for best utilisation of UBE funds and Jigawa state for huge infrastructural development.

The Northern Union, Chief Adaba said, was ready

to assist the North in proffering solutions to the almajiri case, support investment in agricultural activity, stem encroaching desertification, establish microfinance institutions for small and medium enterprises, revival of industries especially the textiles and support solid minerals development.

"We want urgent release of the funds budgeted since

the last administration for the revival of the cotton and textile industries. In respect of this, Northern Union has assured the stakeholders that it will assist in pursuing the release of the N70 billion budgeted for the purpose", he said.

On the foreign exchange trade, he noted that though some policy initiatives may mean well, it hurts the north-

ern community.

"One major complaint by the stakeholders from the interactive session during the tour is the new policy on Bureau de Change apparently designed to strengthen the naira but which has crippled that business. It is evident that this policy actually has destroyed the trade of many northern foreign exchange dealers. Already, the banking

reforms of the previous administration have marginalised the North to the extent that of the 25 consolidated banks, only one, the Unity Bank, could be said to be a Northern bank", he said.

He urged the government to "review the role of the Central Bank in the economy and limit its functions consistent with the internationally accepted practice".

Employees must know their pension rights -PENCOM

The National Pension Commission (PENCOM) has said that employees in Nigeria should know all the rights and privileges accorded to them by the Pension Reform Act (2004) in order to have a secured life after retirement and be active participants in the pension industry.

The commission added that knowledge of their rights will help establish a pension system that is financially sustainable, simple and transparent.

According to the new pension scheme, employees have a right to customer support from Pension Fund Administrators (PFA's) by receiving regular information on investment strategy, market returns and other performance indicators on a quarterly ba-

By Abubakar Buba

sis. Based on the contributory pension scheme, Employers are expected to contribute a minimum of 7.5% on behalf of their employees to the Retiree Savings Account (RSA).

Commenting on the issue, PENCOM's Head of surveillance, Mr. Mohammed Datti said that it is the right of the employee to monitor employers to ensure remittance to contribution.

He said that apart from opening RSA with PFA of their choice, employees should confirm crediting of the contributions to their account.

Mr. Datti added employees must not hesitate to report employers who have been violating their rights.

'Why Kano has high unemployment rate'

The high rate of unemployment in Kano which was reported by the media has been attributed to the attitude of the youth in the state. A commentator on National and international issues based in Kano Malam Buhari Gabari has said.

He made the remark in a chat with *Daily Trust* at the weekend.

He attributed the problem to the emphasis the youth place, especially graduates, on white collar jobs.

He pointed out that the poor incentives the state gov-

By Hisham Habib

ernment gives out is below expectation, calling on the government to replace the Ministry for Monitoring and Evaluation with that of Vocational and Technical training, which he said could go a long way in checkmating the problems of youth wandering in the state, and re-focusing their minds on careers that could make them self-reliant.

Malam Gabari also called on the businessmen in the state to assist youth.



Mr. Ben Akabueze, Lagos State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget briefing the press on the activities of his ministry recently at Alausa Secretariat, Ikeja. With him from left are Mrs. Iyabowale Aluko, Permanent Secretary Economic Planning and Budget and Mrs. Ranti Odutola, Permanent Secretary, Information and Strategy.

Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu

ICAN honours Fashola, Obi with merit awards

The Governors of Lagos and Anambra States, Messrs Babatunde Raji Fashola and Peter Obi, the Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Mr. Phillips Salawu as well as Minister of Aviation, Mr. Babatunde Omotoba and the Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Remi Babalola are among the eminent Nigerians to be honoured by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) at this year's edition of its prestigious ICAN Merit Award.

The Award ceremony will hold at The Lagoon Restaurant, Ozumba Mbadiwe Street, Victoria Island, on Friday 17th April 2009 at 5.00 pm.

According to the head media of the institute, Dayo Akingboto, the deputy Governor of Kogi State and the two Ministers, being members of the institute, will be

By Kayode Ekundayo,
Lagos

given the award in the members category while the two Governors will be honoured in the Non-Members category. Other dignitaries to be so honoured in the members category include the Auditor-General of the Federation, Mr. Robert Onoriode Ejenavi, FCA; Chairman of Fidelity Bank and John Holt, Chief Christopher Ezech, MFR, FCA; Chairman of Honeywell Group and President, Nigerian Stock Exchange, Mr. Oba Otudeko, OFR, FCA; Chairman, Nigerian Breweries, Chief Kola Jamodu, OFR, FCA; Regional Manager for Financial Management for African Region, Dr. Edward Olowo-Okere, FCA; ICAN Past Presidents: Princess Agnes Adenike Adeniran, FCA; Mr. Ayo Oni,

B.Sc, FCA and Venerable Ayodele Odukoya.

Apart from the two Governors, others to be honoured in the Non Members category include: President/CEO, Neimeth Pharmaceuticals, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, MON, and the Group Managing Director, New Nigeria Development Company, NNDC, Alhaji Aliyu A. Alkali, mni, FNIM; and Founder, MD/CEO, EMZOR Pharmaceuticals, Chief (Mrs) Stella Okoli, MON.

In the Corporate Bodies category, Zain Nigeria and FLOUR Mills of Nigeria Plc will be honoured.

The ICAN Registrar/Chief Executive, Mr. Olutoyin Adepatte says that: "The Dinner and Award ceremony this year will be exceptionally colourful when you consider the quality of the people being celebrated - resourceful

Governors and ministers who are true achievers, as well as men of integrity and organizations whose exploits in business and national service will make the nation proud any day. Apart from being an occasion to recognize and honour achievers who have excelled in various strata of the nation's economy, the yearly ICAN Dinner and Awards ceremony is a forum where Chartered Accountants all over the country meet, socialize, wine and dine together in a relaxed atmosphere with their invited guests, friends and family."

The Dinner will be attended by distinguished Chartered Accountants, as well as other professionals, government functionaries, key industry players and Corporate Organisations.

FINANCE BUSINESS

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares	Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	3	0.86	2,150	1,827.50	NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMA. PLC	7	1.76	118,246	208,127.96
FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	18	1.05	412,463	439,029.41	UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SER. PLC	6	0.66	518,100	341,946.00
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	9	1.09	177,502	186,857.18	Sector Totals	45		1,151,278	2,586,442.06
PRESCO PLC	6	5.33	16,968	86,027.76	HOTEL & TOURISM				
Sector Totals	36		609,083	713,741.85	CAPITAL HOTEL PLC	1	3.94	500	1,875.00
AIRLINE SERVICES AND LOGISTICS PLC	2	10.64	5,003	50,580.33	Sector Totals	1		500	1,875.00
NIGERIAN AVIATION HANDLING CO. PLC	58	7.02	387,531	2,740,362.36	INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
Sector Totals	60		392,534	2,790,942.69	B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	6	16.96	42,817	728,112.67
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	18	0.50	1,286,062	643,031.00	FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	1	1.77	55,000	97,350.00
R. T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	5	8.28	26,535	208,830.45	VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC	9	3.71	18,100	64,255.00
Sector Totals	23		1,312,597	851,861.45	VONO PRODUCTS PLC	1	1.90	1,000,000	1,900,000.00
ACCESS BANK PLC	121	4.90	4,880,073	23,887,049.25	Sector Totals	17		1,115,917	2,789,717.67
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	122	5.20	4,924,102	26,199,137.45	INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TELECOMMUNICATION				
DIAMOND BANK PLC	62	4.51	4,291,703	18,874,901.78	CHAMS NIGERIA PLC	18	1.28	2,583,758	3,290,710.24
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	1	27.96	5,000	139,800.00	MASS TELECOM INNOVATION NIG PLC	1	0.59	1,100	627.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	97	4.99	11,177,960	54,897,530.20	STARCOMMS PLC	37	2.00	2,032,548	4,068,870.02
FIDELITY BANK PLC	131	2.09	3,062,901	6,450,753.02	Sector Totals	56		4,617,406	7,360,207.26
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	606	14.01	8,178,028	116,457,286.73	INSURANCE				
FIRST INLAND BANK PLC	11	2.46	336,055	826,634.75	AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	113	1.03	13,041,700	13,174,043.08
GTBANK PLC	221	10.10	13,100,430	131,123,753.95	CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE PLC	12	0.87	617,549	545,098.61
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	30	5.30	1,618,741	8,464,158.30	CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	12	1.22	879,306	1,065,931.48
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	376	6.85	31,716,811	219,639,420.05	CUSTODIAN AND ALLIED INS. PLC	7	2.01	280,900	572,031.00
OCEANIC BANK INTERNATIONAL PLC	171	6.20	2,767,089	17,159,582.47	EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	1	1.63	5,000	7,750.00
BANK PHB PLC	49	4.90	626,298	3,146,397.11	GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	6	0.50	236,250	118,125.00
SKYE BANK PLC.	210	3.97	1,662,108	6,416,628.47	GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	10	0.53	318,321	159,520.50
STERLING BANK PLC	37	1.35	721,980	993,781.48	CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INS. PLC	10	0.56	1,241,400	688,454.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	237	8.60	4,111,329	34,834,070.31	INVEST. AND ALLIED ASSURANCE PLC	8	0.50	595,212	297,606.00
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	179	11.40	1,572,897	18,147,533.30	INT'L ENERGY INSURANCE CO. PLC	35	0.95	2,863,100	2,754,315.00
UNITYBANK PLC	44	1.32	3,790,721	5,000,859.44	LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	9	0.84	442,200	371,448.00
WEMA BANK PLC	6	3.14	70,479	221,304.06	LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	5	0.50	152,000	76,000.00
ZENITH BANK PLC	205	12.24	5,384,836	64,210,334.76	MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	24	0.65	655,885	427,376.25
Sector Totals	2,916		103,999,541	757,090,916.88	N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG) PLC.	36	0.58	2,653,078	1,526,976.92
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	39	88.50	287,062	25,377,724.85	NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	7	1.40	159,964	232,998.60
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	28	2.82	499,204	1,472,087.93	PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	4	4.39	920,500	4,040,995.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	84	36.66	664,700	24,422,362.31	REGENCY ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO. PLC	2	0.50	14,500	7,250.00
Sector Totals	151		1,450,966	51,272,175.09	SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	4	0.74	12,100	8,591.00
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	40	8.00	970,014	7,799,068.80	STACO INSURANCE PLC	1	3.66	21,000	76,860.00
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC	26	23.96	1,097,538	25,395,538.80	STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	11	0.64	740,045	473,628.80
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIGERIA PLC	24	7.00	254,884	1,714,189.50	UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	0.73	355,500	254,655.00
NIGERIAN ROPES PLC.	1	10.73	200	2,040.00	UNIVERSAL INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	2	0.54	4,427	2,390.58
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	39	16.80	1,081,986	18,572,732.43	INTERCONTINENTAL WAPIC INS. PLC	20	1.97	242,872	490,909.56
Sector Totals	130		3,404,622	53,483,569.53	Sector Totals	346		26,452,809	27,372,954.38
COURTVILLE INVESTMENTS PLC	2	2.99	3,500	9,975.00	LEASING				
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	12	1.90	1,133,350	2,236,508.00	C&I LEASING PLC	1	6.04	10,000	57,400.00
Sector Totals	14		1,136,850	2,246,483.00	Sector Totals	1		10,000	57,400.00
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	15	0.86	535,415	497,771.15	MARITIME				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	2	7.39	42,750	300,532.50	JAPUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	92	1.59	1,739,476	2,821,686.44
Sector Totals	17		578,165	798,303.65	Sector Totals	92		1,739,476	2,821,686.44
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIGERIA) PLC	2	6.79	11,634	75,155.64	MEDIA				
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	38	17.10	355,349	6,047,656.08	DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	232	1.42	6,409,682	8,942,003.16
TRANSNATIONAL CORP OF NIG PLC	22	0.54	1,743,643	950,817.84	Sector Totals	232		6,409,682	8,942,003.16
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	22	29.01	427,044	12,414,736.59	MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	39	8.09	886,890	7,125,578.43	ASO SAVINGS AND LOAND PLC	15	1.00	256,301	240,540.00
Sector Totals	123		3,424,560	26,613,944.58	UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	18	1.57	502,442	779,084.82
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	35	4.91	395,718	1,970,474.23	Sector Totals	33		758,743	1,019,624.82
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	16	22.00	129,850	2,726,316.50	OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				
MULTIVERSE RESOURCES PLC	7	0.52	254,500	134,040.00	CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC.	1	3.62	35,000	120,400.00
Sector Totals	58		780,068	4,830,830.73	DEAP CAPITAL MANAG AND TRUST PLC	2	5.43	247,800	1,345,554.00
CUTIX PLC	1	6.72	500	3,195.00	ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	1	2.17	25,000	51,750.00
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	6	1.41	22,100	29,614.00	Sector Totals	4		307,800	1,517,704.00
Sector Totals	7		22,600	32,809.00	PACKAGING				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	6	37.05	15,838	585,560.50	AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	1	9.04	5,000	42,950.00
BIG TREAT PLC	1	2.35	5,000	11,200.00	NIGERIAN BAG MAN. COMPANY PLC	620	1.18	1,058,969	1,258,584.48
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	15	9.60	107,305	1,030,237.50	POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	5.44	1,000	5,170.00
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	26	7.27	240,481	1,756,554.40	Sector Totals	622		1,064,969	1,306,704.48
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	113	14.31	13,281,595	192,543,619.27	PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	43	14.99	336,526	5,070,824.63	AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	69	80.74	273,930	22,150,254.50
NATIONAL SALT COMPANY NIGERIA PLC	11	4.18	248,000	1,036,640.00	CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	1	90.30	2,777	263,287.37
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	9	22.50	18,352	405,320.40	CONOIL PLC	3	67.23	1,885	120,394.95
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	46	150.00	298,311	44,374,626.00	ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	2	26.68	5,200	138,736.00
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC	1	17.14	500	8,145.00	MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	6	96.61	20,545	2,084,084.80
TANTALIZERS PLC	18	1.02	679,600	735,908.50	OANDO PLC	80	68.00	175,394	11,547,510.20
UNION DICON SALT PLC	1	7.97	29,273	221,889.34	TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	9	143.32	2,473	346,673.90
Sector Totals	290		15,260,781	247,780,525.54	Sector Totals	170		482,204	36,650,941.72
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	2	2.66	2,000	5,060.00	PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	10	2.20	405,973	892,615.60	LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	2	3.56	7,000	26,110.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG PLC	12	15.90	62,584	948,767.50	UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	3	4.38	57,552	251,117.76
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	8	4.50	44,375	189,925.00	Sector Totals	5		64,552	277,227.76
					REAL ESTATE				
					UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CO. PLC	2	16.48	100,713	1,661,750.24
					Sector Totals	2		100,713	1,661,750.24
					REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST				
					SKYE SHELTER FUND	1	105.46	790	79,150.10
					Sector Totals	1		790	79,150.10
					ROAD TRANSPORTATION				
					ASSOCIATED BUS COMPANY PLC	10	0.94	136,500	130,055.00
					Sector Totals	10		136,500	130,055.00
					THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
					ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORP.	48	8.92	584,999	5,247,239.19
					Sector Totals	48		584,999	5,247,239.19
					Overall Totals	5,510		177,370,705	1,248,328,787.27

Continued on page 35

FINANCE BUSINESS

Start from page 34

Top 10 Trades

Symbol	Volume	Value	Trades
ACCESS	4,880,073.00	23,887,049.25	121
AFRIBANK	4,924,102.00	26,199,137.45	122
ZENITHBANK	5,384,836.00	64,210,334.76	205
DAARCOMM	6,409,682.00	8,942,003.16	232
FIRSTBANK	8,178,028.00	116,457,286.73	606
FCMB	11,177,960.00	54,897,530.20	97
AIICO	13,041,700.00	13,174,043.08	113
GUARANTY	13,100,430.00	131,123,753.95	221
DANGSUGAR	13,281,595.00	192,543,619.27	113

Gainers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
OANDO	65.00	68.00	+3.00
NESTLE	147.00	150.00	+3.00
BCC	22.84	23.96	+1.12
ZENITHBANK	11.68	12.24	+0.56
UNILEVER	7.71	8.09	+0.38
CCNN	6.73	7.00	+0.27
DIAMONDBNK	4.30	4.51	+0.21
UPL	4.18	4.38	+0.20
NASCON	3.99	4.18	+0.19
GLAXOSMITH	15.73	15.90	+0.17

Losers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
AP	84.98	80.74	-4.24
UBN	11.92	11.40	-0.52
CADBURY	10.10	9.60	-0.50
UACN	29.50	29.01	-0.49
WAPCO	17.20	16.80	-0.40
GUINNESS	88.90	88.50	-0.40
FIRSTBANK	14.40	14.01	-0.39
DANGFLOUR	7.65	7.27	-0.38
INTERCONT	7.19	6.85	-0.34
DEAPCAP	5.71	5.43	-0.28

Market State: Closed

Index	: 19,837.41
Deals	: 5,510
Volume	: 177,370,705
Value	: N 1,248,328,787.27
Cap.	: N 4,487,672,365,487.57

Eterna Oil's N8.5bn offer opens

An indigenous player in the downstream sector, Eterna Oil Plc yesterday commenced additional raise of fund from the capital market.

The energy company is raising N8.5 billion from the capital market which comes in Initial Public Offer and Right Issue.

The offer which opened yesterday closes April 30.

While the company shop for Initial Public Offer of 287,000,000 ordinary shares of 50kobo each at N11.50, its right issue was peaked at 533,000,000 ordinary shares of 50kobo each at N9.95.

At the completion board meeting in Lagos, Chairman of the company, Chief Fola Adeola explained that the proceed from the offer would go into the refinancing of acquisition of tank farms in Apapa and Abuja, retail network acquisition/expansion and the acquisition/development of

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos
aviation facilities in Abuja.

He also said the proceed

from the offer would be meant for the development of Liquefied Petroleum Gas and Natural Gas infrastructure in Ikot

Abassi, Akwa Ibom State as well as investment in mid/upstream operations, Amakpe refinery.

... Partners PHCN on power

An indigenous player in the downstream sector, Eterna Plc has partnered with PHCN through the supply of LPFO to the Egbin Power Station Plant to improve the supply of power in Nigeria. LPFO is an alternative fuel used to power the turbines in the absence of adequate gas supply.

This was stated to newsmen by Mr. Ibrahim Boyi, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Eterna at a news conference held in Lagos.

He said it is known that power generation and supply has always been a major source of worry for suc-

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

cessive Nigerian governments, the manufacturing sector, businesses and the general public.

He said: "This has over the years led to increasing reliance by both the public and private sector on generating sets, occasioning an upward spiral in the cost of production, doing business in Nigeria and negatively impacting on the cost of living for the average Nigerian".

Mr. Ibrahim Boyi stated that Eterna had partnered with the PHCN to transport Low Pour Fuel Oil (LPFO) from the nation's refineries located in Warri and Port

Harcourt to the Egbin thermal station in Lagos to sustain the continued generation of power by the station and improve the station's output of power to the national grid.

In furtherance of this ongoing initiative, Eterna has already delivered approximately 10,000 Metric Tonnes of LPFO to the PHCN Egbin thermal power station and will over the next few months deliver further quantities to the Egbin Thermal Power Station.

This, Boyi said Eterna believes will improve the generation and supply of electricity and act as a positive stimulus for the Nigerian Economy.

LL clinches NIMC account

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has finally drawn the curtain on the appointment of Communication and Marketing Plan Consultants by the selection of LOWE LINTAS (LL) as its Consultants.

Sources close to the NIMC revealed that the process which started way back in 2006, with the advertisement of Request for Proposals (RFP) was initially slated for confirmation in third quarter 2007 but could not be done due to what the source termed necessary reviews for due process compliance. The appointment was finally made following a revision of the scope of work and the fees.

Our source revealed that the firm, LL which has started work is expected to assist the NIMC to develop a communication and mar-

By Jibrin Abubakar

keting plan policy which includes the development of a brand strategy, architecture and DNA or identity.

It also includes capacity building for the Commission's newly established Corporate Communication Unit and the provision of implementation support for the Commission's range of services and communication needs.

"The appointment of LL is seen as a remarkable development at the NIMC in view of the Commission's herculean task of taking over the assets and liabilities of the defunct DNCR which did not have a good image due to the bad press following the scandal that cost the life of a one time Minister of Interior, Mr. Afolabi," the source said.

Also the Commission's current effort at what is termed 'a paradigm shift' away from 'Card Issuance' to 'Identity Management and Assurance Systems' requires that the public is well informed to engender sufficient support without which the proposed Permanent Registration Centres (PRCs), which will be built and operated by the private sector, will not work.

When contacted, the Executive Vice Chairman (EVC) of LL Mr. Erhabor Emokpae said that his firm is happy to have clinched the account, noting that though the process took quite some time, it has finally ended well and the Agency is looking forward to helping the NIMC achieve its exceptionally unique and far reaching objectives.

Speaking further, the EVC said, "Although the

account is a relatively small one for now, we are very encouraged by the infectious passion and determination you see amongst the management of NIMC, in working to make identity assurance a reality in Nigeria. We should soon be able to say credibly that I am Mr. 'A' without question, because there is a trusted infrastructure in place that can be relied upon by all parties."

With our unequalled advertising history, we at Lowe Lintas are undoubtedly the most successful brand builders in Nigeria, and we believe that when we create a brand, we create a future. This is therefore a huge opportunity to make our mark in creating and nurturing a trusted and well understood brand-type persona for the NIMC and the identity management objectives with which they have been charged."

Media ranks low in pension compliance

The National Pension Commission (PENCOM) has ranked media low in the list of organizations complying with the contributory pension scheme.

While giving a breakdown on the status of compliance of private sector contribution to the present pension reform scheme, PENCOM's head of resolution and enforcement, Mr. Mohammed Bello Umar said

By Abubakar Buba

that out of the total 3,468,740 Retiree Saving Account (RSA) opened; media has only a figure of 2,270.

He said: "Only 9 out of the 68 media organizations presently registered under the scheme are complying. That is say, the remaining 59 are not complying".

Mr. Bello said that contributions remitted by media organization stood at N1.18

billion out of the total N472.73 billion to RSA.

He said that the commission has put in place various implementation strategies including collaboration with regulatory bodies like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the National Communication Commission (NCC) to ensure adequate compliance.

Mr. Bello added that it is disheartening that compliance level of media to the

pension scheme is still very low, adding "the commission will continue to engage in massive enlightenment campaign of all stakeholders on the benefit of contributing to the scheme, but will not hesitate to apply sanction regime when the need arises".

Private sector participation to the scheme stood at 1,334,262, while public sector has 1,352,763.



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DIGEST

Stem cell fertility hope: Scientists make breakthrough in egg production which could put an end to the menopause

In a breakthrough that could help infertile couples to conceive, scientists claim to have created eggs in sterile ovaries.

When fertilised, the eggs resulted in the birth of healthy young.

The technique offers hope for cancer patients left infertile by chemotherapy, and women who have gone through the menopause while still young.

The experiments were conducted on mice, and scientists warned that much more work would be needed before the research could be extended to humans.

British experts also expressed scepticism about the results claimed by Chinese scientists.

The work centres on stem cells - 'master' cells with the power to turn into other cell types, thereby offering a 'repair kit' for the body.

The Chinese

scientists removed stem cells from the ovaries of mice, grew them in the laboratory and injected them into female mice with sterile ovaries, where they turned into eggs.

After the mice mated, healthy babies were born, the journal Nature Cell Biology reported.

The researchers now plan to try to create eggs with stem cells removed from women's ovaries.

Dr Ji Wu, of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, said the technique had the potential to restore fertility after cancer treatment and treat infertility, including early menopause.

In theory, stem cells could be taken from a woman's ovaries, grown in the lab, then frozen until needed.

This raises the prospect of allowing healthy women to put motherhood on hold without worrying about

the menopause.

A greater understanding of egg production could also lead to new drugs to boost fertility,

a condition that affects one in six couples. Use of cells from the adult body overcomes the ethical

objections surrounding embryonic stem cells.

British stem cell scientists welcomed the research but

warned that the claims needed to be verified by other laboratories.

Culled from dailymail.co.uk



Hope: The breakthrough could offer hope to infertile women, and put an end to the menopause - but British scientists remain sceptical

Scientists find 'pleasure nerves'

Scientists say they understand more about how the body responds to pleasurable touch.

A team, including scientists from the Unilever company, have identified a class of nerve fibres in the skin which specifically send pleasure messages.

And people had to be stroked at a certain speed - 4-5cm per second - to activate the pleasure sensation.

They say the study, published in Nature Neuroscience, could help understand how touch sustains human relationships.

Hairy skin

But the researchers involved in this work were looking to understand the opposite sensation - pleasure.

This research, which also involved experts at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and at the University of North Carolina, recorded nerve responses in 20 people.

They then tested how people responded to having their forearm skin stroked at a range of different speeds.

They identified "C-tactile" nerve fibres as



Mothers use touch to sooth their babies

those stimulated when people said a touch had been pleasant.

If the stroke was faster or slower than the optimum speed, the touch was not pleasurable and the nerve fibres were not activated.

The scientists also discovered that the C-tactile nerve fibres are only present on hairy skin, and are not found on the hand.

Professor Francis McGlone, now based at Unilever after an academic career where he carried out research into nerve response, says this is likely to be a deliberate "design".

"We believe this could be Mother Nature's way of ensuring that mixed messages are not sent to the brain when it is in use as a functional tool."

He said the speed at which people found arm-stroking pleasurable was the same as that which a mother uses to comfort a baby, or couples use to show

affection.

Professor McGlone said it was part of the evolutionary mechanism that sustained relationships between adults, or with children.

"Our primary impulse as humans is procreation, but there are some mechanisms in place that are associated with behaviour and reward which are there to ensure relationships continue."

Culled from bbc.co.uk

Promotion at work can increase stress and be bad for your health

Climbing the career ladder may be the goal of many employees but each step, it appears, can have a detrimental effect on mental health.

Researchers have found that promotion increases stress levels by up to 10 per cent - and gives up to 20 per cent less time to visit the doctor.

The increased pressure may come from heavier workloads, extra responsibility and reduced leisure time.

Economists and psychologists at the University of Warwick analysed 1,000 individual promotions between 1991 and 2005. They knew that people in high positions tend to have better health, and expected that their research would reflect this. But researcher Chris Boyce, who worked with Professor Andrew Oswald, said: 'Getting a promotion at work is not as great as many people think.'

'Our research finds that the mental health of managers typically deteriorates after a job promotion, and in a way that goes beyond merely short-term change. 'Just because people in managerial positions find themselves to be healthier does not necessarily mean this is as a direct result of their occupational positions. 'These findings suggest that there are other determining factors because we found that there were no physical health benefits at all. 'When it came to mental health we found that promotions actually make people feel more stressed - meaning promotions may not actually be good for your health. 'It's not completely clear why this is but it may be that promotions are not the best route for everybody due to increased pressure and stress levels. We found that some people just don't cope in certain positions.'

'There are no indications of any health improvements for promoted people other than reduced attendance at GP surgeries, which may itself be something to worry about rather than celebrate.'

Culled from dailymail.co.uk



Stress: A promotion can have a detrimental effect on mental health

DIGEST

SUDOKU PUZZLE

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given"-these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

EASY

59.

				4	5	1		
	9	5	1			6	4	8
	1	4	9			2		3
		6			4			
1				9				4
			2			8		
4		1			3	5	8	
9	3	8			6	7	2	
		2	8	1				

SOLUTION TO SUDOKU PUZZLE No. 58

3	5	2	7	8	1	6	4	9
8	1	4	9	6	3	2	5	7
9	6	7	2	4	5	8	3	1
6	3	9	8	5	4	7	1	2
1	7	8	3	9	2	5	6	4
2	4	5	6	1	7	3	9	8
7	9	6	1	3	8	4	2	5
5	2	1	4	7	6	9	8	3
4	8	3	5	2	9	1	7	6

SIGN LANGUAGE



Case of going to equity with clean hands
Photo location: Scarborough, Tobago, by Chris McBride.
Culled from the telegraph.co.uk

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO puzzles are solved by finding all the hidden words in the diagram. The words are always in a straight line and may read up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally. Cross a word off your list once you have circled it. Many words will overlap.

48

World of fantasy

R	M	N	L	V	A	R	S	D	A	B	D	N	I	S
P	A	Q	O	R	H	R	E	U	R	M	R	I	M	S
J	E	D	I	L	I	K	C	L	P	E	X	O	T	N
P	A	C	I	S	A	G	J	A	T	E	O	I	J	R
H	T	P	O	C	P	V	R	N	D	N	R	G	D	O
A	L	L	I	S	U	Z	A	E	C	I	S	M	I	C
N	A	Y	N	U	B	L	U	A	P	E	A	R	A	I
T	N	O	O	X	N	I	L	S	L	U	H	Y	M	N
O	T	P	X	E	O	F	L	E	P	S	S	D	R	U
M	I	A	E	L	E	N	N	L	P	O	A	K	E	J
S	S	R	E	L	A	I	R	U	M	E	L	Y	M	W
H	G	S	V	M	T	O	T	S	U	A	F	C	X	I
I	K	E	T	E	F	L	O	W	E	R	E	W	Y	T
P	S	A	S	Q	U	A	T	C	H	H	T	M	C	
U	B	I	T	E	Y	H	O	B	B	I	T	S	H	H

- Paul
- Bunyan
- Pecos Bill
- Pellucidar
- Phantom Ship
- Sasquatch
- Selenites
- Sindbad
- Spirits
- Supergirl
- Superman
- Talos
- The Flash
- Unicorn
- Werewolf
- Witch
- Yeti

- Arcadia
- Atlantis
- Avalon
- Batman
- Cyclops
- Eloi
- Elves
- Faust
- Green
- Lantern
- Hobbits
- Lemuria
- Mermaid
- Moonealf
- Opar

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 47

E	M	O	H	R	O	T	O	M	O	T	E	D	Y	R
S	P	O	T	S	E	S	I	C	H	E	X	D	L	B
P	R	E	T	A	W	X	N	U	P	S	E	A	D	S
O	A	E	H	A	K	C	E	H	O	N	W	P	N	L
T	O	R	H	E	D	I	S	D	A	O	D	O	E	W
A	R	R	O	T	O	U	B	L	E	I	I	C	I	O
N	S	O	F	P	O	J	P	O	T	T	X	A	R	B
U	M	P	V	R	R	O	R	A	A	C	N	F	M	
P	L	R	C	E	T	L	E	L	R	V	O	N	T	O
W	R	E	A	A	L	A	U	D	C	R	N	E	E	O
W	O	L	A	A	T	H	A	R	I	E	F	D	B	B
V	T	I	B	S	E	I	S	A	S	I	F	K	U	
H	E	A	P	B	H	T	P	I	E	E	N	O	H	D
H	U	B	E	C	O	R	D	S	D	B	E	O	K	I
E	X	O	B	A	C	H	A	R	G	E	D	C	X	

PROPERTY

HOTLINES:
08064416006, 08035946883

Kaduna Stadium splits commissioner, Pillars coach

The Kaduna state commissioner for sports, Shehu Adamu, has disagreed with Kano Pillars Coach Abdulmalik Jabir, over the size of the Kaduna Township Stadium. Shehu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Kaduna it was untrue that the Township Stadium was smaller than the Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano, where the Pillars played their matches before relocating to Kaduna.

NAN reports that Pillars moved their Globacom Premier League and CAF Champions League matches to Kaduna following the ongoing renovation of the Sani Abacha Stadium for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup.

NAN also reports that while the Kano club play their Globacom league matches at the Township stadium, formerly Ranch Bees Stadium, the Ahmadu Bello Stadium hosts their continental games. "FIFA Vice President, Jack Warner, gave the stadium a pass mark when he said it had the best pitch in Africa. "Ranchers Bees played their WAFU Cup matches on the same pitch that Jabir said is sub-standard.

"The size of the pitch is the same with that of ABS and any other stadium for that matter."

Jabir had told NAN last week that Pillars would be delighted to have all their matches in both competitions played at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium.

He also claimed the Kaduna Township Stadium was smaller than the Sani Abacha and Ahmadu Bello stadiums.

Shehu said the state had met FIFA's requirements.

"They want a standard stadium with a main bowl: the Ahmadu Bello Stadium is okay; they also want three training pitches. "We are working on the two other training pitches situated at ABS.

"The two pitches have been cleared and are being back filled with black sand for the planting of carpet grass," he added.

Multi-billion naira clinics for Abuja, Ibadan

It is set for the commencement of construction work on two world-class clinics and a vocational centre worth over one million dollars. The hospitals are to be situated along the Ibadan-Ife express road, Temidire in Oyo State and Airport road in the FCT.

The clinics, when completed, are expected to boost Nigeria's primary healthcare service delivery.

Footsteps Projects Limited is handling the construction, while Landmark Turnkey and Allied Company are the architects for the project being bankrolled by the Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Remi Babalola, in partnership with the Nigerian Red Cross (NRC).

The ground-breaking ceremony for the proposed clinic in Ibadan would be performed by Nigeria's First Lady, Mrs. Turai Yar'Adua, in March, while that of Abuja is scheduled for April. The President of the NRC, Owelle Rochas Okorochoa, had last year appointed Babalola and other prominent Nigerians as Ambassadorial Volunteers. This is part of renewed efforts by the NRC to rely on the network of numerous volunteers to carry out the agency's humanitarian mandate. As part of his Ambassadorial responsibility, the Minister is undertaking and embarking on a challenging developmental task of providing accessible clinics in identified areas of the country as well as the construction of a professional centre for re-skilling, re-tooling and re-training of Nigerians. The Technical Assistant (Special Duties) to the Minister, Mr. Laide Agboola, disclosed in Abuja that the two modern clinics would be equipped with basic facilities for dispensing both rural and urban healthcare services.

"The design of the clinics comprises three major functional entities namely- administrative units, consulting units and allied services, while the units have been categorised into theatre and laboratories, emergency and treatment units, private and general wards, consulting rooms, pharmacy and accounting units, nurses station/staff changing and lounge, among others.



A suspension bridge hanging 450 feet over the Capilano River, Vancouver, Canada

'Remove illegal structures at Itanmo market site'

The committee in charge of the relocation of Ago market in the Ilorin West local government of Kwara state to Itanmo, a new market settlement, has ordered for the immediate demolition of all illegal structures at the Itanmo site. The committee, led by its chairman, Alhaji Salihu Woru Mohammed, asserted that the indiscriminate construction of illegal structures at the Itanmo temporary site by some traders is totally unacceptable.

A visit by our correspondent to the Itanmo

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

temporary market site revealed that some touts have taken over the new site and were collecting as much as N5,000.00 from would-be shop-owners before erecting the illegal shops.

Daily Trust however gathered that the new Ago market, which would be named after a prominent female market woman in the state capital, is expected to be completed within one year at a cost of six hundred and forty nine million naira.

The vice chairman of the local government, Hajia

Tawakalitu Kadir, who was disturbed by the development warned that any shop not built in accordance with laid down plan would be demolished, and confirmed the reports of some touts at the temporary market site collecting exorbitant charges from some traders.

Hajia Tawakalitu said that traders displaced from Ago Market, who were originally allocated the new site, had been deprived of it, a development she assured the council would not succumb to.

A trader called Iya Jide,

who spoke on the development, praised the efforts of the government in providing them with an alternative site and pleaded that traders from Ago market be first considered in the allocation of new shops.

Meanwhile the Ago market had been cleared while the developer, Alhaji Bolaji Atunse said the foundation for the new ultra modern market project would be laid before the end of this month, adding that the shops, which would be of international standard, would be allocated on first come first serve basis.

We did not borrow money to execute projects -Gov Obi

Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State says that the state did not borrow money from any financial institution to execute development projects.

He spoke during the commissioning of a five classroom block at Girls Secondary School, Awka-Etiti, executed by the legislator representing

Idemili South in the state's House of Assembly, Mr. Ifeanyi Igwe, with the financial assistance of the state government.

The governor said that though the State House of Assembly approved that he should borrow money last year to execute of some projects, he decided otherwise, but to prudently manage what the state has.

He said that in spite of the numerous projects going on in the state, his administration had about N11 billion budget surplus last year.

Obi said Anambra State has migrated to the politics of improving the lives of the people from that of self enrichment, adding that his administration is determined to rebuild the state and make

it a model in a few years from now.

The legislator Mr. Igwe, said he embarked on the project to emulate Governor Obi's foresight on laudable educational programmes, aim at developing children properly, adding that the project was made possible because of the Governor's support and encouragement.

Residents of Mushin/Isolo want pedestrian bridge

If there is any place that needs a pedestrian bridge urgently along the Apapa-Oshodi expressway in Lagos, it is Isolo bus stop. Crossing the expressway either from the Mushin side or that of Isolo is as dangerous as trying to run

through a raging inferno. It is one of the busiest bus stops along the road because of the huge human traffic crossing both sides of the road.

Unfortunately, the expressway around the bus stop is reputed to always

record heavy traffic because of the different junctions that link the expressway there. Because of the danger inherent at this bus stop, many pedestrians who want to cross the road, have had to spend close to half an hour sometimes waiting for the

traffic to ease before they could pass to avoid being hit by speeding vehicles. To compound the problem, several companies are located on both sides of the road while the Isolo axis even hosts one of the most populous campuses of the

Lagos State Polytechnic. The implication of this is that there is bound to be heavy human traffic crossing that part of the expressway on daily basis. Some pedestrians have either lost their lives or sent into permanent disability as they

were hit by speeding vehicles while crossing the road.

Those who have cause to use the expressway doing their daily hustling are therefore calling on the relevant authority to save them from avoidable death.

ENVIRONMENT



Take that load off stronger core muscles will support the spine when you are doing garden chores

Back care in the garden

Strengthening exercises can help you avoid injury

Gardeners grumble about their backs, often their weakest link. After a couple of long spring gardening sessions – especially after probably a rather inert, tucked-up winter – the back can go into spasm, and you can end up flat on your back. Catastrophe, especially at the busiest time in the garden. It's not surprising that doctors' surgeries fill up with gardeners with back problems at this time of year. We whizz into the garden, twist, bend, and lift, failing to pace ourselves, never thinking to warm up first and stretch afterwards. Normal 21st-century living is abusive to our spines. Sitting for hours in the office (often with poor posture) in one position, driving for prolonged periods, lifting children, and slouching all contribute to weakening your back. Add to this a bit of surplus weight and it's no wonder that our backs whine when we put them through their paces.

Our long S-curve-shaped spines contain 24 vertebrae, all of which are capable of movement,

though sometimes not the way we want. The backbone is supported by ligaments backed up with a complex muscle system. These muscles, especially the deep core muscles, are responsible for your postural alignment, supporting your vertebrae like a corset, wrapping around you from front to back.

We are used to the effects of various exercises to give us toned biceps or whatever, but not many of us realise that exercising your core muscles creates a strong network of deep, strong postural muscles, which help to protect that line of vertebrae. A flat tummy is an added bonus.

My back used to be inherently dodgy. Short legs and a long back, I thought, was the cause, plus the fact I am constantly heaving large sacks of compost, moving heavy pots, pick-axing out plant holes and all those other back-breaking garden jobs.

However since starting to work with Jacqueline Knox, a physiotherapist and pilates teacher, on a gardening exercise book about four years ago, my back has blossomed. I now

know where my core muscles are and what they do. I haven't felt a twinge for ages and can now lift even heavier weights.

Carrying out a simple exercise routine for just 15 minutes a day is number one on my list of how to look after your back.

Pilates is the method Jackie recommends, and finding a local teacher is essential initially. If you find pilates is not for you, (I failed first time around) the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais method, yoga and t'ai chi all help too. Robbie Phelps teaches pilates in Peterborough and he introduced me to foam roller exercises. These are easy to grasp and do properly and they hone your core muscles beautifully.

Maintaining flexibility is essential to keep a healthy back; it's not all about strength. If you stretch daily you will quickly notice an improvement in your movement. Gardeners frequently suffer from stiffness in the lower back and tight hamstrings. Leg-lengthening stretches on a garden bench or lawn help with the latter (lying on

your back and putting one leg straight up as vertically as you can); spine curls help with stiffness in the lower and upper back.

Once you have mastered your core and become supple, you then realise that many gardening jobs such as raking, digging and weeding can tempt you to work with a bent back, especially if you use shorter-handled tools. But these can be done with a straight back and slightly bent knees, with the core muscles engaged so your back is supported and your body is balanced.

Bending from the waist is common, but does put stress on the spine. Instead, keep your back straight and bend your knees, or squat. Squatting helps tone and stretch thighs, hips and buttocks and can be done with a straight back. Lifting correctly without bending your back and twisting your spine is key too.

Finally, do give your back regular breaks. Pretend the garden is a gym and just do 15 or 20 minutes on each activity so you don't strain particular body parts. Warm up first, stretch after, and above all, of course – enjoy. —Daily Telegraph

'Hand of God' captured by NASA observatory

This beautiful image of a "cosmic hand" reaching for the stars has been captured by a NASA observatory.

What appears, with a little imagination, to be the outstretched fingers were created by a spinning neutron star known as a pulsar buried deep inside the fist which releases energy as it rotates. Although the pulsar itself is only 12 miles in diameter, the cloud or nebula that it produces stretches across 150 light years of space. The X-ray image was recorded by Nasa's Chandra observatory which is circling 360 miles above Earth taking images of high-energy locations across the universe, such as the remnants of exploded stars. Dubbed the Hand of God, following on from an 'Eye of God' image released by European astronomers in February, the nebula pictured in the new X-ray was produced by the pulsar B1509, which is about 17,000 light years away.

Neutron stars are created when standard stars run out of fuel and collapse, and Nasa believes that the one pictured is rotating around seven times a second.

The golden-red lights in the image are actually part of a neighbouring gas cloud, which has been energised by the wind of electrons and ions being spewed out from the pulsar.

The colours of the image represent different energy intensities – the blue lights are the areas of highest energy X-rays, followed by green and then red.

—Daily Telegraph



2,465 corpses evacuated from Lagos roads

At least 2,465 corpses have been evacuated from Lagos roads and other public places, says Commissioner for Health, Dr. Jide Idris.

He said the State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit (SEHMU) of the ministry combs the highways and public places to evacuate the dead bodies within a period of one year. Idris added that 1,849 of the corpses, representing 75 per cent, are still in the state's mortuaries as they are coroner cases. The commissioner further disclosed that of the 14 patients screened for the first cardiac test conducted by the state government, nine had undergone surgery, while six of them had successful operation, three died during the process.

On its National Immunisation Plus Days (NIPDS), Idris said over 14 million children were immunised in Lagos state

between December, 2008 and now. He also said its ambulance services/emergency case attended to 8, 167 patients who were victims of road accidents, gunshot injuries, assault, burns, building collapsed victims, home/industrial accidents and medical/surgical emergencies. The commissioner stated that the Health Facility Monitoring and Accreditation Agency in the last one year, renewed the registration of 1,883 private health facilities.

"A total of 2,339 private and public health facilities were monitored during this period and 50 facilities identified as substandard were closed down," he noted. Idris added that the Task Force on counterfeit/fake drugs arrested six persons in the Mushin area of Lagos state over counterfeit drugs and destroyed drugs worth N50 million.

Lagos rounds up street beggars

In an effort to rid the streets of Lagos of beggars and destitutes, the Lagos State Rehabilitation and Training Centre located at Majidun, Ikorodu, has arrested over 1000 beggars and destitutes. An official of the centre, Mr. Asake Kayode, said the presence of beggars on the streets of Lagos, "was becoming an eyesore. You see them roaming around the whole town causing a lot of environmental and health hazards."

According to him, their number has increased from

250 to 1000, while the task force is still combing the town for more destitutes."

"Since Lagos State started clearing its streets of beggars, destitutes and mentally deranged persons in and around Lagos, it has been a different case. They were all brought in here for care and medical attention before being sent to their various hostels," Kayode said. On the medical needs of the inmates, Kayode explained, "we have our own clinic within the premises. We also have medical personnel who check the

inmates twice a week to make sure they are healthy. The state government also supplies the clinic with medical equipment to enable it function adequately."

He further explained that "all inmates here are dully registered with names of their partners and addresses. So what we intend to do is to send them away to their people later in order to decongest the cells."

On what the government is doing about some of the inmates who are pregnant, Kayode said, "some of them were arrested with tender

children and some are pregnant. Some others got pregnant while inside here. The fact remains that human beings are often very difficult to manage.

Despite our efforts, some of them still sneak out and that is what has happened here. They keep sneaking into each other's hostel. The result is the pregnancies.

"The centre is also tackling the menace of child beggars and hawkers on the streets by rehabilitating them and sending them to schools or vocational centers to

enhance their development. Governor Babatunde Fashola is doing a lot to rid the state of miscreants."

"We have some well-meaning individuals and NGOs and various church groups helping by taking the children to orphanage homes when some inmates give birth."

"In recent times, most people you see on the streets are neither destitutes nor lunatics but victims of the economic situation in the country. So the best thing is to send them home. The mentally deranged have their

hostel here where they are kept. And like I said earlier, we have a clinic where doctors check them twice a week," he added.

Meanwhile, one of the inmates, Mrs. Nkechi Jerome, claimed she is not a destitute but that she is a street trader.

"I am a widow with six children. I am not a destitute, but trading to eke out a living with my children. I was selling by St. Leo Catholic church in Ikeja when the taskforce arrived and bundled me into their truck," she said.

PROPERTY



A newly completed office complex constructed by the FCT Administration at Area 11, Garki, Abuja

Kulende market allottees to lose shops in Ilorin

Allottees of the Kulende Shopping Complex in Ilorin, Kwara State, will from this May, forfeit their shops if they don't make use of them.

Chairman of the Traders Association of the shopping complex, Alhaji Toyin

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

Chindo, who disclosed this at the inauguration of the Association's executive, also urged banks in the state to open branches in the complex.

Chindo commended the

state government for transforming the abandoned shopping complex with the provision of infrastructures and urged the state governor, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki to come and open the complex officially.

The chairman also urged

the government to enforce the usage of the shopping complex and make it functional.

Other officials of the traders associations include Mrs. Abodunrin, Vice Chairman and Alhaji Muyideen Hassan.

Tenants cry out against thuggery in ejection

Tenants of an apartment located at 42, Montgomery Road, Yaba, Lagos, say they are now living in fear following the recent invasion of the property by thugs allegedly sent by someone claiming ownership of the property. Daily Trust gathered that the property is presently the subject of a legal dispute following a change of ownership from the former landlord, one Chief Orode Omene, to a new one.

The new landlord, the tenants allege, has been trying to adopt all illegal means to eject them including the use of thugs to intimidate and blackmail them into submission. A spokesman for the tenants, Mallam Yusuf Mohammed, a security and management consultant, described the action of the new landlord as not only unbecoming, but also an assault on the rule of law which should be condemned by all and sundry, saying the relevant agencies of the law should call him to order before his brazen abuse of power gets

out of hand. According to him, the tenants were only given a two-day deadline to leave the building two days after being notified about the change of ownership. Although he said the deadline was later extended to seven days, the tenants found the action untenable since some of them still have a subsisting valid tenancy with the former landlord. He said some of the tenants, for instance, had within the period the notice was issued, paid about two-years rent to the former landlord and therefore, were legally entitled to stay on the premises until the expiration of their rent.

The situation, he added prompted them to seek redress in court so as to obtain an injunction restraining the man from forcefully ejecting them from the building until the money being owed them through rent already paid is fully refunded to them.

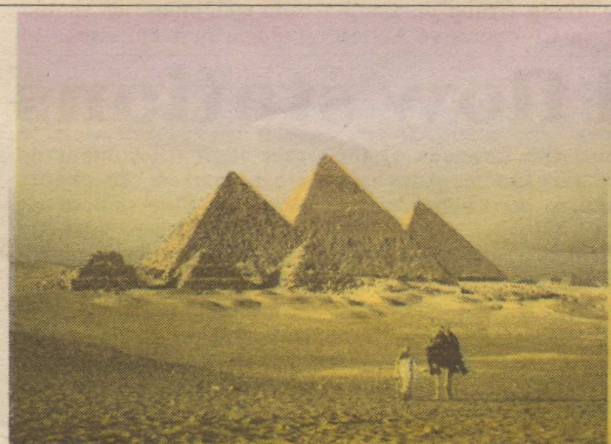
Narrating the tenants experience on the day of the invasion, Mallam Mohammed had said thus: "The way they came still

remains a shock to us because they were armed with dangerous weapons including cutlasses and sledge hammers which they used to smash the walls. We were helpless and could do nothing to stop them, especially as they numbered close to 30 thugs wielding dangerous weapons. But what I can say is that their action is criminal and a slap on the face of the law since they carried it out with impunity".

Mallam Mohammed's account was corroborated by another tenant, Mr Frederick Nwajei, who said that he paid N240,000 for a

two year rent shortly before the quit notice was issued to him. "I was just a year here when the property was sold. As a yearly paying tenant, I think I'm entitled to a six months quit notice. Its good as well to refund my balance. If this is done, I think we would have been able to settle the issue."

For another tenant, Mr Festus Odumodu, who claimed to have lived in the building for 11 years: "For someone to take such an action against rent paying individuals and in a place where children and women are living is unfair and inhuman".



Pyramids of Giza, Egypt

The ultimate house cleaning calendar

Here's the scoop on what to clean and how often.

Wanting to keep a clean home doesn't mean you have time to polish your silver every week. We spoke with cleaning experts who have both feet solidly planted in the real world and asked how often specific cleaning tasks really need to be done.

Here's the scoop on what to clean and how often:

Every day

- Put things away when you finish using them.
- Wash dishes, wipe kitchen counters, clean up stove spills, and empty trash as needed.
- Squeegee showers after use to prevent mineral deposits and mildew.
- Wipe sinks.
- Make beds and straighten rooms.

Twice a week

- Dust-mop hardwood floors to prevent scratching from dirt.
- Put away clutter.
- Vacuum if you live in a dusty region or have children and pets that track in lots of dirt. Otherwise, weekly vacuuming should suffice.

Once a month

- Wipe or vacuum baseboards and blinds.
- Sweep the garage, patio, and walkways.
- Vacuum upholstered furniture with the brush attachment.
- Clean ceiling fixtures in one room per month (rotate).

Every three months

- Wash throw rugs.
- Dust ceiling fans.
- Polish wood furniture.
- Remove cobwebs from ceiling corners, stairwells, and such.
- Change or clean furnace and air-conditioner filters (less frequently in low-use seasons).
- Clean the oven (monthly if grunge builds up quickly).

Every six months

- Wash windows inside and out. Do this quarterly for windows near work spaces (the kitchen sink or a desk, for instance).
- Declutter storage areas in the basement, attic, and garage.
- Vacuum, flip, and rotate mattresses.
- Polish silver.
- Air out pillows.

Once a year

- Move heavy furniture to clean behind and underneath.
- Vacuum rug pads and the backs of area rugs.
- Clean drapes and carpets.
- Turn area rugs 180-degrees to even out wear.
- Wash walls.
- Clean chandeliers.

New York landlords fight as rent refunds loom

The real estate industry president of the Rent in New York City is Stabilization Association, a mobilizing with an group representing 25,000 intensity not seen in years as property owners and it faces an almost unheard-of managers.

possibility: a court order that Tenant advocates said it may have to return the real estate industry was exaggerating the impact of hundreds of millions of dollars in rent. the decision. The problem is

The state appeals court not the decision, but the decision bars New York City landlords who misinterpreted state law, they said.

apartment rents while The Appellate Division of receiving a popular tax break the State Supreme Court meant to encourage building ruled on March 5 that the renovations. Industry landlord for Stuyvesant officials say the decision Town and Peter Cooper could affect as many as Village, adjoining complexes 80,000 apartments in the city, with 11,232 apartments on the trigger widespread defaults East Side of Manhattan, had on loans, eliminate improperly deregulated more construction jobs and reduce than 3,000 apartments and property tax revenues for the raised rents beyond city. prescribed levels, while

"We all understand that this would be disastrous," breaks from the city. said Joseph Strasburg, *-New York Times*

ENVIRONMENT

Modern public toilets emerge in Lagos

When the commercial bus took off from Oshodi bound for Ikorodu, the passengers obviously looked forward to a smooth, uneventful ride as they happily engaged each other in current affairs discussion that sometimes bordered on the humorous prompting occasional laughter.

The driver also heightened the happy mood by playing an Igbo music which the two passengers sitting with him in the front seat chorused to with a lot of enthusiasm. However, the bus was still some distance from Ojota when one of the passengers cried out about being pressed and needed to ease herself urgently as it was evident she could not hold on till she reaches home.

After having tried to manage the situation to no avail, the female passenger had screamed in Yoruba: "Driver! Driver! Mo fe ya'gbe" (Driver! pack, pack, I want to defecate).

But the driver had

surprisingly ignored her, erroneously believing that there was no cause for alarm. In fact, all he could offer by way of a response was: "E mu morake, E sa kii se omode, ee ni pe de ibi ti enlo" (Be patient a little, after all you are not a baby and you will soon get to your destination). The driver apparently underestimated the woman's desperation and the penalty for this was not long coming. Before anyone could say: "Driver, please stop for her, the woman suddenly found herself defecating on her body. No one needed to tell the driver to stop at this point. The accompanying stench was so overpowering that it almost choked the passengers who immediately scrambled out of the bus as soon as it made a hasty halt. The interrupted journey only resumed after the bus had been thoroughly cleaned up.

But if feelers from the Lagos State government is anything to go by, this type

of situation may soon be a thing of the past in the "Centre of Excellence" as the Ministry of Environment has embarked upon the construction of modern toilet facilities at some strategic areas of the state.

The idea, according to officials of the Ministry, is part of activities to ensure cleanliness in all ramifications and to make Lagos a mega city. When Daily Trust went to town last Thursday to see how far the

government has gone in this regard, it was seen that some of them have already been roofed and plastered while works have just began on others.

These public toilets can be found in some choice locations in the state such as Dopemu Under bridge, Obanikoro, Toyota and Ijesha bus-stops, among others. Each of these buildings comprise ten toilets for ladies and gents complete with water closet

(WC) facilities. A green signboard was strategically placed in front of the toilets which read: "LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT: A proposed site for Modern Public Toilet. Keep Lagos clean or leave. Eko oni baje o." In a chat with Daily Trust, Commissioner for Environment, Dr. Muiz Banire, said the exercise is to ensure that people don't defecate or excrete on the road any longer. "This must

be carried out in places they are meant for," he said. Continuing, Banire said: "We are to ensure minimum standard of sanitation in the state and make our environment free from odour".

According to him, environmental health officers will be on guard to ensure proper use. "About 30 of them are on completion stage while the rest will soon be completed.

-Nigeria Press



Snow covered taxis in London

Canadian coy wants trash to fuel cars

Enerkem Inc, a private company based in Montreal, wants to kill two birds with one stone — fuel your car while getting paid for reducing trash mountains. They say they can do it by using garbage and biomass as feedstocks for plants that make second generation ethanol and other advanced biofuels. Vincent Chornet, the president and chief executive, said that Enerkem and GreenField Ethanol has reached a deal with the city of Edmonton to take its trash. "They will pay us to take it away from them," he said. "Fifty percent of what we put in trash is not recyclable." That plant should start making fuel in 2011. Edmonton will pay less than it normally would for hauling away trash, Chornet said, but he wouldn't say how much his company is making per ton for taking away the smelly stuff.

On Thursday Enerkem announced plans to take the process to the United States, which, it is probably safe to say, has bigger waste bounties. My city New York, for example, exports tens of thousands of tons per day of trash to states as far away as Ohio on trains and barges.

Enerkem, which is financed by U.S. venture capital firms Rho Ventures, Braemar Energy Ventures and others, plans to build and operate a plant in Pontotoc, Mississippi. Under an agreement, the Three Rivers Solid Waste Management Authority of Mississippi will supply nearly 190,000 tons per year of unsorted municipal solid waste for the plant to help make some 20 million gallons per year of fuel.

Chornet says the beauty of using trash as a feedstock is that small decentralized plants can make fuel close to where it is needed, which could one day, perhaps, trim reliance on big oil refineries for fuel.

The company plans to gasify the garbage at 400 degrees Centigrade, or higher depending on the feedstock, and then convert the gas into liquid fuels. Once the process gets started, the trash itself fuels the plant. Like the process of burning coal, the gasified garbage leaves behind ash waste, which would have to be dealt with through landfilling or as an ingredient for concrete.

-Reuters

UN talks on global warming receive some jolts

In theory, the world's governments have over seven months to craft a new treaty to slow climate change before a deadline set by the United Nations. But in practice, points out Yvo de Boer, head of the UN agency that monitors the current Kyoto protocol, only a few weeks of scheduled negotiations remain.

Yet with America's tree-hugging new leadership in place, and with a green stimulus suddenly in vogue, the outlook for a deal at the climate jamboree in Copenhagen at the end of the year has brightened somewhat. So it was with keen anticipation that the first of a series of preparatory pow-wows opened last week in Bonn.

The numbing proceedings of the (drum roll, please) First Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Co-operative Action

under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change jolted to life at the first speech by an American envoy since Barack Obama replaced the climate-insouciant George Bush as president. "We are very glad to be back, we want to make up for lost time and we are seized with the urgency of the task before us," said Todd Stern, America's negotiator, to loud applause.

But the rapture soon subsided, as differences re-emerged over how fast and far countries should cut their greenhouse-gas emissions. Mr Stern stuck to Mr Obama's proposal that America should trim its emissions back to the level of 1990 by 2020. That was not enough for some 70 poor and low-lying countries, most faced with rising waters and withering crops. They said rich countries should reduce their emissions to

45% below 1990's output by then. Mr Stern muttered about pragmatism. Poor countries retorted that they did not see floods or famine as pragmatic options. On the knotty but crucial question of how to reduce deforestation and the emissions it causes, progress was scanty.

Mr de Boer suggested that a deal in Copenhagen would involve rich countries accepting big cuts and helping poor ones to curb the growth of their emissions with handouts of cash and technology. Agreeing on exact numbers, however, will be difficult. Many climate pundits assume the meat of a deal will be reached in other, smaller groupings. Mr Obama plans to reconvene Mr Bush's much-reviled club of countries responsible for most of the world's emissions, now renamed the Major Economies Forum. He has also sent Mr Stern and

Hillary Clinton, his secretary of state, to talk to China about climate.

The slowness of negotiations is stirring anxiety in some quarters. As green activists moaned, the G20 summit in London risked neglecting climate at the expense of economics. But not entirely: Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, used the moment to call in senior types from Brazil, Indonesia and America, among other places, to discuss short-term efforts to protect tropical forests before a UN-backed plan kicks in. With the leaders of Japan, France, Germany and Italy in attendance, it may have been the highest-level talk about trees ever held. Participants listened with approval to their host's idea that new ways be found for rich states, and investors, to send cash—swiftly but conditionally—to poor, forested countries.

Fire guts Shell flow stations in Ogoniland

Nigeria's crude oil production shut-in has hit 836,500 barrels per day as Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), has shut down major flow stations supplying crude to its Trans-Niger Pipeline (TNP) in Rivers State.

This development will further jeopardise the

finances of both the federal, state and local governments.

This year's budget was premised on a benchmark oil price of \$45 per barrel and a daily oil output of 2.292 million barrels per day (bpd).

Although the price of oil on the international market currently hovers between 53 and 54 dollar per barrel, the shut-in crude production will

hurt the finances of the country as some states have already gone borrowing - following dwindling allocations from the federation account.

The TNP is a long stretch of network of pipelines transversing parts of the southern Niger Delta and conveying crude oil from Shell's Nigerian joint venture

and other oil companies (third parties) to export terminals. Flow stations are oil facilities where water, gas and other impurities are removed from crude oil before it is fed into export terminals.

Shell's closure of the flow stations which was said to have affected about 120,000bpd volume of

production, was a precautionary measure after a fire at the Bomu manifold.

Before the closure of the flow stations, Nigeria had about 716,500bpd of oil shut-in due to the escalating crisis in the Niger Delta which has resulted in attacks on oil workers and destruction of oil and gas installations.

This production loss is outside the several cuts imposed by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to arrest the collapse of oil prices.

Nigeria's average daily export in March, 2009 was 1.6 million bpd but the country has a capacity to produce three million barrels per day.

City news

NEWS ABOUT
YOUR
CAPITAL CITY

email: citynews@dailytrust.com

Hotlines

0803-3493-462

0803-8927-513

Gwarimpa residents blame agents for high rents

Residents of Gwarimpa district in the Federal Capital Territory yesterday accused local estate agents in the area of arbitrarily increasing the rents of houses in the area to enrich themselves.

They said such agents apart from getting their cuts from landlords also trouble prospective tenants to pay extra money to them as their agency fees.

"We are tired of this practice as such agents rip us of our hard earned money while government does nothing," Abiola Tajudeen, a resident said.

He appealed to the National Assembly members and the attorney-general of the federation to work out modalities in promoting a bill that will discourage the practice where landlords collect above one year rent.

Mallam Abdulkarim Abdullahi, a tenant, said house rents in the area during the year witnessed high

By Suleiman Musa
increases to almost hundred percent.

He lamented that such agents now force tenants to pay rents for years in order for them to get fat cuts.

Another tenant, Mallam Sunusi Ahmad, said tenants are now at the receiving end and accept whatever the agents tell them, so as not to be thrown out in the street.

A licensed estate agent, Mallam Bukar Ismail blamed the non registered agents for increasing rents arbitrarily.

He said registered estate agents have stipulated rules and regulations of which they must abide by.

A landlord, Alhaji Danbaba Isa Gumil, accused his counterparts of patronising the services of unregistered estate agents.

He kicked against the sharp practices by the agents and called on landlords in the area to only patronise registered agents.

Crisis rocks AMAC parliament over speaker's election

Chaos broke out yesterday morning at the Legislative Chamber of the Abuja Municipal Area Council, during the election of a new speaker to replace late Yohanna D. Panayi, who died recently.

The 11 councillors of the chambers that consisted of five members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and six from the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) could not reach a compromise, which led to a shouting match.

Some of the ANPP legislatures felt since the late speaker was from their party, an ANPP councillor should be considered as the next speaker and this suggestion did not go down well with the PDP councillors, who wanted one of their own to emerge as speaker.

The ANPP councillors, who expressed their disappointments at the attitude of their colleagues in the PDP, also faulted the part played by the chamber's clerk and sought to know whether he was an agent of the council's executive arm

By Abubakar Yakubu

that was working on a script.

Our reporter learnt that the Majority Leader of the House, Ahmed A. Yerimah of Wuse ward quickly seized the Mace and locked it in his booth but was prevented from going out of the council premises by security officials assigned to the place.

Clerk of the chamber, Mr Stanley Jonah rushed to alert the executive arm of the development and the majority leader's car was prevented from going out by security men until the Mace was retrieved.

The police were later invited to seal up the premises of the chamber to avert a break down of law and order.

Some councillors gathered at the front of the chamber accused the AMAC executive arm of trying to manipulate the election process in order to see

that a PDP councillor emerges speaker to take over from the late ANPP speaker.

One of the councillors, Ahmed A. Medugu of Nyanya ward, said AMAC legislature did not elect a new speaker within 24 hours of the demise of the incumbent because of the respect they had for their late colleague.

He said the legislatures wanted to bury the speaker and finish the Easter holiday before reconvening to elect a replacement.

"Some abnormalities were played when we reconvened this morning and there is no way PDP being the minority will usurp the speaker's positions," he said.

He said the clerk, who is meant to be neutral disappointed them, adding that his attitude made councillors to throw questions at him to find out whether he is in support of

the PDP.

"Nothing stops the councillors from reconvening to elect their speaker and who so ever is elected remains the speaker," he said

Councillor Medugu said if the problem can't be solved within 24 hours then the problem will be taken before the National Assembly.

Reacting to the councillors' allegation, AMAC's Supervisory Councillor of Special Duties, Emmanuel Inyang said the executive arm does not interfere in the affairs of the legislators.

He said it was only this morning that he learnt they were going to elect a speaker, adding that the chairman is not interested in whatever party takes the speaker position.

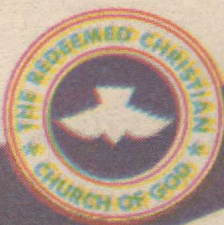
According to him, the chairman had a close relationship with the late speaker, who was from ANPP.

ABUJA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2009 ▼

Theme:
**World Economic Recession:
A Blessing in Disguise**

**Today Wednesday
15th April 2009**

Speaker
**DR. MYLES
MUNROE**
U.S.A.



Venue:
International
Conference Centre,
Area 10,
Garki, Abuja.

Time:
5.00pm

Powered By:
RCCG, North 5
Zonal Pastors' Forum

Chief Host:
Pastor E. O. Daramola
S.A to G.O, Region 10

City news

Motorist crushes two at Abaji

Two unidentified youngsters were on Monday night crushed to death by a Volkswagen Golf car at the Central Market, Abaji.

An eyewitness said the youngsters were on a motorcycle when the Golf car crushed them, while moving at top speed.

He said one of the riders died instantly, while the other died few minutes later at Abaji General Hospital.

Our reporter learnt that the headlight of the Golf vehicle was not bright, which made it difficult for the driver to see the bike from a distance.

Abaji Unit Commander of

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Mr. Joseph Ojerinde, blamed the accident on the Golf driver for flouting the speed limit on the road.

He said the corpses have been collected by their relatives for burial.

The commander also disclosed that the car driver escaped immediately after the accident occurred, adding that the mangled remains of the car was taken to Abaji Police Station.

When our reporter visited the police station yesterday, a police officer said investiga-

tions are on to track down the fleeing driver.

In another accident opposite RCC junction, Kwali, one person died, while another escaped unhurt on Monday, when a Mercedes Benz car with registration number GL 114 ABC lost control and crashed into a ditch.

Mr. Tukur D. Sifawa, FRSC Kwali Unit Commander, blamed the cause on over-speeding.

He said one of the victims, a female, died at Kwali General Hospital, while her corpse was deposited at University of Abuja Teaching Hospital's Morgue.



Families trooping into Wonderland Amusement Park, Abuja, Saturday. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Farmers call for early distribution of fertilizer

A renowned farmer in Bwari, Mr. Adache John yesterday appealed to the FCT Administration and other relevant agencies to ensure that fertilizers are distributed on time for this year's planting season.

He said a situation where fertilizers are only made available towards the end of the raining season compounds their problems and leads to poor harvest.

"We farmers appeal to the

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

six area councils to make agriculture development as one of their policy programmes because of its importance to the general wellbeing of the people," he stated.

He said area councils administrators know the problems affecting farmer and can solve them if they want to.

Another farmer called on all the area council's to make tractors available to them during this year's farming season.

He said the system of farming manually is outdated and cumbersome, adding that the output from such practice are always little compared to those of mechanised farming.

At the Bwari Area Council, the Pres Secretary to the Chairman, Mr. Dauda Dasha, said he had not received information concerning this year's fertilizer.

New monarch emerges at Gwargwada

The FCT Minister of State, Chief Chuka Odom, yesterday approved the selection process that made Malam Ibrahim Dikko Dagbo, the traditional ruler of Gwargwada community in Kuje Area council.

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

Malam Dagbo succeeds late Alhaji Tanko S. Abubakar (Agabe of Gwargwada), who died last month after a protracted illness.

The new Gwargwada was

selected by a unanimous resolution of the community's king makers.

The minister said the approval of Malam Dagbo as the new traditional ruler of Gwargwada is in accordance with the FCT Decree No. 8 of July 1997.



Federal Republic of Nigeria

Ministry of Mines and Steel Development
Sustainable Management of Mineral Resources Project

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR POSITIONS AT THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF MINING AND GEOSCIENCES, JOS

EXTENSION OF CLOSING DATE OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Further to our advert of 26th March, 2009 which appeared in the Daily Trust, Thisday, Guardian and Punch newspapers in respect of the Vacancy announcement for positions at the Nigerian Institute of Mining and Geosciences Jos, we hereby extend the closing date for submission of applications by four weeks.

The new closing date is 4th May, 2009.

All other conditions contained in the initial advert still apply.

Interested applicants are encouraged to check the advertisement referred above at the following website: www.mmsd.gov.ng

**Project Coordinator,
Sustainable Management of Mineral
Resources Project (SMMRP),
No 6 Marte Close, Off Misau Crescent,
Garki II,
P.M.B. 107, Abuja.**

Tel.: Tel.: +234- 8055018774

uladie2001@yahoo.co.uk,

utsu.adie@msmd.gov.nd

City news

Two jailed for fighting in public

A man and lady were yesterday sentenced to one month imprisonment each for fighting each other in public.

They were however given a fine option of N2,500 each.

The accused persons, Jacob Giran, 27 and Sikira Hamza, 27, all of Lugbe Zone 6, Abuja, were arrested by the police on April 7, 2009.

Prosecutor Jeremiah Elijah told the court that on April 7, 2009, one Hamza David of Lugbe Zone 6, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused persons engaged each other in fighting.

He said the fight started when Sikira came to the area to confirm the increased price of a jerry can of water, from N15 to N20.

According to the prosecutor, the offence committed by the accused is punishable under Section 113 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charge was read

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

to the accused persons, they pleaded guilty and begged or leniency.

Magistrate Hadiza Shagari convicted them of the offence of disturbing public peace and sentenced each of them to one month imprisonment or N2,500 fine options.

In another case, two men were yesterday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for alleged mischief and causing grievous harm to two persons at Adamson Hotel, Lugbe Zone 7, Abuja.

The accused persons, Hamza David, 26, a school teacher, and Abubakar Abdulmalik, 17, a student were reported to have committed the offence on April 7, 2009.

Prosecutor Obed Amikor told the court that on April 7, 2009, one Lawrence Iyaji of Adamson Hotels reported to the police that the accused

persons caused grievous injuries with a wood to one Clement Emeonu of Lugbe Zone 8, Abuja.

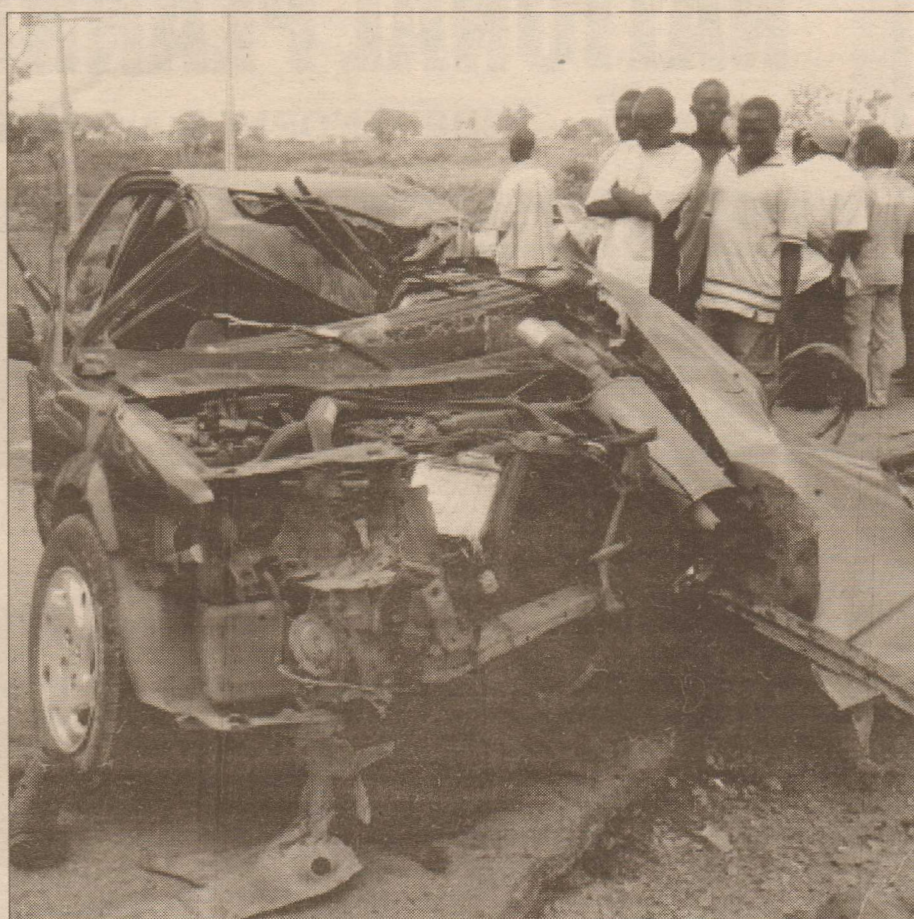
He said the accused persons also assaulted one Juliana Ahelle, adding that her Nokia handset valued at N16,000 and a necklace valued at N2,500 got missing.

"During the attack, the accused persons and others now at large also damaged an entrance gate, three speakers and a glass shelf, all belonging to the hotel," the prosecutor added.

When the charges were read to the accused persons, they all pleaded not guilty and requested for bail.

Magistrate Hadiza Shagari granted them bail in the sum of N20,000 each with a surety each in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an affidavit to produce the accused persons in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to May 12 for hearing.



An accident scene along Kubwa-Dei-Dei expressway Saturday. Pic Rasheed Yusuf.

Police Hotlines in FCT

Divisional Police Officers	Telephone Nos
1. Maitama	08038485123
2. Central Police Station	08033568389
3. Lugbe	08077657371, 08037882321
4. Wuse	08053088102
5. National Assembly	08065777706, 08045317637
6. Asokoro	07028134449
7. Nyanya	08046115181
8. Utako	07055888119, 07038621264
9. Karshi	08023565354
10. Wuye	08023314440
11. Karu	08036098804
12. Gwarimpa	08059113555
13. Karmo	08033773129
14. Garki	08033560903
15. Life Camp	08058036613
16. Kubwa	08036134478
17. Gwagwa	08035537989
18. Zuba	08036311967
19. Bwari	08075804475
20. Dutse Alhaji	08053089999
21. Kuje	07030800531
22. Kwali	08033062496
23. Rubocho	08060568342
24. Gwagwalada	08057467369
25. Abaji	08037209328

- Abuja Area Command Heads
1. Metro: 08033052353, 08059099953
 2. Kubwa: 08033560903, 08026760504
 3. Gwagwalada: 08033041083

Other police help lines: 09-8702367, 09-8702368, 09-2341198, 08061581938

FRSC FCT COMMAND HOTLINES-EMERGENCY

FCT Sector Command	-	08035752108
FCT Head of Operations	-	08053471057
Giri-Gwagwalada-Kwali	-	07034736628
AYA-Nyanya-Keffi	-	08075029154
Gwagwalada-Yangoji-Kwali	-	08055120551
Kubwa-Zuba-Bwari	-	08052738933
Kubwa-Zuba & Kubwa-Bwari	-	08035892284
Kwali-Abaji-Lokoja-Giri	-	08059219730
Central Business District	-	08059216183
Kuje-Airport Junction	-	08065302264
National Assembly	-	08035958958



Members of the National Association of Sea Dogs, Abuja Zone presenting food items to children at the Abuja Children's Home, Karu, on Easter Monday. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Commuters groan over increased transport fares

By Suleiman Musa

Commuters in Abuja yesterday complained of high transport fares caused by the long queues at filling stations.

At Nyanya, a commuter lamented that he spends endless hours in the morning waiting for a commercial bus to take him to the city centre.

"When such buses come, the fares are doubled by the conductor, while people rush to get in," he said.

Our reporter observed that as from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. a large number of commuters are always stranded in major bus stops at Nyanya, Gwarimpa and Bwari bus stops.

Commercial buses that ply such routes increase their fares by 50 percent, blaming the present fuel queues at filling station for the reason. City News investigation

also revealed that such fare hikes affected inter state commercial vehicles.

For instance, transport fare to the southern parts of the country remained on the high side, with vehicles charging N5,000 instead of N3,500 that was previously paid.

Transport fares from Abuja to various parts of north such as Jos, Bauchi, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi remain the same.

A long journey driver at Jabi Motor Park, Adebayo Adekunle attributed the increased transport fares to the high turn out of passengers travelling to the south during the Easter period coupled with the fuel scarcity problem.

Mr Azuka Ikechukwu, a passenger, appealed to the authorities to take adequate measures in ensuring that transport fares remain stable.



NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, OPPOSITE NDIC, ABUJA

NOTICE FOR THE 3RD REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF VISION 20: 2020

Members of the National steering Committee (NSC), of the Vision 20: 2020, are hereby notified of the scheduled 4th meeting of the committee as follows:

- **Date:** April 17, 2009
- **Venue:** Transcorp Hilton
- **Time:** 9.00 a.m.

THIS NOTICE SERVES AS A REMINDER TO THE EARLIER CONTACTS AND NOTICES SENT TO MEMBERS ACCORDINGLY.

SIGNED:

AKIN ARIKAWA, OON
COORDINATOR, NV 20: 2020

VOICES

email: voices@dailytrust.com

How do you view the Atiku-PDP imbroglio?

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar was recently engaged in a war of words with leaders of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a dramatic turn of events after Atiku visited his former boss, ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo in January. The visit to OBJ prompted speculations that Atiku was mapping his way back to his former party, the PDP. Respondents on VOICES this week discuss the Atiku-PDP imbroglio.

Atiku's inconsistency is bad for the polity; Barrister Lekan Sowande, legal practitioner

Atiku left PDP at a time when he wanted to become president of the country and could not get what he wanted in PDP. He decamped to the Action Congress (AC). To me personally such an action doesn't show strength of character of a politician. It should not be that when your interest is not being protected in a party, you jump to another political party and when your interest is no longer being protected you leave. It is not good for our political development as a country.

His purported wish to return to PDP depends on the party and on what the leadership of the party wants. The party hierarchy should handle the whole thing the way it should as their actions and inactions will be part of political history for other generations to come.

Atiku should be free to enter and get out of any party he chooses -Mr. Emmanuel, a Nigerian based in Japan

People are just seeing tension where there is none. What is going on between the PDP and former vice president Atiku is expected in a democracy. We are supposed to have people's opinion and actions being criticised, but if I were to advise the former vice president I would say that he should have been able to have his way to the president and air his view. He could also have taken up his grievances quietly with whoever is at the helm in the PDP. He doesn't need any newspaper to express his opinion.

I want to emphasize that it is a fundamental human right to belong to any political party of one's choice. Leaving the party and deciding to go back is not a big deal as nothing is wrong in that. To me PDP should have allowed him because the electorate are still there to say whether to accept him or reject him should he intend to vie for any political office. So his going there is just on

By Onimisi Alao, Mustapha Suleiman, Abbas Jimoh, & Muideen Olaniyi

the basis of association and that is the beauty of democracy.

Let Atiku be -Chief Udemba Chukwulude, a politician;

Let me begin by stating that as a democrat and a believer in freedom of association, expression and choice; I think if the former Vice presi-

There is nothing wrong in seeking reconciliation, especially because Atiku is a Muslim. But his visit to Obasanjo showed that he is a power monger and a desperate politician; it is wrong for him to try to go back to PDP after his miscalculated political manoeuvrings.

Both PDP and Atiku are



Chief Udemba Chukwulude dent Atiku has decided to re-establish his membership of the ruling party, it is within his rights to do so. PDP should allow him, after all he co-founded the party. Whether his decision is right or wrong is a matter of conjecture, which should not degenerate into name calling. Knowing PDP the way I do Atiku and other opposition leaders will soon be subjects of investigation, blackmail and intimidation. I hope the situation doesn't take such dangerous dimension.

So, the problem wasn't just between Atiku and Obasanjo! -AbdulAkeem Adewuyi, an automobile engineer

This is what we are saying: Atiku was one of the founders of PDP and the party made him a vice president. We thought the problem was between Atiku and Obasanjo, until events started unfolding and it becomes a problem between the PDP and Atiku. He (Atiku) is a political harlot; he harassed PDP, thinking his popularity, after the third term scandal, would make him succeed, but his selfishness is now exposed with his recent actions.



Hon. George Daika

to blame for Atiku's problem -Audu Danladi, civil servant

It is unfair for Atiku to be treated like this by the same people he had helped one time or the other. If anything, he should have been respected for his former position of the vice president of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I however blame Atiku for his recent moves, which portrayed him as a power monger and someone who can go to any length to get power, including going to prostrate in Obasanjo's house, only to turn around and insult the same people who he went to beg after failing to get what he wanted.

Atiku was a part of PDP's misdeeds -Comfort Eze, trader;

I may not know the details of what happened between Atiku, Obasanjo and PDP, but I think Atiku should be blamed for his situation more than the other sides.

He was part of the eight years of misrule of the Obasanjo/PDP era. Why did he not resign then? He should just go and sit down rather than making a mess of himself

Yar'adua is not being courteous with Atiku -

Atiku's chief spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu.

For daring to criticise government's handling of the electoral reform and the near absence of governance in the country, President Umaru Yar'adua ordered the withdrawal of security escorts to the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. In a move reminiscent of the autocratic style of former President Olusegun Obasanjo,

shown that the present lords of the party would not allow such moves.

The point to be made is that while the PDP leadership has the right to read the political compass and react as deemed fit, this must be done in accordance with decorum. If President Yar'adua wants the people to believe that his action was not dictated by intention to preserve personal advan-

ment area and then from the local government area to the state and then to the national level. You don't join at the national level, you have to join from your ward.

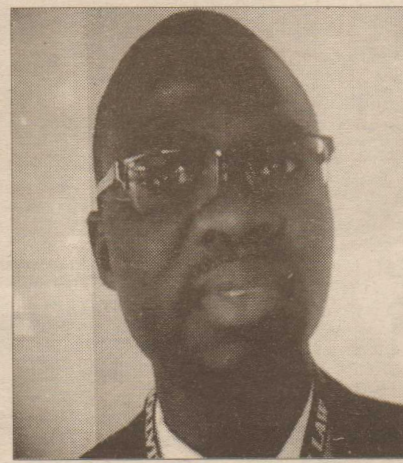
People blaming the party for saying certain things against him should note what he said to warrant the reaction that has come from party leaders. People have reacted to his comments against the party. There was something he said and the PDP reacted based on the comment he made

Atiku and PDP should reconcile in the national interest -Rt. Hon. George Daika, former Speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly, and current member, House of Representatives (PDP Plateau)

I considered it a good development when the former vice president visited the former president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. I saw two people who quarrelled trying to reconcile. Their quarrel affected the whole country, not just the two and their supporters. Even now, the nation has nothing to gain if they keep on against each other.

True reconciliation appeared to have started after that meeting between the former president and his vice, but something happened and there was these hot exchanges between Atiku and some leaders of the PDP. I can't say exactly what happened. I only read in the newspapers that while PDP wants him to follow the due process-by beginning his return from down the rungs at the grass roots while he feels that the process doesn't have to take such course.

I have a personal respect for Atiku as a founding member of the party, but I also can't castigate leaders of the party for insisting on the due process; I can only urge that whatever is done, there should be no further acrimony. Nigeria can only gain from leaders when harmony and oneness reign among them irrespective of whatever political or ideological differences that there may be.



Barrister Lekan Sowande

Yar'adua stripped the former Vice President of his security escorts without the courtesy of notifying him. The President's action came barely 72 hours after the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) launched an acidic attack on Atiku's person and character

PDP should be civil in reaction to remarks or actions of critics -Bolade Omonijo, Journalist and political analyst

Responding to Atiku Abubakar's statement that PDP could not be trusted to lead a genuine electoral reform, the national spokesman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Professor Rufai Alkali launched a blistering attack on the person of the former number two citizen of the country. Professor Alkali described Atiku as a "hopeless, drowning and unreliable politician" and attributed the turn-around of the former vice president to opportunism.

In January, following a meeting between Atiku and his former boss, there were heightened speculations that the former vice president was on his way back to the PDP, recent events have

tages, he should be transparent in managing the issue. The same point had been raised during the travails of former Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission which started with his demotion and secondment to the National Institute, Kuru. He later lost his commission. Government should be about toeing the line of probity, rule of law and accountability. President Yar'adua should begin to respect the intelligence of Nigerians by playing the game straight.

Edmons Chijioke Adindu, Special Assistant on Media and Public Affairs to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) National Chairman, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor.

As the national chairman has always said, we have our way. We have our constitution. If you want to join the party, you know how to join. If you want to join the PDP, you have our constitution to tell you how to join. I think if he (Atiku) intends to join the party, he knows what to do.

You have to go back to your ward. From the ward, you go to the local govern-

INSIDE POLITICS

Plateau PDP faction endorses Jang for 2011

The Prof. Dakum Shown-led faction of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State has endorsed Governor Jonah Jang for the 2011 governorship election.

Addressing newsmen at the Korinjoh House PDP secretariat after a stakeholder's meeting, State Commissioner of Commerce and Industry Mutbam Na'allah said the meeting agreed that Jang should stand for re-election.

He said, however, the endorsement does not mean shutting the doors of the party against other aspirants for the governorship seat.

"The door is not shut

It's a futile exercise, says group

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

against anybody," Na'allah said. "We are into politics; I am sure that whoever is operating under the name PDP will come back and support Governor Jang as so endorsed."

But the Chief Emmanuel Mangni faction said they were not aware of such endorsement and that those who claim it were not true democrats.

Publicity secretary of the Mangni faction Mr. Sylvanus Namang described the endorsement as an exer-

cise in futility.

He said the party is throwing its doors open for all aspirants and would not at this stage endorse a candidate who has been working against the interest of the party since assuming office.

"You see the lack of democratic culture we are talking about? How can you say you have endorsed somebody without subjecting such measures through a democratic process? Besides, the aspirant they are talking about is one who has a record for anti-party activities. Plateau PDP surely de-

serves better than that," Namang said.

The commissioner, however, said the Shown faction is adhering to the rule of law to checkmate the activities of the Mangni group.

"You cannot carry sticks or guns and stampede, the PDP is following the proper channel in addressing that. There are efforts in that direction, we want to do it legally," Na'allah said.

He said the coming national convention of the PDP later in the month will show which of the two factions is recognised.

Adebayo calls for unity in S/West

Former Governor of old Western State retired Major General Adeyinka Adebayo has called for unity among governors in the South West in their quest to move the region forward.

Adebayo, who made the plea yesterday while speaking with newsmen shortly after he visited Ondo State Governor Olusegun Mimiko in Akure, said without unity among the governors there would hardly be any meaningful development in the region.

According to him, there is need for the Yorubas to come together and fashion

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

out reasonable policy that would have direct impact on the livelihood of the people.

He condemned the recent spate of violence in Ekiti State over the re-run of governorship election.

Adebayo noted that time has come for all stakeholders in Ekiti to reconcile for the progress and development of the state.

Earlier, Mimiko had assured that he would meet stakeholders in the Yoruba land to look for ways of solving the crises in the region.

Daniel, lawmakers in closed-door meeting

Governor Gbenga Daniel of Ogun State and 21 members of the state Assembly on Tuesday attended a closed-door meeting to settle the political crisis in the state.

The meeting was sequel to the peace brokered between the executive and legislative arms of government by the Elders Consultative Forum.

A NAN correspondent who was at the conference room of the Government House, venue of the meeting, reports that some members of the Group of 11 (G11), lawmakers loyal to Daniel, were the first to arrive for the meeting.

They were followed by some members of the Group of 15 (G15), led by Speaker Tunji Egbetokun.

The state was thrown into a state of crisis following the removal of the former Speaker, Mrs Titi Oseni, in February.

The House thereafter adjourned abruptly and had not reconvened for plenary sessions since then.

The House of Representatives gave an ultimatum that if the state government failed to resolve the crisis by midnight today, it would be compelled to take over functions of the state Assembly.

It then warned that Section 11 (4) of the 1999 Constitution empowered the House of Representatives to take over the functions of any state legislature if it failed to live up to its statutory expectations. (NAN)

...N/Assembly can't take over

Ogun House—Enahoro

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

Leader statesman Chief Anthony Enahoro on Tuesday cautioned against the planned takeover of the affairs of Ogun State House Assembly by the National Assembly.

"Taking over Ogun House of Assembly is not the way forward. It can't be. It is not a viable solution," he said in Abeokuta during a courtesy call on Governor Gbenga Daniel.

Enahoro said the political crisis in the state was regrettable, and urged the people to find a way of resolving it.

"The call by the House of Representatives to take over the Ogun House of Assembly is illegal," he said. "The House of Representatives has no right to take over any other legislature in the country. They do not have that right, which in fact does not exist. The people of the state must find a way of resolving the current situation."

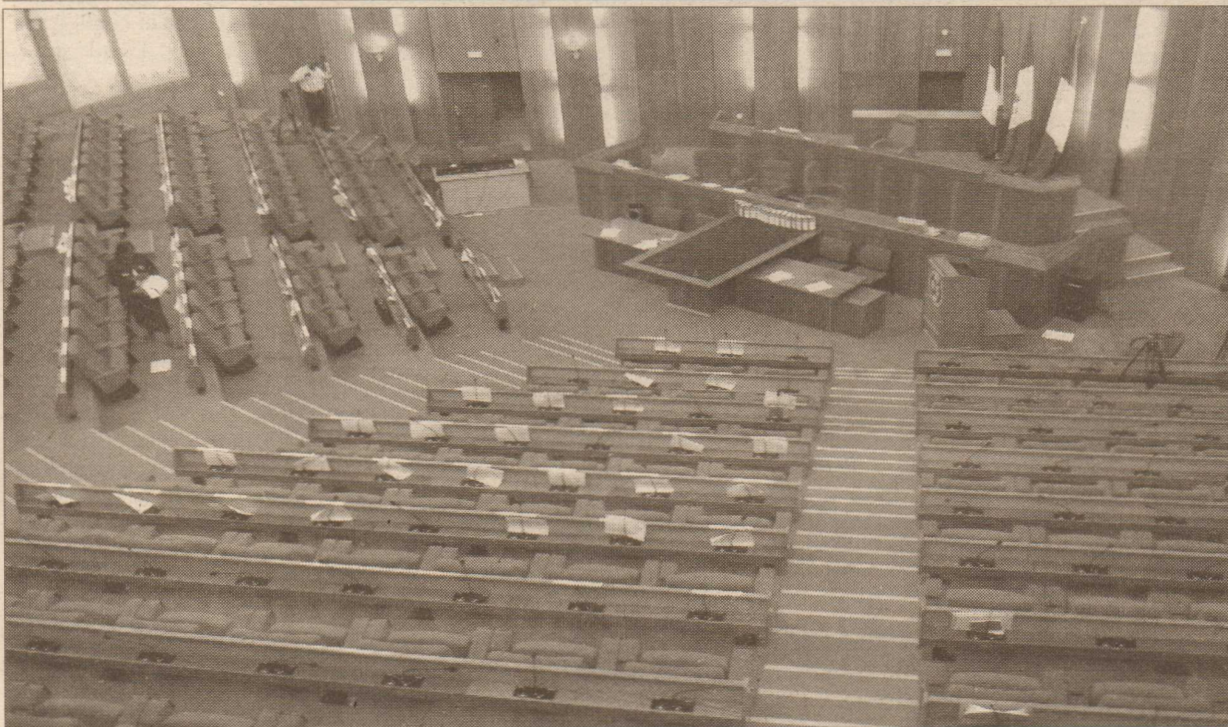
Responding, Daniel described the visit by Enahoro as a positive development, arising from the initiative of the Ogun Elders' Council.

"It is as a result of their meeting. I am sure that from that meeting we will have additional meetings. I think a lot of progress has been made as a result of the meeting," the governor said.

"Strictly speaking, I do accept that there is a communication gap. I do accept that there are a few fundamental challenges which are not unconnected with the limit of the resources of the state and how they are being utilised.

"All our people should remember that what the state government is doing is in accordance with its agenda for a secured future. All our projects are on course."

Daniel explained that the economic meltdown had become a challenge to the government, "because we are not getting the income we expected, and we are not likely to get it for a long time to come."



Empty Senate chamber during the Easter recess.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

TMG urges parties not to undermine Ekiti rerun

The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) has called on all political parties in Ekiti State to ensure that their supporters refrain from any act that could undermine the successful conduct of the coming governorship rerun in the state.

The group also warned against militarisation of the state during the April 25 re-

From Ralph Adekunle, Ado-Ekiti

run polls in the 64 wards of 10 local government areas.

Briefing newsmen in Ado-Ekiti on Tuesday, TMG Chairman Comrade Mashood Erubami said the rerun "represent a decisive moment in the political life of the state and a significant event in the history

of Nigeria."

He said "we are seriously concerned about the growing tension and confusion already dotting the political landscape of politics in the state."

Erubami said TMG has mobilised to champion the monitoring of the elections in the affected local governments covering over 800 polling units during the election.

The TMG "expects that INEC will be committed to its task of election conduct independence, fairness and non-partisanship rather than be hooked with external selfish political influence and agenda," he said. "The police must demonstrate capacity more than ever before that their leadership is above partisanship and show visible neutrality in all situation of conflict among the political parties."

Speaker explains poverty reduction bill

Speaker of the Kwara State House of Assembly Babatunde Mohammed on Tuesday said that the Community and Social Development Agency Bill, recently passed by the House, would reduce poverty in the state.

Mohammed said in Ilorin that the bill provided for the establishment of an agency which would accelerate the development of the rural ar-

reas.

"The Community and Social Development Agency Bill 2009, when signed into law, will assist in the formulation and implementation of strategies aimed at reducing poverty in the state.

"By the provisions of the bill, the agency is expected to function as an organ for the funding of small-scale projects in rural communities. It will also provide expertise

in the execution of projects by the communities," he said.

Mohammed expressed the optimism that various communities in the state, through the instrumentality of the law, would attain greater heights in terms of development and availability of basic amenities.

He said that the establishment of the agency was

in line with the objectives of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the seven-point agenda of the Federal Government.

"The agency will improve access of the people to education, potable water, electricity and other things needed to enhance the quality of the people's lives in rural and semi-urban areas," he said. (NAN)

SPORTS

N18.5m bribery allegation shocks Lulu

By David Ngobua

NFF President, Alhaji Sani Lulu Abdullahi has expressed shock over the allegations that the five hundred thousand naira recently given to each of the thirty six state Football Associations including the FCT by the football federation is meant to induce the F.A chairmen to support his second term bid.

Moments after the news filtered out that the NFF President had disbursed the whopping sum of eighteen million, five hundred thousand naira to the state F.As, tongues began to wag with his critics especially those who have their eyes on his position alleging that he was merely trying to bribe the state football associations.

The timing of the gesture was cited by his critics as one of the reasons why they were left with no choice but to question his magnanimity to the state F.As.

But in his reaction, the NFF President who spoke to *Trustsports* on the allegations being leveled against him expressed shock over what he described as attempts by some disgruntled elements to cause unnecessary distractions for his board.

Lulu said that the money he disbursed to the state F.As was given to his federation by FIFA for the development of the game in the country.

He explained that even before now, such money was given to the football federation but Nigerians did not get to know about it probably because

it was not used appropriately.

The NFF president said it was in the spirit of prudence and accountability that he gave part of the over N32m he received from FIFA to the F.As to assist them in the development of the game in their respective states.

"I am shocked by what is happening because I don't know what else they expect I should have done with the money. Misappropriate the money that is meant for football development? I have neither regret nor interior motive for giving out that money to the F.As because it is money meant for them," he stated.

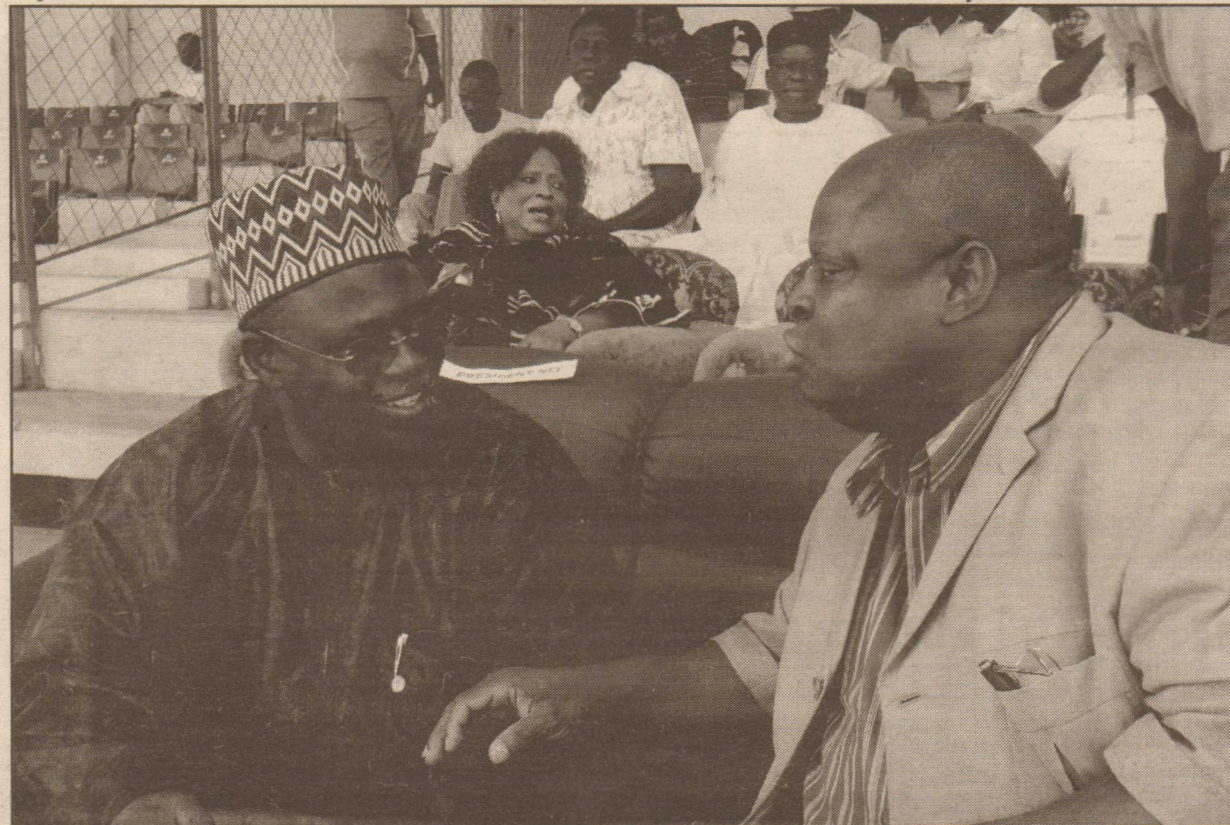
Lulu insisted that he does

not need to bribe anyone to get a second term and he would do the same thing if he gets money that is meant for football development in the country.

"I don't need to bribe anyone to remain as NFF president. My records will speak for me. All my actions are informed by my vision and aspirations for Nigerian football," he insisted.

The NFF president reiterated that he gave the money to the state F.As not to induce them to support him for a second term but to assist them in developing football at the grassroots.

Lulu however warned that the money received by the F.As must be judiciously utilized as NFF would monitor how the funds are expended by them.



NFF President, Sani Lulu, left, discussing with NFF Secretary General, Bolaji Ojo Oba during the final of the soccer event at the 16th National Sports Festival in Kaduna last February.

Falcons begin screening in Abuja

By David Ngobua

Following the dismal performances of Nigeria's Super Falcons at the last Africa Women Championship in Equatorial Guinea and the need to assemble a new team for future challenges, the newly constituted technical crew of the team has commenced screening of new players in Abuja.

As at yesterday, not fewer than twenty five out of the forty players invited for the first phase of the camping exercise reported to camp and trained under the watchful eyes of

Coach Uche Eucharia who is herself a former Super Falcons player.

Speaking to *Trustsports*, one of the Super Falcons assistant coaches, Mansur Abdullahi said after the first phase of the screening exercise, a total of twenty five players would be selected to fight for shirts in the team with some of the Super Falcons who would be invited on current for the second phase of camping.

He said "there is no automatic

shirt for any Super Falcons player. Some of them who are still useful would be invited to come and fight for places in the team. If they can prove to be better than the new girls, they will retain their places in the team but if the new girls can outplay them, they will take over" he stated.

Coach Mansur explained that in compliance with NFF directive, the coaching crew has decided to begin the screening exercise with unknown players in the female professional league and some of the players who distinguished themselves

during the 2009 National Sports Festival in Kaduna.

"Most of the players invited to camp are between the ages of 17 and 20. The new players we intend to assemble for the new Super Falcons are going to be young, mobile and energetic. The physique of the players is one of the conditions for invitation to camp," he stated.

The coach hinted that friendly matches with local clubs have been lined up to enable them test the abilities of the players who would be selected at the end of the first

phase camping.

It will be recalled that the future of the present members of the Super Falcons became uncertain when they surrendered their dominance of African women football at the last edition of the African women championship in Equatorial Guinea in 2008.

There and then clarion calls for a new female national team to be assembled to arrest the sudden drift were made which necessitated the disbandment of the then coaching crew led by Jossy Ladipo.

Gogo Iwo-Brown, Chairman, Rivers State Para-Soccer Association, said that she was not surprised that her side emerged champions.

"Rivers State has one of the best para-soccer teams in the country. I was confident of our victory as our team won a Silver medal at the National Sports Festival in Kaduna," she said.

Iwo-Brown told NAN that Rivers State would host the next edition of para-soccer championship in 2010.

Femi Orimolade, General Manager, Marketing, Promasidor Nig. Ltd, makers of Cowbell, led other dignitaries to present the trophy and other gift items to the players.

Westerhof: I only want to help

Former Super Eagles technical adviser, Clemens Westerhof says he is not begging to return as the team's boss 15 years after he left in a blaze of glory.

The self-acclaimed Dutchman is one of the few names Nigerians want to replace embattled Shaibu Amodu as Eagles boss but the Nigeria Football Federation, NFF, have closed the door on him (Westerhof) returning to the post.

"I am not jobless. I am only concerned about Nigeria's chances of qualifying for next

year's World Cup in South Africa. I have not applied for the job and will not do so. If Nigerians say they want who am I to say no. I consider Nigeria as my country and told journalists in Abuja recently that I will sell my house in South Africa if Nigeria does not qualify," said Westerhof in a telephone chat with *Complete Sports* at the weekend.

Westerhof believes it will be a shame if Nigeria is not at the first world cup Africa will be hosting and wants all hands on deck towards realising the goal.

First Bank team moves camp to Zaria

First Bank Basketball team has shifted camp from Lagos to Zaria, ahead of the Zenith Female Basketball League. The First Bank FC Team Manager, Tunji Oyekan, told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Lagos yesterday that the change of base was to avoid distractions.

"We are moving the camp out of Lagos to avoid distractions. The management wants the best from the ladies. The team will be leaving for Zaria this week. We want full concentration for the players because to whom much is given, much is expected," Oyekan said.

NAN learnt that the management of the bank budgeted N90 million for sports development in 2009 especially in the area of football and basketball. According to Oyekan, the management has set a premiership target for the First Bank Football Club next season, while all efforts will be geared towards realising the dream.

"The management has given us the target to gain promotion to the Premier League next season. Premier League is where we belong. That is the ultimate and we are equal to the task. We will continue to get better in the remaining matches of the Division One pro-league to ensure we beat both Gabros and 3SC to top the table," he said.

Quote of the Day

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— Former Super Eagles technical adviser Clemens Westerhof, insisting he is not begging to return as the chief coach of the senior national team.

Hotline:
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Team Rivers emerge para-soccer champions

Team Rivers para-soccer has emerged champions of the 2009 Cowbell para-soccer championship in Lagos.

In the finals of the Easter event on Monday, Team Rivers humbled the defending champions, Total Consult Terrors of Lagos, 4-2 at the Mobolaji Bank-Anthony Sports Complex, Rowe Park, Yaba.

The champions scored the opener 20 minutes into play through its star player, Sani Gimba. Scores at half time was 2-1 in favour of Team Rivers.

Total Consult Terrors, however, equalised in the early minutes of the second half, but the celebrations which greeted the equaliser had hardly died down when Team Rivers pulled two successive goals.

Total Consult's striker, Haruna Merci, who scored the two goals for his side in the explosive match, emerged the highest scorer in the three-day event with 10 goals.

In the third place match played earlier, NAS warriors beat the AY United 6-1.

The proprietor of Total Consult, Theo Lawson, said that his side, a club side, played against a state team.

"My team is a club side and we played against a state team which won a Silver medal at the last National Sports Festival in Kaduna," he said.

He, however, vowed that his team would reclaim the title in 2010. Total Consult won the first edition in 2008.

Gogo Iwo-Brown, Chairman, Rivers State Para-Soccer Association, said that she was not surprised that her side emerged champions.

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Iwo-Brown told NAN that Rivers State would host the next edition of para-soccer championship in 2010.

Femi Orimolade, General Manager, Marketing, Promasidor Nig. Ltd, makers of Cowbell, led other dignitaries to present the trophy and other gift items to the players.

Sports



Chelsea's Michael Essien, left, competes for the ball with Liverpool's Javier Mascherano during their Champions League quarter final second leg match at Stamford Bridge in London, England... yesterday.

The Onikan Stadium Lagos was thrown into pandemonium yesterday following the defeat of Bolowotan FC of Ikorodu, in the on-going Lagos State Challenge Cup.

Dissatisfied with the outcome of the match between LSDPC FC of Agege and Bolo-wotan which ended 8-7 in favour of LSDPC in the ensuing penalty shoot-out, irate Bolowotan fans took on their opponents in a fistcuff.

Some of the fans who spoke with the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) blamed the chaos on poor officiating by

Pandemonium at Onikan Stadium ...over bad officiating

the referee.

"The referee was bias in officiating. The red card he awarded to a Bolowotan player at that crucial time of the game was wrong," some of the fans said.

Bolowotan took the lead in the 24th minute, while LSDPC got a late equalizer in the 89th minute. Scores at regulation

time was 1-1 forcing the game to be decided on penalty.

Efforts by NAN to get reactions from the handlers of both teams proved abortive as the stadium was thrown into disarray.

In another quarter-final match, Union Bank FC of Lagos yesterday defeated Larry FC of Egbeda, Lagos

by 1-0 to pick a semi-final ticket.

Jejelola Olaniyi gave his side the winning goal in the 89th minute after dribbling the defender and the goalkeeper to put the ball in the net.

Coach Kelvin Adeniyi, of Union Bank told NAN that it was a difficult match.

"I am happy that we were

able to emerge victorious in the encounter. Our opponent gave us a tough time but experience gave us the goal," he said.

According to Adeniyi, the opponents are full of energy, pointing out that it is always difficult to play a youthful side.

Olaniyi, the goal scorer, said that their opponents were

determined to win the match but with commitment on the part of his teammates, they were able to emerge victorious.

The coach of Larry FC, Rollanson Odeh, told NAN that he had accepted the defeat in good faith.

Odeh commended his boys for their brilliant performance in the competition and the Union Bank FC for winning.

"They (Union Bank FC) were not better, but only luckier," he said.

NTF invites entries for CBN Open

The Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF) has fixed the 2009 edition of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Open Championships for April 30.

NTF Secretary-General Olusola Luke told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Lagos today that the 10-day tournament which attracts the country's tennis elite, is slated for the National Stadium, Lagos tennis courts.

Luke called for entries from state associations who had paid their affiliation fees till 2009 and to send the list of their players and officials to the NTF not later than April 24.

The championships, which will feature matches in the men's and women's singles and men's and women's doubles, will end on May 9.

Togo, Ghana, others for Randle Swimming Gala

Ghana, Benin Republic, Togo and Niger Republic have been invited to participate in the 2009 Dr J.K. Randle Swimming Championships from May 4 to May 9 in Lagos.

Randle told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) yesterday in Lagos that the invitation to the four countries was part of the sponsor's plans to give the

championships an international flavour.

The championships scheduled for the Teslim Balogun Stadium swimming pool will be the 81st edition.

Randle said it was the first time organisers were expanding the scope of the championships by inviting the four neighbouring countries and other states in the federation.

"This is the first time we are expanding the scope of this championship and we want to make it unique by involving our neighbouring countries to be part of this edition," he said.

In addition to the four West African countries, states in the South-south, South west, Kaduna and Gombe states have also been invited, he said.

Shittu to undergo scan

Bolton defender Danny Shittu is to undergo a scan on Tuesday after pulling up injured in Saturday's frantic 4-3 loss to Chelsea.

Shittu, making a rare start for the Trotters, was having a stellar game shackling Chelsea and Ivory Coast forward Didier Drogba before the striker fell on him,

hurting the Nigerian's ankle and knee.

Shittu was replaced at halftime and will now have scan to check for any tear in the muscle, but the defender is hoping for good news.

"I am pretty hopeful there will be no tears and looking to be fit in two weeks," he told *KickOffNigeria.com*.

Tornadoes players get N6.8m sign-on fees

At a time when players are threatening their clubs over no-payment of sign-on fees, the management of Niger Tornadoes Football Club of Minna has paid the club's players ten percent (10%) of their sign on fees amounting to N6.8 million.

With the payment of the money, Niger Tornadoes has successfully settled fifty percent (50%) of their players' sign-on fees, having earlier

By Orkula Shaagee

paid 40% at the start of the 2008/2009 league season.

Welfare Officer to the club, Alhaji Sani Mahmud, who announced this in a statement made available to Trustsports yesterday, said the decision, is to ensure that the players give out their best in the remaining matches of the on-going Globacom Premier League.

In addition to that, Mahmud

says the management has cleared all the approved match bonuses of the players up to their last match with JUTH. The players are currently on an improved match bonus of N30,000 for every away win while away draw and home win fetch them N15,000 each.

He pointed out that out of the N79 million budget submitted to the government for the players' sign-on fees, only about N40million have

been released.

He admitted that the N79 million budget later dropped to N68 million because according to him, no fewer than 13 players were dropped at the mid-season for decline in productivity and lack of club commitment.

Although 8 new other players were recruited to replace the sacked ones, their prizes, he said were not up to the ones that were declared

surplus for requirement; adding that the management has a mission which it hopes to achieve with the improved welfare of the players.

"We take the welfare of the players with utmost priority because without them there can not be management and apart from that this management has a mission and we are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that we accomplish it".

Sports

Ronaldo leads United dominance of PFA nominations

Cristiano Ronaldo is on course for a hat-trick of PFA Player of the Year awards after being included in the nominations released on Tuesday.

The Portuguese, who was voted World Footballer of the Year in January, is one of five Manchester United nominees, a reflection on a season that could end with Alex Ferguson's side collecting five trophies.

Central defensive partnership Rio Ferdinand and Nemanja Vidic are in contention for the award voted for by their fellow professionals while Ryan Giggs and goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar are also nominated.

The 35-year-old Giggs, who has never won the award, has been in sparkling form for United as they aim to add the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup to the FIFA Club World Cup and English League Cup trophies they have already won.

Dutchman Van der Sar managed a record 14 consecutive league clean sheets earlier this season.

Cavaliers secure best record in NBA

The Cleveland Cavaliers locked up the best record in the National Basketball Association and home-court advantage throughout the playoffs with a victory over Indiana.

LeBron James scored 37 points to lead the Cavaliers to a 117-109 victory.

"It's one step, however, it's a big step," James said. "When you consider all the great teams, all the great players, all the great coaches and all the great systems that are in the NBA, for us to finish with the best record is a tremendous feat. And that is something the franchise should be proud of."

Home-court advantage is especially valuable to the Cavaliers, who own a 39-1 record on their home floor.

A win by the Cavaliers in their season finale on Wednesday would tie them for the NBA record for best home mark, 40-1, set by the Boston Celtics in 1985-86.

But James, who could yet sit out that contest resting up for the playoffs, said that record didn't matter.

"We've got to do what's best for the ring," he said. "We've got home-court advantage already. We're not fighting for breaking a record anymore. We're fighting for that ring."

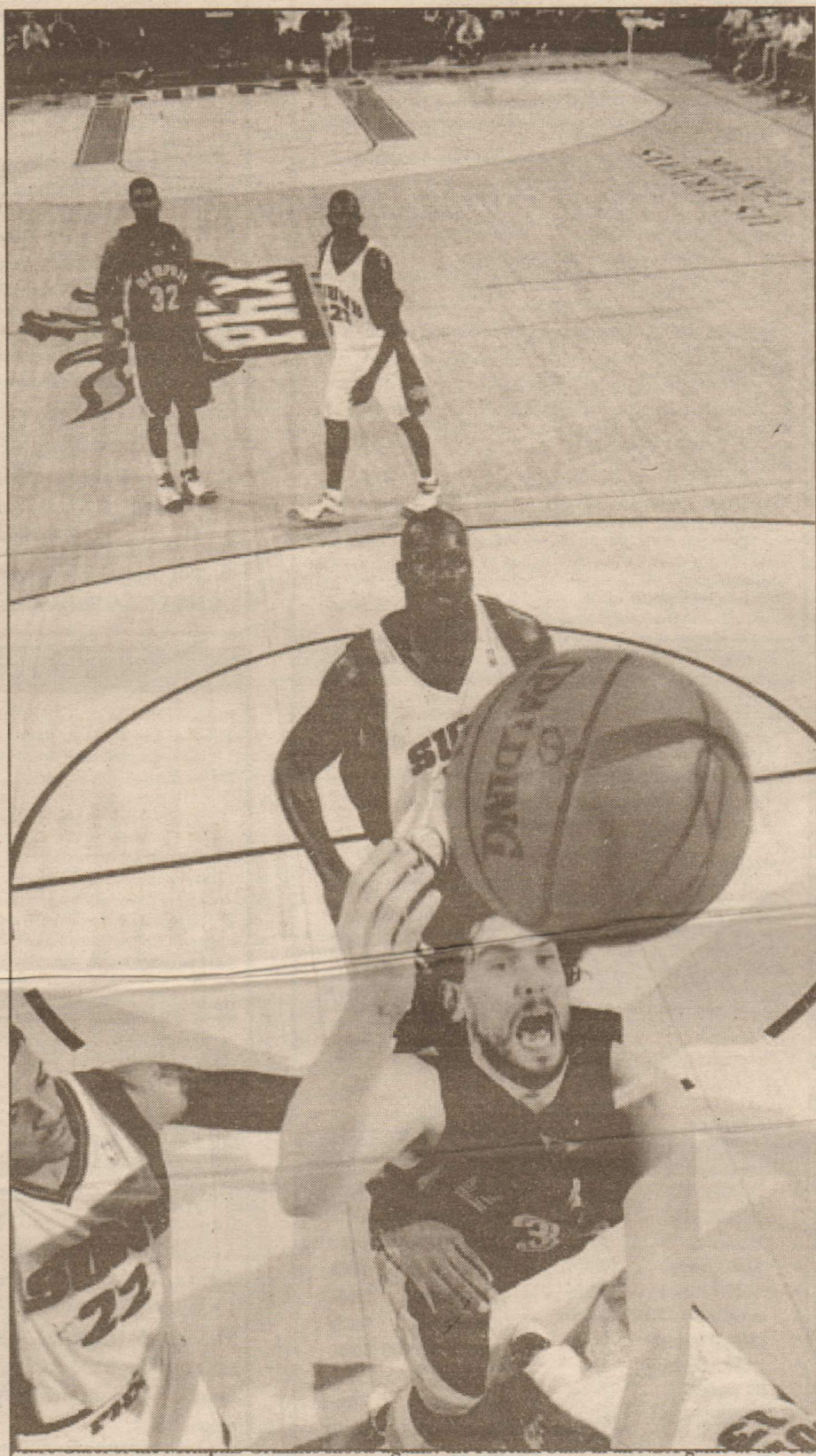
Delonte West scored 20 points, Mo Williams had 18 and Zydrunas Ilgauskas chipped in 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who won their fifth straight game.

Danny Granger scored 38 points, rookie Brandon Rush scored 27 and Troy Murphy had 17 points and 13 rebounds for Indiana, who had already been eliminated from playoff contention.

Even with the postseason out of their grasp, the Pacers had been playing well, winning seven of their previous 10 games.

Cleveland had reason to take them seriously after falling 96-95 to the Pacers on February 10.

But the Cavaliers stayed focused, suffering no let-down a day after their 31-point victory over reigning NBA champions Boston.



Airways Centre in Phoenix, Arizona on Monday.

Yao lifts Rockets over Hornets

Yao Ming scored 22 points to lift the Houston Rockets to an 86-66 victory over New Orleans in a National Basketball Association contest.

Luis Scola brought down 15 rebounds for the Rockets, who entered the contest holding the number four seed in the West, with the same record as San Antonio and Portland.

The Spurs kept pace with the Rockets with a 101-72 victory at Oakland, where Tony Parker scored 17 points and Tim Duncan added 16 points and 13 rebounds.

If Houston and San Antonio both win their regular-season

finals on Wednesday, the Rockets will win a complicated tiebreaker and get the number three Western Conference seed.

In fact, the Rockets could yet finish seeded anywhere from second to fifth in the West.

"We just need to keep winning because nothing is secure right now," said Yao.

Added Scola: "It was huge. We needed it. If we lost, we'd have much fewer chances to get home-court advantage. Now we have a chance for everything."

Yao showed no ill effects from a painful right foot that kept him out of Houston's

previous game.

"No problem," said Yao, who played 31 minutes. "That's a team win right there. I'm proud of this team. I'm proud I'm a member of this team."

New Orleans squandered a chance to seal the Western Conference sixth seed.

"It is very disappointing," Hornets coach Byron Scott said of his team's lackluster performance. "I think most of our guys in that locker room think that it's like a light switch, that you can just turn on when the playoffs start. It's not going to happen, it's just not."

Rivals still fearful of Federer

Roger Federer may have lost his place at the top of the rankings but he remains a supremely formidable opponent, his rivals have said.

The Swiss star has not won a tournament this year and smashed a racquet in an out-of-character outburst in Miami.

"He's made a Grand Slam final and two Master Series semis," said world number one Rafael Nadal.

"He's been at it for four years and now he loses a few - he's not in crisis," said world number three Novak Djokovic.

"I did find it strange that he broke his racquet in Miami, he who always keeps calm. But these things happen when you

are frustrated on the court," added the Serbian.

Federer, 27, has won 13 Grand Slam events but only one, last year's US Open, out of the last five.

Nadal replaced Federer at the top of the rankings last August, and the Swiss player has never beaten him at a Grand Slam event outside of SW19.

The normally reserved Federer burst into tears after losing to Nadal in the Australian Open final in February, providing the critics with further ammunition that the Swiss player's game was in decline.

France's Gilles Simon has beaten Federer on each of the two occasions they have met, but the Frenchman was equally

complimentary as Nadal and Djokovic. "To me, on a good day, he still is the best player in the world," he said.

Breaking ranks, Fernando Verdasco of Spain suggested Federer was struggling psychologically with having to accept he was no longer as dominant as he had once been.

"Two years ago he was winning everything. Now, since the beginning of the year, he has been beaten by Nadal, Djokovic and Andy Murray. Mentally it is not easy to handle."

Federer is due to start his clay-court season in Monte Carlo against Italian Andreas Seppi today.

Djokovic, Murray advance at Monte Carlo

Third-seeded Novak Djokovic and No. 4 Andy Murray each won in straight sets Tuesday to reach the third round of the Monte Carlo Masters.

Djokovic cruised in a 6-1, 6-2 win against Oscar Hernandez of Spain, while Murray began slowly before easing past Victor Hanescu of Romania 6-3, 6-2.

Djokovic, who reached the French Open semifinals last year, will face either Jean-Rene Lisnard or Albert Montanes. He

"I didn't quite expect to perform that good, considering the fact that I didn't have any matches, singles matches, on this surface," Djokovic said. "But I was really playing aggres-

sive and patient at the same time. This combination is really important for this surface."

Murray twice dropped serve to trail 2-1 in the opening set, but the Scot took the next four games for a commanding lead.

"At the start of the match when I got broken, I was sort of moving like I was still on a hard court," Murray said. "And then after four, five, six games, I started to move better."

He broke Hanescu, a French Open quarterfinalist in 2005, in the seventh game of the second set to take a 5-2 lead, and converted his fourth

match point when the Romanian hit a forehand return into the net.

Murray, who lost to Roger Federer in the U.S. Open final last year, next takes on the winner between Marin Cilic and Fabio Fognini. If Murray wins, he will reach a clay-court quarterfinal for the first time in his career.

"It takes time, I never played that well on clay especially in the last couple of years," Murray said. "I played solid and he made some mistakes. I was happy with the way I played for my first match on clay this year."

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The successful candidate will be required to coordinate the accounting and administrative activities of the bank.

REQUIREMENTS:

- A good degree or its equivalent
- five years' post qualification experience in banking institution

3. MARKETERS

Candidates will be responsible for achieving the bank's established market goals.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. OND in marketing or it's equivalent
2. Relevant marketing experience preferably in banking institution.

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RE-CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY ON PLOT NO 881, FILE NO. FCT/ABU/KG.1049

The general public and particularly the family of **DR. STEPHEN OJO OLORUNFEMI** is hereby informed that **ARC. SEGUN OLORUNFEMI** has applied to Abuja Geographic and Information Systems for the release of **Certificate of Occupancy** on Plot No. 881, File No. **FCT/ABU/KG.1049**, Land located at Cadastral Zone B11, Kaura District Abuja, FCT, belonging to **LATE DR. STEPHEN OJO OLORUNFEMI**.

Any objection to the release of the Certificate of Occupancy to **ARC. SEGUN OLORUNFEMI** should be forwarded to Abuja Geographic Information Systems within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Tito Tar. Ayangebee
Messrs Hoffman Williams Attorneys

LOSS OF LAND DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the loss of Original Acknowledgement AGIS Letter of Plot No. CP95, of about 5000m² MFCT/AMAC at Sabo - Lugbe East Extension Layout, bearing **OMA VIEW VENTURE**, and belonging to **MRS GRACE FEMI**. All efforts to trace the documents proved abortive. If found, contact the nearest police station. AGIS/FCDA/F.H.A please note.

COMMUNITY RESCUE INITIATIVE BAUCHI STATE

This is to notify the general public that the above named organization has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part "C" of the companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

Trustees are:

1. Barrister Hudu Yunusa Ari
2. Ahmed Muhammed Ahmed
3. Alhaji Aliyu Umar Misau

AIMS / OBJECTIVES

1. To compliment government efforts in all its programmes toward healthcare services, education and the general welfare of the people.
2. To motivate communal participation in self reliance activities and communal fight against all social vices.
3. To advocate for the protection and promotion of rights of vulnerable people.

Any objection to the registration of the above named organization should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 565, Ndola Square, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed
Idris Jibo Esq

HEALTH CARING MINISTRY

The general public is hereby notified that the above named Organization has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part "C" of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:

1. Evang. Victoria Chukwukere (Chairman).
2. Bro. Martin Chukwukere
3. Bro. Chukwudi Chukwukere.
4. Rev. Lawson Nnamdi Onwuka
5. Bro. Celestine Onwuanaku

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To proclaim the gospel of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To carry out counseling and deliverance.
3. To establish branches of the Church within and outside Nigeria.
4. To promote and provide scriptural and secular education and evangelism
5. To establish institutions for the purpose of (3) above for the social welfare of the needy.

Any objective should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 565, Ndola Square, Wuse, Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of the publication

Signed:
BARR. ROSITA A. TONY - SAMPSON
OHANEZE CHAMBERS
21 Emekuku Street,
D/Line, Port Harcourt

STATE CHAIRMEN OF VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA

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| 2. DANKAI MOHAMMED ABUJA | 18. ALH. LAHALISAH LAGOS |
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| 15. ALH. UMAR WAGIRI KEBBI | 31. NAFIU BASHIR ZAMFARA |
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Signed:
ALH. ALI SOKOTO, National Chairman

WAFI ROAD MOSQUE FORUM

W.R.M. Forum Secretariat,
All Aidi Road, adjacent Oando filling station. U/Serid Bus-Stop,
P. M. B. 7840, Kaduna - Nigeria.

This is to notify the general public that the above mentioned Forum has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (C.A.C.) for amendment of its Constitution and change of Trustees under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

NEW TRUSTEES:

1. Muhammad Sani Isah
2. Nur Yakubu
3. Usman Abubakar
4. Murtala Aliyu
5. Abubakar Sada
6. Muhammad Joji

Any objection(s) to this amendment and changes should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission Plot 663, Ndola Square, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Executive Secretary

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly **LAWRENCE VERONICA**, now wish to be called **WILLIAM LAWRENCE VERONICA**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS EBO BLESSING NKECHI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS MKPA BLESSING NKECHI**. All former documents remain valid. National Institute for Cultural Orientation and the general public take note.

I, formerly known as **MISS AILEME AGBONMEIRE ALICE**, now addressed as **MRS. TUNYAN AGBONMEIRE ALICE**. All former documents remain valid. General public to take note.

I, formerly **MISS RIFKATU MADILA FILIBUS**, now wish to be addressed as **MRS. RIFKATU MADILA UTAJI ONUH**. All former documents remain valid. National Examination Council and general public to take note.

I, formerly called **MARYAM ALIYU** now wish to be called **MARYAM ALIYU NAKAKANA**. All former documents remain valid. ABU Zaria, NYSC and the public to note.

I, formerly **YAHAYA ABDULLAHI**, now wish to be known as **ALHASSAN YAHAYA ABDULLAHI**. University of Maiduguri, Gome Media Corporation and the general public to take note.

I, formerly **MISS AGNES GAIYA**, now wish to be known as **MRS AGNES YOHANNA ABA**. All former documents remain valid. Un ion Bank of Nigeria PLC, Hunu Bamali Polytechnic Zaria and general public to note.

I, formerly known as **KABIRU DATTI**, now **ABUBAKAR ABDULLAHI**. Former documents remain valid. Birnin Kudu L.G. and general public to note

I, formerly known as **BASHIRA DAUDA MANI**, now wish to be called **BASHIRA RUFA'I**. All former documents remain valid. NYSC and general public to note.

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Sports

ROMA FINALE 2009



Ferguson took Porto 'too lightly'

Porto legend Jorge Costa feels holders Manchester United made the mistake of underestimating his old club in last week's Champions League quarter-final.

United drew 2-2, leaving them with an uphill task in Portugal on Wednesday.

Costa, captain of the Porto side that beat United on the way to winning the competition in 2004, told *BBC Sport*: "I think Sir Alex Ferguson was surprised.

"Before the game, he said Porto were OK and a nice team but he talked mainly about Barcelona. That was not clever."

Porto were perceived to be one of the weaker teams in the quarter-finals, especially after the ease of Arsenal's 4-0 victory over the Portuguese side in the group stages in September.

When the draw was made, United - still chasing an unprecedented quintuple this season - were heavy favourites to progress to the last four and a tie against the Gunners or Villarreal.

That is no longer the case after Porto's impressive display



earned them a deserved draw in Manchester, enabling Jesualdo Ferreira's side to take two away goals back to Estadio do Dragao - where no English side has ever won.

Last week's result shocked many observers but Costa always believed Porto, who are four points clear at the top of Portugal's Liga Sagres, had the quality to upset the 2008 winners.

"Against Arsenal, it was the beginning of the season," Costa explained. "Porto have a lot of young players and they needed time to improve but now they are a much better team."

"The way they played at Old Trafford was not a surprise

because I know them very well, as well as United.

"Portugal does not have a fantastic league, which is why I think Porto are not rated in England. But Porto do have a fantastic team and they showed that.

"It was a brilliant performance but they could even have had a better result - I think they deserved one. But, in this sort of tie, it was still a great result."

Costa played for Porto for 16 years from 1989 until 2005, winning eight league titles as well as 50 Portugal caps, and the 37-year-old also had a spell in the Premier League with Charlton.

Now coach of second divi-

sion Olhanense in his home country, he was nicknamed 'Bicho' (Animal) or 'Tanque' (Tank) by Porto's fanatical supporters for his whole-hearted and physical playing style.

And he believes those fans will play a large part in helping Porto finish off United and move one step closer to emulating the European success they enjoyed under Jose Mourinho, when the Dragons won the 2003 Uefa Cup and 2004 Champions League.

"In the last round, Porto got a 2-2 draw against Atletico in Madrid and then played well in the return, which ended 0-0," said Costa.

"United, along with Barcelona, are one of the best teams in Europe so it will be a more difficult task but, with Porto being at home with their supporters and with the quality of their team, I think they are more of the favourites this time.

"I don't think they will try to defend and hold out for a draw - they are not used to doing that. Porto will try to win the game."

"If you saw them in Man-



Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo eyes the ball during their training session yesterday.

chester, they tried to play high up the pitch and that is their style - they will not change their mentality in this match."

United need to score and will be expected to come forward themselves so Porto's strategy

should result in another open encounter.

That could suit United's superstar winger Cristiano Ronaldo, whose misplaced pass led to Porto's first goal at Old Trafford.

Diaby in, Djourou out

Arsenal's defensive problems have increased with the news that Johan Djourou is definitely ruled out of the Champions League quarter-final second leg against Villarreal.

A knee injury means that Swiss international Djourou joins fellow defenders William Gallas and Gael Clichy, as well as first-choice goalkeeper Manuel Almunia, on the sidelines.

"Both Djourou and Clichy are unfortunately out," Arsene Wenger said at his pre-match news conference.

"Djourou has a knee problem. He will have a scan today but we fear a cartilage (injury)."

One piece of good news for Arsene Wenger is that versatile midfielder Abou Diaby has made the squad after recovering from a thigh injury sustained on international duty last month.

Villarreal will be without captain and talismanic midfielder Marcos Senna, who limped out of the 2-0 defeat to Malaga at the weekend with hamstring trouble.

Senna opened the scoring in the first leg at El Madrigal before Emmanuel Adebayor equalised with a stunning overhead kick.

The Spanish side - currently fourth in La Liga, are also without influential winger Santi Cazorla, although midfield duo Cami and Mati Fernandez have recovered to make the trip.

Buoyant Arsenal ready to finish Villarreal

Arsene Wenger can be excused a little smugness as he prepares his Arsenal side for Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg at home to Villarreal as a bleak-looking season has suddenly burst into bloom.

Last week's 1-1 draw in Spain makes Arsenal favourites to progress to a semi-final against either holders Manchester United or Porto while on Saturday they face Chelsea in the last four of the FA Cup at Wembley.

Five consecutive Premier League wins have also cemented the Gunners in fourth place, in the league after it had looked for most of the season that their place among the top four was under threat.

Add to that the impressive return to fitness of Cesc

Fabregas after a long lay-off with a knee injury and the feel-good factor is very much back at the Emirates where Arsenal have never lost in the Champions League.

An alternative view would be that Arsenal's season could disintegrate within the space of four days, which is why Wenger is wary of the threat posed by Villarreal who must score in England for the first time in the Champions League.

A 0-0 draw would be enough for Arsenal thanks to Emmanuel Adebayor's acrobatic equaliser last week but Wenger's young side will not be playing a containing game, especially as they are without defensive rock William Gallas, raiding left back Gael Clichy and first choice keeper Manuel Almunia through

injury.

"We have scored that away goal so it could have an importance at the end of the day," Wenger told Arsenal's website (www.arsenal.com).

"I don't believe that we are a team who can play for 0-0, that's not our natural way. If there are five minutes to go and it's 0-0 even goal kicks make you nervous.

"I personally don't expect any weaknesses from them, I expect some strength from us to say, 'listen, we have the opportunity to get to the semi-final at home, let's take it'."

The return of skipper Fabregas to pull Arsenal's midfield strings has provided a massive boost and the timing is perfect.

"He looks to get stronger

and stronger from game to game," Wenger said. "I did think he needed a breather [earlier in the campaign]. Maybe it was too long for my taste but it will help him to finish the season strongly."

While Arsenal's most influential player is back, Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini must do without injured midfielder Marcos Senna who scored a stunning opener in the first leg.

He will also need to reverse a mini-slump that has seen them slip out of the Champions League qualification slots after a 2-0 defeat by Malaga in the Primera Liga on Saturday.

The memory of their tight 2006 semi-final defeat by Arsenal, however, will mean motivation is not a problem.

"It isn't difficult to find the motivation for these types of games, and it does not depend on the weekend's result. Playing for a place in the Champions League semi-finals is sufficient motivation," said Pellegrini.

Probable teams:

Arsenal: 21-Lukasz Fabianski; 3-Bacary Sagna, 5-Kolo Toure, 20-Johan Djourou, 18-Mikael Silvestre; 15-Denilson, 17-Alex Song, 4-Cesc Fabregas, 14-Theo Walcott; 8-Samir Nasri; 25-Emmanuel Adebayor

Villarreal: 13-Diego Lopez; 18-Angel Lopez, 4-Diego Godin, 2-Gonzalo Rodriguez, 5-Joan Capdevila; 10-Cami, 21-Bruno Soriano, 6-Sebastian Eguren, 11-Ariel Ibagaza; 16-Joseba Llorente, 22-Giuseppe Ros.

Chelsea survive Liverpool onslaught

Another enthralling encounter between these teams left Chelsea FC celebrating a fifth UEFA Champions League semi-final appearance in the last six seasons. But what a fright Liverpool FC gave them after they first established a 2-0 lead inside the first 30 minutes and then scored twice again late on.

The 3-1 first-leg deficit was a formidable barrier for the Anfield club to overcome but they set about it with gusto and Fabio Aurelio's free-kick and

Xabi Alonso's penalty had the scores level. However, Chelsea roared back with second-half goals from Didier Drogba, Alex and Frank Lampard. Lucas with a deflected shot and a Dirk Kuyt header left the home supporters fearing the worst but Lampard scored again with a minute remaining to ensure Chelsea a semi-final against FC Barcelona on 28 April and 6 May, another Stamford Bridge second leg.

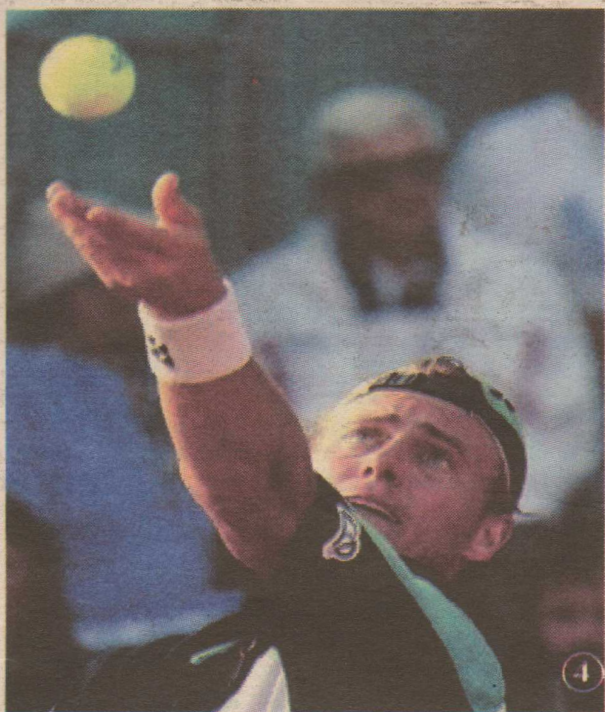
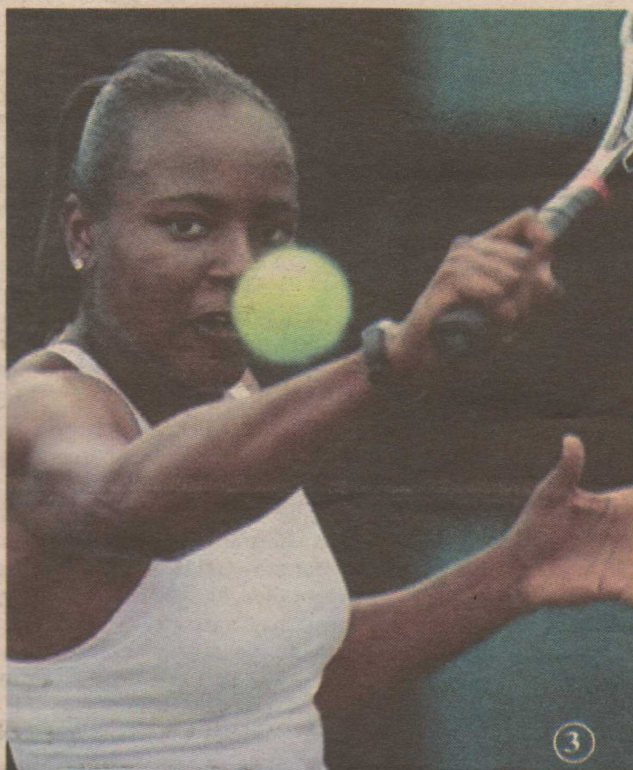
With Steven Gerrard ruled out with an abductor injury,

Liverpool's task looked even more onerous. While their desire was all too apparent, their early passing lacked sufficient sharpness to put their supporters in a confident frame of mind. However they created a good chance in the 13th minute that Fernando Torres would normally have put away eight times out of ten. It was skilfully created by Kuyt and Yossi Benayoun but having sidestepped Alex's challenge, Torres was unable to keep his shot down.

Lampard sent a free-kick fizzing wide as Chelsea threatened for the first time. Yet within five minutes their night began to take a turn for the worst as Liverpool were awarded a free-kick out on the right following a push by Lampard on Torres. Aurelio stood over the ball as players on both teams jostled for position. The Brazilian then deceived everyone by arrowing his delivery inside Petr Cech's left-hand post, leaving the Chelsea goalkeeper embarrassed.

It was game on once more and Branislav Ivanovic was forced to intervene when Torres almost put Benayoun in. Liverpool had their tails up and they soon scored again. Another Aurelio free-kick was vigorously contested with the referee spotting a tug by Ivanovic on Alonso, who calmly slotted home the spot-kick. Chelsea manager Guus Hiddink was seething on the touchline and in a bid to put new life in his team he replaced Salomon Kalou with Nicolas Anelka.

Sports Illustrated



CAPTION

1. Manchester United's Anderson Oliveira of Brazil, left, and coach Alex Ferguson react during a press conference prior to their training session at the Dragao stadium in Porto,

Portugal. Manchester United will face Porto in a Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match tonight.

2. France's Gael Monfils hits a return to Serbia's Janko Tipsarevic during their first

round match at the Monte Carlo Masters. Monfils slumped to a 6-3, 6-1 defeat to Tipsarevic.

3. Shenay Perry, of the United States, returns a shot to Fifteenth-seeded Barbora Zehlavova Strycova, of the

Czech Republic, during Family Circle Cup tennis action in Charleston, South Carolina, United States.

4. Australia's Lleyton Hewitt serves to Russia's Marat Safin, during their first round of the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters

tournament, in Monaco.

5. Villarreal manager Manuel Pellegrini keeps watch during a training session at The Emirates Stadium London. Arsenal will face Villarreal in a Champions League quarter

final 2nd leg soccer match at the Emirates Stadium tonight.

6. Rudy Gay of the Memphis Grizzlies dunks against the Phoenix Suns in an NBA game at U.S. Airways Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

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DAILY TRUST

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

SPORTS Bits

Martins denies rift with Shearer

O bafemi Martins has admitted he could understand Alan Shearer's frustration over his late withdrawal for the match against Stoke City. The Newcastle striker played no part in the 1-1 draw on Saturday after waking up on the morning of the game with groin trouble.

Shearer was unhappy that he had to change his plans just hours before kick-off and asked Martins to explain what happened.

There have been suggestions that the incident created a rift between player and manager but Martins will not face punishment.

The Nigerian realises why Shearer was upset but insists he could do little to help the situation and made the right decision to pull out.

Martins, who was last week described as a key player by Shearer, is looking forward to playing a major role in Newcastle's battle against relegation.

"I understand why the manager was frustrated because he had to change his plans," he said in *The Guardian*.

"But I woke up in so much pain that I knew I could not give 100 per cent, so I decided I play."

"I didn't want to let the team down. And, with so many important games coming up, I needed to think about staying fit for the future."



Taiwo backs Marseille for title

Nigeria defender Taye Taiwo believes that his French club, Marseille, can win the league title this year to end Lyon's seven year domination. Taiwo scored two goals on Sunday as Marseille beat Grenoble 4-1 and moved one point ahead of Lyon with seven games to play.

"Marseille will be champions," Taiwo said. "We're right up there and there's no way we're going to give up this position between now and the end of the season."

"There are some big matches left." Lyon still have matches at Bordeaux, Marseille and Toulouse, as well as a home game against Paris Saint-Germain.

Marseille, the only French club to have won the European Cup, won the last of its eight national titles in 1992.

"Marseille is now inspiring a kind of fear, or at least some respect from its rivals," said the club's president Pape Diouf said Monday.

"But we have to be careful to avoid falling in the ambient euphoria."

Marseille won the inaugural Champions League tournament in 1993 but was then demoted to France's second division because of a corruption scandal. Lyon's hopes of winning a record eighth consecutive title took a knock on Sunday when they drew 2-2 at home against Monaco.

Lyon captain Juninho said after the game that both Marseille and Bordeaux were known a threat.

"It's good for the championship. I'm an honest man and you've got to say that Marseille and Bordeaux have worked well these past two seasons," the Brazilian midfielder said.

"This year maybe they deserve to go all the way." Marseille are also still in the Uefa Cup although they lost their quarter-final first leg 2-0 in Ukraine to Shakhtar Donetsk, with the second leg on Thursday.

"If we hadn't beat Grenoble we'd have stood no chance against Donetsk," Taiwo said.

"We can now focus on qualifying."

Safin brings Hewitt down to earth

Marat Safin brought Lleyton Hewitt down to earth on Tuesday when he won the battle of the former world number ones by beating him 6-4 7-5 in the first round of the Monte Carlo Masters. Australian Hewitt, who won the U.S. Clay Court Championships in Houston on Sunday, could not match Safin's accuracy and bowed out on the third match point when he sent a backhand wide.

Russian Safin, who topped the ATP rankings for the first time in November 2000 following his U.S. Open victory, next faces Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti.

He set his record straight to 7-7 with Hewitt, whom he beat in the Australian Open final in 2005.

Hewitt, who became world number one in November 2001, had his right thigh strapped after the first set but, true to his reputation, did not give up easily.

Between a former president and his vice

Predictably the visit in January by Vice-President Atiku Abubakar to his former boss, President Olusegun Obasanjo, at his Ota Farm in Ogun State has provoked fierce controversy not least because of the claim and counter-claim between the two about who took the initiative. While Obasanjo claims his estranged lieutenant pestered him for the visit sources very close to the former vice-president said it was the other way round.

Significantly Obasanjo chose Yola, the capital of Adamawa, Abubakar's home state, to make his claim. "I initially declined but after pressure was mounted on me I had to succumb to the request," he said at a PDP meeting in the capital late March. "He (Abubakar) kept calling me to the extent that I had to change my GSM line. Even in Katsina during Yar'adua's daughter's wedding Atiku begged me to ask Yar'adua to forgive him."

In a swift reaction through his spokesmen Abubakar denied the claim. He never begged Obasanjo for any reconciliation, he said. Instead it was Obasanjo, according to sources close to Abubakar, who sent emissaries to the former vice-president seeking for an end to their long drawn rift. For months Atiku reportedly spurned those initiatives on the grounds that it would be prejudicial to his petition against the election of President Umaru Yar'adua.

The pressure was reportedly renewed after the Supreme Court threw out the opposition's case. If this was true the pressure apparently paid off. Abubakar, as we all now know, went to Ota on a supposedly private visit that immediately became the talk of town and may yet prove his costliest political mistake so far; it has caused serious dissension within his own Action Congress and has also handed his former boss, famous for his elephantine memory, a propaganda weapon with which to further discredit him.

Abubakar has since claimed that his former boss has phoned him to deny the Yola story as widely published in the media. At least one newspaper, the *Daily Trust*, has published the transcript of what Obasanjo reportedly said in Yola to prove it did not make it up. So far the former president has rebutted neither *Trust* nor Abubakar.

Even then the controversy essentially remains a case of Obasanjo's word against that of his former lieutenant's. My own personal experience back in 2003 suggests that Obasanjo is the one not telling the truth.

The reader may recall that soon after the results of the year's presidential elections were declared, General Muhammadu Buhari, who lost out to Obasanjo as the candidate of the main opposition ANPP, threatened to call his followers on to the streets in protest.

To avert a possible bloodshed a leading traditional ruler in the North initiated a move for possible dialogue between the two opponents. The traditional ruler formed a committee of several Northern leaders under the chairmanship of the late Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Umaru Sanda Ndayako. I happened to be its secretary.

The committee first sat in Kaduna for a couple of days and then moved to Abuja. That was when I developed a sneaky feeling that Obasanjo himself was the man behind it all. There had been some whispers to that effect but I'd dismissed them as your typical Nigerian cynicism. But when the odd dozen or so of us, bar the chairman, were accommodated in executive suites in the then NICON HILTON Hotel and the State House gave us a liaison who dropped hints of generous honourarium for us at the end of our assignment I began to wonder if there wasn't something to those suspicions.

My own suspicions were heightened by the fact that Buhari initially refused to have anything to do with us because some of his aides who had reliable sources in intelligence circles told him it was a ruse to take the wind out of his sail of mass protest. Still the optimist in me said something good could yet come out of it even if it was a ruse.

At any rate the committee eventually succeeded in persuading Buhari to meet with its members through the intervention of Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, Marafan Sokoto and himself an ANPP stalwart. During the meeting the general said he only accepted to come because of the respect he had for several of the members including,

WEDNESDAY
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with Mohammad Haruna
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of course, the chairman. At the end of the meeting I had the impression that the committee succeeded in dissuading Buhari from carrying out his threat to go to the streets. In return the committee recommended that Obasanjo should summon a summit of all parties to consider ways to end the palpable tension that had engulfed the land as a result of Buhari's threat.

This was the recommendation that we submitted to Obasanjo at a brief ceremony in the presidential villa. Not to my surprise he gave it the shortest shrift possible. A summit of all parties, he said in a short dismissive response to our chairman's address, was a nonstarter especially as many of the opposition parties existed only on paper. I suspected that the man was angry that the chairman's speech dispensed of all the niceties about congratulating him over his victory and simply plunged in to the business on hand. Worse, the speech even questioned the integrity of the elections.

A few days after the event he told any one who cared to listen that the whole initiative was a diabolical - his own words - plan to scuttle his victory at the polls. His denunciation of our report finally confirmed my suspicion that it was all his own initiative. It became obvious to me that what he wanted was a respectable group of Northern leaders to be seen as endorsing the controversial election. And when he could not get his wish he decided to wash his hands off the whole initiative even though government's imprimatur was written all over it.

My choice of Vice-President Atiku Abubakar's word against Obasanjo's in the Ota visit controversy is, however, not merely on account of my own experience. Time and again the former president has proved he is not beyond telling blatant lies or reneging on his commitments. Ask the chieftains of *Afenifere* who are yet to recover from the subterfuge they suffered at his hands in the run-up to the 2003 elections. Ask former president, Shehu Shagari, and former head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, who intervened at his behest to get his near-Nemesis, former speaker of the House of Representative, Umar Ghali Na'abba, off his back during the second impeachment threat he was confronted with. Ask former deputy Senate president, Ibrahim Mantu, who diligently played the script of what every one knew was the president's Third Term Agenda only for the man to deny that he ever contemplated such an agenda.

Last month the clever general was the subject of the popular BBC personality interview, *Hardtalk*. Clearly he intended the interview to burnish his image as one of few world statesmen that could bring peace to the troubled Democratic Republic of Congo and its Victoria Lake region. He'd been there several times before the interview as a special envoy of the United Nations' Secretary General.

Unfortunately for him instead of burnishing his image, the interview turned in to a nightmare of sorts towards the end when the host, Stephen Sucker, raised questions about his possible implication in the Halliburton bribery scandal involving many highly placed Nigerians. I have never seen the man so angry. Such impertinence, he thundered, for Sucker to even suggest that he could be bribed! He was, after all, the only Nigerian leader to have been thoroughly probed and given a clean bill of health by the anti-corruption agencies he himself had set up.

Apparently it escaped his mind that he had used them against other leaders like former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, and although the agencies did not give their target-subjects any bill of health neither did they establish any thing against them. The clever general also forgot that as his own creatures the anti-corruption agencies were unlikely to indict him as long as he was in power, which he still is as the self-imposed chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PDP.

All of which brings me to the point of this piece. And this is that with a well known record like this how could Vice-President Atiku Abubakar have been so naïve to think it is possible, in a manner of speaking, to ever kiss and make up with his ever scheming boss, whatever agreement they had between the two of them?