

Inside Today's Daily Trust

Business

Minister of Power Lanre Babalola says 30,000mw of electricity is needed to attain Vision 20:2020 **26**

Politics

Kebbi State lawmakers disown report of an alleged N50bn debt on ex-Governor Aliero **51**

News

Zenith Bank yesterday announced the appointment of Godwin Emefiele as the new MD/CEO **3**

Jos crisis:
23,800 cows,
117 herdsman missing

Page 2



Saudi Embassy:

No visa request from MPs

By Nasidi A. Yahaya & Aisha Umar

THE Saudi Arabian Embassy in Abuja yesterday denied claims by members of the House of Representatives' 7-member panel that their proposed trip to visit President Umaru Yar'adua in Saudi Arabia was delayed by the Embas-

sy's failure to issue them with visas. The Charge d'Affairs in the Saudi Embassy Jalal Hassan O. Almagraby said the embassy has not received any visa applications from the House members.

Almagraby, who spoke at the embassy compound, said "up till this moment I am talking to you,

the embassy has not received any letter from members of the House of Representatives seeking for Saudi Arabian visa to go and see President Yar'adua at Jeddah."

He said the only requirement to accompany the visa application is that any official travelling to Saudi Arabia to visit President Yar'adua

needs to tender an official clearance letter from Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry and the embassy earlier agreed on this requirement, he said.

However, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Media and Public Affairs Rep Esemey Eyiboh (PDP, Akwa

Ibom State) told our *Daily Trust* yesterday that it is the responsibility of the National Assembly's management to process visas for the MPs. He said he was not aware if they had already communicated to the Saudi Arabian embassy.

Eyiboh had said last week that **Continued on page 5**

Sardauna visits the Emir



PHOTO: SANI MAIKATANGA

THE new Sardaunan Kano Governor Ibrahim Shekarau with his deputy Alhaji Tijjani Gwarzoo (left) and the Wamban Kano Alhaji Abbas Sanusi (right) soon after he visited the Emir Ado Bayero in Kano yesterday.

Police: 362 died in Plateau crisis

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

THE Acting Commissioner of Police in Plateau State Mr Ikechukwu Aduba said yesterday that 326 people were killed in the recent crisis in Jos, Bukuru and environs. Aduba told newsmen in Jos that the police had arrested 313 people, out of which 139 were transferred to the Force Headquarters in Abuja for investigation.

He said the suspects were transferred to Abuja due to the congestion at the state Criminal Investigation Department. When the Inspector General of Police went to Jos, he saw

the congestion and ordered that some of them be transferred to Abuja, Aduba said.

The Acting Police Commissioner said the killings were carried out in Kuru-Jenta, Tim Tim and other places, adding that the crisis had no religious connotation but was rather "an affray hijacked in the name of religion by demons with human faces."

He said the DIG Investigation was heading the investigation after which those found culpable would be brought back to Jos for prosecution according to the laws of the land.

Continued on page 5

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23,800 cows, 117 herdsmen missing –MACBAN

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

TWENTY three thousand, eight hundred cows and 117 herdsmen are missing following the crisis in Jos, Plateau State Chairman of

the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) Muhammad Nuru Abdullahi said yesterday. The chairman said at an interview in Jos that the cattle and their rearers went missing in Vom,

Forom, Bakin Kogi Panyam and other places in the state.

He alleged that the cattle were stolen while the rearers were killed by the rioting youths who attacked Muslims within the area, adding

that most of the Fulani rearers killed were below the age of 18. Muhammad Nuru stressed that their investigation had so far confirmed that 58 out of the 117 missing Fulani rearers were killed between Barkin

Ladi and Riyom area.

He called on Fulani cattle rearers from other states who graze within Plateau to stay away from the area in order to avoid being ambushed by rioters.



NIGERIAN Army troops to the UN peace support operation during the inauguration of the Peace Keeping Forward operating base in Abuja yesterday.

Police warn hospitals against refusing emergency cases

THE Imo State Police Command has warned hospitals still refusing to treat gunshot and vehicle accident victims without police report to desist. The command's spokesman, ASP Linus Nwaiwu, said in an interview with newsmen in Owerri yesterday that the refusal contravened the new government directive that such cases be handled.

He explained that the overriding aim of the directive was to save lives.

Nwaiwu said government as well as private hospitals and clinics were expected to treat the emergency cases without requesting for or insisting on the mandatory police report, cash deposit and presence of next of kin.

"In line with the new government directive on treating such victims, all government/private hospitals and clinics are expected to treat victims of gunshot and vehicle/motorcycle accident immediately they are brought into their premises. Such treatment should be done without requesting for or insisting on the mandatory requirements of police report, cash deposit and presence of next of kin," he said.

Nwaiwu said that where the identity of the patient was in doubt, especially if he was an armed robbery suspect, a report should be lodged at the police station nearest to the clinic or hospital concerned after attending to such a person.

He urged medical doctors and other health workers to adhere strictly to the new policy. (NAN)

Youths nabbed with arms in Mangu

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

SOLDIERS have arrested five youths with fire arms in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Police Public Relations Officer ASP Mohammed Lerama told newsmen yesterday that the arrested youths had been handed over to the police for investigation and prosecution. ASP Lerama said the police in collaboration with other security forces had embarked on joint patrol and under the programme revived the joint operation room for the

police and armed forces at the police headquarters. He said they required information from the public that would lead to the arrest of those who killed innocent citizens in Kuru during the recent skirmish.

He threw more light on the publication credited to the General Officer Commanding 3rd Armoured Division Major General Sale Maina that policemen were affected in the curfew. "The GOC was quoted out of context and advised that policemen including soldiers who are not on duty are not expected outside

during the curfew period as a way of checking movement to ensure that there is no confusion by uniformed men."

ASP Lerama said the Inspector General of Police had re-deployed the Commissioner of Police in charge of Police Mobile Force, Commissioner of Police Ikechukwu Aduba on special duty to Jos as the Acting Commissioner of Police in the state command while the former commissioner of police Mr Gregory Anyanting had been recalled to the force headquarters in Abuja.

Meanwhile, the General

Officer Commanding 3rd Army Division Major General Saleh Maina has described the relationship between the Army and the Police in Plateau State as cordial and commended the police for their understanding and cooperation with the military in containing the crisis in Jos and other parts of the state.

A statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer ASP Mohammed Lerama said General Maina made the remarks yesterday when he paid a visit to the new Acting Commissioner of Police in Plateau State.

Saraki swears-in Kawu as Acting Kwara CJ

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE third Acting Chief Judge of Kwara State appointed after the removal of the substantive Chief Judge 10 months ago was yesterday sworn in.

The new Acting Chief Judge, Suleiman Durosinsolun Kawu, is the son of the first Chief Judge of the state, Saidu Kawu, who retired as a judge of the Supreme Court.

It would be recalled that the former Chief Judge, Raliat Elelu-Habib, who was appointed in 2008, was removed from office in 2009

on account of alleged gross misconduct and the state government has appealed against a Federal High Court judgment that reversed her removal.

This was followed by the appointment of the first Acting Chief Judge after her removal. Joseph Fola Gbadeyan who retired four months later after clocking the mandatory retirement age of 65.

Gbadeyan was succeeded by Joseph Olatunji Bamg-bola who just concluded a six month tenure including a three-month extension granted him by the National

Judicial Council after the expiration of his first three-months.

The state governor, Bukola Saraki, at the swearing-in ceremony of Kawu, said the new Acting Chief Judge was appointed because the outgoing one could no longer have his tenure extended after six months.

"After the extension of the acting appointment (of Bamig-bola) for another three months and its subsequent expiration, another Acting Chief Judge had to be appointed because the constitution does not provide for further extension.

We are handicapped in prosecuting suspects –PLSG

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

PLATEAU State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice Edward Pwajok has said the state government is handicapped in prosecuting suspects arrested in connection with the latest crisis in the state because the police has not sent any files to his office. Pwajok who addressed newsmen in his office yesterday said this was despite the efforts made by the public prosecution department of the state's justice ministry and several meetings with the police who are in custody of the files.

"As the Plateau State Ministry of

Justice is in the dark about the status of the suspects or investigations, the state government is not in a position to act on the demand of the public including the senate on bringing to justice the perpetrators of the crimes that have occurred in Plateau State", he said.

"We are disturbed because after the November 2008 crisis, all the over 300 files that had been processed and based upon which remand orders were obtained in the courts, were taken to force headquarters, Abuja and in spite of repeated demands, no file was returned to Jos thus leading to the release of all the suspects of the 2008 Jos unrest," he added.

Jos : No soldier fired a single shot-COAS

By Benjamin Auta

NO soldier fired a single shot during the sectarian crisis rocking Jos, the Plateau State capital, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Lieutenant General Abdulrahman Bello Danbazau said yesterday.

He made the comment while fielding questions from reporters on the alleged genocide committed by soldiers sent to quell

the Jos riot. He spoke after the commissioning of Nigeria Army Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Abuja.

"We are also aware of the attempt by some people to drag the Nigerian Army, which has remained neutral but absolutely committed to the survival of our nascent democracy, into the crisis. No soldier fired a round because we have rules of engagement, and we are there to keep

peace", he said.

The Army chief who said soldiers were brought to keep the peace in the state, stated that all soldiers would account for their ammunition.

General Danbazau who described the religion of the Army as the "esprit de corps" and its tribe the "military profession" called on all Nigerians not to allow trouble makers to promote anarchy in the country.

On the five persons arrested impersonating the soldiers during the crisis, the COAS said that when they were presented to him but he found out that some of them have police identity cards. He said investigations are still on in the matter.

Speaking earlier, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike warned members of the Nigerian Armed Force to steer clear of politics and stick

to their constitutional duty.

Marshal Dike said "Meddling in political issues does not complement our constitutional role in any way, shape or form. I therefore warn all members of the armed forces to steer clear of politics".

While urging members of the armed forces to be committed to service, Air Chief Marshal Dike charged them to always the laws of other countries when on peacekeeping missions abroad.

EFCC, ICPC to spend N10b

By Boco Edet

NIGERIA'S two foremost anti-corruption agencies, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) would spend N10billion this year to finance their anti-graft activities.

The Federal Government in the 2010 budget proposal has earmarked N7.6b for the EFCC, this more than triples the amount its sister agency ICPC is receiving which is N2.3b.

It would be recalled that the House Committee on Drugs, Narcotics & Financial Crimes of the House of Representatives made a u-turn on threats to suspend EFCC from defending its budget after claiming the Commission had erred in the submission of quarterly and annual reports on budget performance.

In the budget proposal, N4.2b representing half of the total sum would finance expenditures like salaries, benefits and allowances, pension and the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

EFCC would spend N1.9b on capital projects which include the construction of cells in Ibadan, Maiduguri, Enugu and Kano. The total sum for this project stands at N60million.

Other projects include the completion of forensic laboratory N300m, completion of head office building N1.1b, completion of Gombe office N50m among others. The Commission also intends to establish North-East and South-West zonal offices expected to cost N70m.

ICPC on the other hand, would spend N988m of its total budget on expenditure items, N216m on travels and transport, N29m on utilities, N71m on materials and supplies, N80m on maintenance and N37m on training.



OKE-AFA monument where victims of the January 27, 2002 bomb blast are buried renovated. PIC: NAN

Former President Shagari speaks on Jos crisis, Yar'adua

Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

FORMER President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari has decried the recurrence of Jos crisis in plateau state, stressing that problems should be solved through consultations.

"Democracy cannot survive when the people are fighting each other", he said, adding "we should live together without any problems."

Speaking with journalists in Sokoto yesterday, the second republic president stated "if a problem arises there is always a way to solve it amicably. Even the nation's civil war came to an end

through negotiations".

Shagari said many people outside the country still wonder how Nigeria has remained a united nation irrespective of the multiplicity of languages, religion and cultures. He also recalled that the Libya's president, Muammar Gaddafi had once told him, "the population of the Arab world put together is less than that of Nigeria and we are divided".

The former president tasked people in plateau state to "remember this and be proud of it" He advised "if you have a complaint, you take it to the courts.

The process of democracy should be followed." Shagari

noted that the government and the people have a very important responsibility to try and live a normal life.

On Yar'adua health Shagari noted with concern that some Nigerians are making "a mess of the whole thing".

He added "some people are taking things a little bit too far. The president was elected and he is subjected to the constitution just like other Nigerians".

Shagari said it is difficult for Yar'adua to write a resignation letter. The constitution I think does not allow all these things going on in the country now.

He noted that the long stay

of the president in Saudi Arabia is not deliberate, pointing out "the length of the stay in hospital depends on the type of sickness."

The former president recalled that he was afflicted by an illness in 2002 which was treated in a German hospital for about three months.

According to Shagari, "it took me a long time to get rehabilitated to even know how to talk, walk and do other things."

The Former President called on Nigerians to exercise caution and patience over the illness of President Umaru Yar'Adua even as he prayed that Yar'Adua gets better and return to the country.

Zenith names Godwin Emeziele as MD/CEO designate

Assumes office August 1, 2010

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

THE Board of Directors of Zenith Bank Plc yesterday announced the appointment of Godwin Emeziele as Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer designate of the Bank. The appointment, which is subject to Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) confirmation, takes effect from August 1, 2010.

Emeziele is a pioneer staff of the Bank. He holds a BSc and an MBA in Finance from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and

is an alumnus of Stanford University, Harvard and Wharton Graduate Schools of Business. Before commencing his banking career over 23 years ago, he lectured Finance, Bank Management, and Insurance at the University of Nigeria and University of Port Harcourt.

Emeziele joined Zenith bank over 19 years ago and was appointed Deputy Managing Director in 2001. Given his pivotal role, the bank has benefited from his in-depth knowledge of finance and banking. Zenith Bank is Nigeria's second largest

bank by market capitalization (N360 billion).

The board's statement said "Emeziele's strong leadership skills will no doubt be a significant advantage as he sets in motion the combined vision for the Zenith Bank Group. The Board, with the new appointment, rests assured that shareholder value will continue to be the primary factor driving strategic thinking. The Bank continues to rely on the strength of the Board, management and all staff to sustain superior performance."



GODWIN Emeziele, new MD/CEO designate, Zenith Bank

Why Plateau CP was redeployed

By Misbahu Bashir

THE former Plateau State Commissioner of Police Gregory Anyanting was redeployed to the Police Force Headquarters Abuja because of his unguarded state-

ment on the sectarian crisis in Jos.

Sources at the Force Headquarters said the CP had to be redeployed because police authorities were embarrassed by his utterances and allegations of police bias in the crisis. "Police

leadership also want a police officer with competence in managing crimes to handle the Plateau State Command", sources said.

The Inspector General of Police Ogbonna Onovo has

approved the transfer of the former Commissioner of Police in charge the Police Mobile Force Ikechukwu Aduba to Plateau State as Acting Commissioner while Anyanting has been designated CP Special Duties.

Meanwhile the General Officer Commanding 3rd Army Division Major General Saleh Maina has in conjunction with the new CP and other security agents in the State assured safety of people.

PIX: NAN

Nine universities to access \$180 million world bank assistance

By Tina A. Hassan

THE World Bank has released the sum of \$180 million to support the evolution of nine regional Emerging Centers of Excellence in nine strategically located Universities across Nigeria. Speaking to newsmen in Abuja recently, National Coordinator of the Project Prof. Michael Adikwu said the each of the nine specially selected universities is allowed to access up to \$7 million for the transformation of some of the science courses to address specific national needs especially in science and technology research. He said the program is the second component of the Science and Technology Education Post-Basic (STEP B) program being supported by the World Bank for scientific innovations. Adikwu said the assistance is specifically for science related disciplines in each of the nine federal universities that were selected. He said some of the criteria for selecting the schools are the location and certain standards required for evolving the program.

The universities are University of Calabar, University of Nigeria Nsukka, and Federal University of Technology Akure, Federal Technology Minna, Uthman Danfodio University Sokoto, And National Research Institute for Technology, University of Maiduguri, and Obafemi Awolowo University.

EFCC seals off Ibru's mansions

By Boco Edet

ECONOMIC and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has sealed off five houses belonging to the former Managing Director of Oceanic Bank Plc, Mrs. Cecilia Ibru, in Ikoyi area of Lagos. EFCC's spokesman Femi Babafemi said the agency's operatives would seal Ibru's other seized properties today. EFCC had seized 103 properties of the former bank executive and shares in different companies and banks valued at N399 billion on January 16.

A Federal High Court in Lagos had ordered the freezing of all her bank accounts and seizure of assets held directly or indirectly for her benefit or on her behalf which EFCC had so far traced to be proceeds of economic and financial crimes.

The larger share of Ibru's assets is in Lagos where she owns 38 houses and 3 lands. They include 1 in Ikeja, 16 in Ikoyi, 5 in Victoria Island, 5 in Lekki Peninsula, 3 in Lagos Island, 8 in Lagos Mainland while the three lands are located in Lekki Peninsula.



FROM left: Principal Secretary to the President, Mr. Dave Edvebie with the Chairman, Nigeria Ports Authority, Chief Tony Anenih, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja yesterday.

Yaradua: Impeachment should be the last option— Rep

By Nasir Imam

THE Deputy Chairman House of Representatives committee on Drugs, Narcotics and Financial Crimes, Hon Bassey Etim, has said that the planned impeachment of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua by the Senate should come after all other options have failed.

Speaking on the call by former President Olusegun Obasanjo asking Yar'Adua to resign on health grounds and the decision of members of the Senate to commence an impeachment procedure of the President, Etim is of the view that the President be given sometime to recover.

He said the provisions of the Constitution are very clear on

the process of impeachment of the President which requires the 2/3 majority of members of both chambers, arguing that the Senate alone cannot impeach the president without the members of the House of Representatives.

"Section 143 of the Constitution that talks about the removal of the President or Vice President from office clearly states that a notice of any allegation in writing signed by not less than 1/3 of the members of the National Assembly shall be presented to the President of the Senate stating that the holder of the office of President or his Vice is guilty of gross misconduct in the performance of the functions of his office".

"The President of the Sen-

ate shall, within seven days of the receipt of the notice, cause a copy thereof to be served on the holder of the office and on each member of the national assembly and a statement of response by the accused served on each member of the national assembly".

"Within 14 days of the presentation of the notice to the President of the Senate, whether or not any statement was made by the holder of the office or reply to the allegations contained in the notice both chambers shall resolve by a motion without debate if such allegations shall be investigated".

Etim noted that a motion of the national assembly that the allegations be investigated in this case the health of the president

shall not be declared as having been passed, unless it is supported by the 2/3 majority of all the members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Earlier, the Court has given the Federal Executive Council FEC 14 days within which concrete decisions are taken on whether President Yar'Adua is capable of continuing in office under this circumstance or advise same to resign.

Etim cited section 144 of the constitution which also granted powers to the Federal Executive Council FEC to pass a resolution by 2/3 majority of the members of the executive council to determine if the president is no longer capable of discharging the functions of his office.

Skye Bank Board meets over appointment of new CEO

From kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

IN line with the directive of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on tenure limit for bank chief executive officers now pegged at 10 years, the Board of Directors of Skye Bank Plc is to meet soon to appoint a new Managing Director for the bank.

A statement issued by the bank said the Board is confident that all its executive directors are seasoned bankers who can seamlessly assume the mantle of leadership.

The bank explained that it was well prepared for the new development having established a robust succession and leadership development plan way back

before the new CBN directive.

In addition, the Bank noted that it has already made significant changes to its operating structure in the last couple of months to prepare and position the Bank for better performance.

More importantly, the statement said the bank is, however, very focused on aggressively pushing the market frontiers and

winning new business, as this is a new financial year.

Last week, the CBN introduced a new policy prescribing a 10-year tenure limit for chief executives of banks in the country. The new rule directs that bank chiefs who have spent over 10 years should initiate succession plans and hand over to their successors at the end of July this year.

Retirement age should be abolished - Rights group

PEOPLE should be allowed to work beyond the current retirement age and working times should be more flexible, a report by Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission said yesterday. The Commission said the default retirement age - currently 65 for a man and 60 for a woman in Britain -- was outdated.

It added that abolishing the retirement age would inject 15 billion pounds (24.2 billion dollars) into the British economy.

According to a survey, 24 per cent of men and 64 per cent of women planned to work beyond the pension age. Most older people did not want to slow down and instead wanted job promotions, the survey showed.

However, the report found that outdated working practices often forced workers into retirement early and that allowing more flexible working hours and conditions would address this.

"Radical change is what older Britons are telling us needs to happen for them to stay in the workforce," said Baroness Margaret Prosser, the Commission's deputy chairman. "Britain has experienced a skills exodus during the recession and as the economy recovers, we face a very real threat of not having enough workers." (Reuters/NAN)

362 died in Plateau crisis

Continued from page 1

Mr Aduba added that residents of Kuru said they knew the suspects because residents interviewed identified some people. He said he was not aware of the arrest of men in uniform for killing or shooting innocent citizens. The Acting CP said the mandate given to him by the Inspector General was to sustain lasting peace in the state, even though the military were fully in charge. He said the police were working with the military and that their relationship was cordial. Aduba advised residents to shun rumour mongering and work towards ensuring sustainable peace.

The Plateau state chapter of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) said yesterday that its officials rediscovered another 28 corpses at Kuru Karama and Gada Biyu, a village near Jos where 150 dead bodies were found stuffed in well two days earlier.

JNI's representative Alhaji Danjuma Khalid said there are many corpses yet to be estimated and evacuated at Gero, Sabon Gida and Dogo Nahauwa, saying that they discovered the murdered bodies yesterday when their team visited the areas. The victims were mostly women and children, he said.

Ogun Assembly passes vote of confidence on Bankole

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

OGUN state House of Assembly on Monday rose stoutly to defend the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, who the state governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel described as a curse to the state last Saturday.

Daniel while addressing party faithful at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) secretariat, in Abeokuta at the weekend accused the Speaker of being a curse to

the state for working against his administration's policy and programmes.

But, the State House of Assembly at its plenary yesterday, adopted a motion passing a vote of confidence on Bankole, noting contrary to the governor, that he is a blessing to the state in all ramifications and a worthy ambassador.

The motion under House Rule 205 titled: Motion to pass vote of confidence on Rt. Hon. Dimeji Bankole, was moved by

the Deputy Speaker, Remmy Hassan (Odogbolu) and seconded by Pelumi Adesola Olusola (Remo North). All the 15 members of the House who had been having running battles with the governor in the two years spoke in turns to condemn the statement. Only one of the G11 members, Musa Moroof was present, but his contribution could not save the situation.

The deputy Speaker in his submission stressed that the less

emphasis should be given to the messenger, but much to the message, as he went ahead to explain the meaning of the word Curse. Hassan traced the exploits of the state from the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo to the Obasanjo regime, affirming that "Ogun state has never been under any curse, but blessing. If there is a problem there is machinery for resolving such, and not for the governor describing the Speaker in such obscene language."

PHOTO: NAN



FROM left: Vice President Goodluck Jonathan with the Speaker, House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, after a meeting at the Presidential Villa, Abuja yesterday.

No visa request from MPs

Continued from page 1

visa and other travelling arrangements were responsible for the delay in the MPs' trip to Saudi Arabia. He said, "Travelling to Saudi Arabia is not like going to Lokoja or Jos. We have to apply for visas and wait for the response of the country (in this case Saudi Arabia). Therefore visa processing and other travelling arrangements like flight availability is responsible for the delay of our trip".

However, Minority Leader Mohamed Ali Ndume, who is a member of the 7-man panel, said last night that he spoke to the House Clerk, who told him that they were waiting for the Speaker Dimeji Bankole to sign the papers for the visa request before the application is lodged with the Saudi Embassy. With speculations now rife that President Umaru Yar'adua could be back in the country this week, it increasingly looks like the MPs' trip may never materialise.

The House had constituted a

six-member team to visit the ailing President in Jeddah in order to "convey the members' goodwill message and discuss other issues of national importance".

Members of the panel include Deputy House Leader Baba Shehu Agaie (PDP, Niger State), Minority Leader Mohammed Ali Ndume (ANPP, Borno State), Rep Nnenna Ukeje (PDP, Abia State), Rep Fatai Moruf (AC, Lagos State), Rep Jibril Adamu (PDP, Kaduna State) and Rep Patrick Ikhariala (PDP, Edo State).

Rep Mohammed Ali Ndume (ANPP, Borno State) yesterday said the planned trip by MPs to Saudi Arabia is fake, saying it is an attempt to waste public fund.

Ndume also said the visit is "fake, unnecessary and diversionary", pointing out that it was a plan by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to cover up its failures.

He said, "All this if you look at it critically is fake, diversionary and waste of time. Nigerians should be concentrating on asking questions on good govern-

ance. They should be asking questions on service delivery".

He however said he will partake in the trip and will brief Nigerians when they come back, adding that he will resist any plan to cover up whatever happens during the trip. He said, "They (Leadership of the House) said we should go and send goodwill message to the President. Am not a doctor; I will want to go and see and then I will tell Nigerians what I saw. And if I am not allowed to see him, I will also tell you."

He said the embassy does not have any objection about Nigerians visiting Mr. President in Saudi Arabia because the embassy is at the service of all Nigerians and Saudi Arabia is open to all Nigerians provided the procedure is followed, that is, getting a clearance letter from Ministry of Foreign affairs.

He stated, "Any official who comes to the embassy with a note from the foreign ministry will not encounter delay in getting visa. In fact, in a few hours the visa would

be made available for the applicant." He said many people have gone and even last Friday, some Nigerians were given visa to travel to Saudi Arabia to see the President.

He said according to the information the embassy has about President Yar'adua, he is in Saudi Arabia receiving treatment, but information his health "is with Nigerian officials."

"Saudi is always happy to host people and not to talk of Nigeria's president because it is part of Arab culture to be hospitable. I am assuring Nigerians that President Yar'adua is receiving treatment in one of the best hospitals in Saudi Arabia," the charge said.

He said "the Embassy is careful and serious in giving the right information. That is why we have been silent for a long time." He said "even journalists who want to go to Saudi Arabia to write report on the health of Yar'adua are allowed, but will have to follow through Saudi Arabian foreign ministry requirement."

Jos: Aliyu questions official negligence

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

GOVERNOR Muazu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State has called for the trial of those in positions of authority who refused to use such positions to quickly stop the recent mayhem in Jos, Plateau State.

Aliyu made the call yesterday

when a delegation of traditional leaders from the Federal Capital Territory led by the chairman of FCT council chiefs, Ona of Abaji, Alhaji Baba Yunusa.

"This is the third time in two years that such human carnage is taking place in Jos and if we do not take time it will spiral out of con-

trol and a way towards ending this whole matter is to start trying people. We must hold people responsible, especially those who are in positions of authority in Jos since they refused to act towards finding a lasting solution to the massacre in the place", he said. Aliyu maintained that the problem in

Jos was not caused by religion but attributed it to politics, adding that people hide under such crises to perpetuate self-centred objectives at the detriment of the lives of others. "Why must we always perceive people from the divides of Muslim or Christian, the Jos crises, contrary to general understand-

ing, is not that of religion but definitely that of other interests from self-centred individuals", he said.

He said Niger State was under constant surveillance, adding that it was necessary to do so as preventing crisis is easier and better than stopping one that has gone out of control.

Make findings of past inquiries public, forum tells FG

From Yahaya Ibrahim, Maiduguri

THE Borno Muslim Forum has called on the Federal Government to make findings of past commissions of inquiry on the persistent religious crises in Jos and implement the recommendations.

The forum in a statement signed by its Secretary, M. B Ibrahim expressed sympathy with those affected. The forum said the entire Muslims of Borno State were seriously disturbed by the persistent happenings in Jos.

"We are making a clarion call on the authorities and other stakeholders to look into the immediate and remote causes of the current crisis to bring the culprits to bear the wrath of the law," the statement said.

It noted that any bonafide citizen was under the protection of the state to contribute his quota to the development of the country.

They called on the Plateau State government to accept the responsibility to resettle, rehabilitate and compensate all those who fled or were forced to leave their homes.

Police dispel reprisal rumour in Kebbi

From Ismail Adebayo, Birnin-Kebbi

KEBBI State Police Commissioner Alhaji Muhktari Ibrahim has dispelled rumours that some people were planning a reprisal over the Jos crisis in Birnin Kebbi.

The commissioner while briefing newsmen in Birnin Kebbi said what some people perceived as riot was a mere demonstration by commercial motorcyclists in the state over one of their members who was killed by armed robbers in an attempt to steal his motorcycle.

The police boss said the commercial motorcyclist, Aliyu Aminu Gwandu, was approached by the armed robbers, Yusuf Suleiman and Mudashir Bala, to take one of them to Abacha New Bye Pass in Birnin Kebbi. When they got there, he said, that Suleiman instead of giving the motorcyclist his fare stabbed him in the stomach in order to snatch his motorcycle.

Security men attached to the legislative quarters heard the cry of the victim and immediately rushed to the scene with two police officers and arrested him as he attempted to flee.



GOVERNOR Danjuma Goje of Gombe State (third right) with the Minister of Works, Housing and Urban Development Dr. Hassan Muhammad Lawal (third right), when the governor took the Minister around to inspect some road projects in the state.

How we were rounded up — Village head of Kuru Karama

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

THE Village Head of Kuru Karama in Plateau State Malam Umar Mai Unguwa Baza yesterday said his village was surrounded by over 15,000 youths who attacked them despite efforts to curtail the crisis in the area.

Malam Umar said in an interview with our correspondent in Jos that the village which was surrounded by other villages made up mostly of Beroms was attacked early Tuesday after a meeting with various community leaders in the area. According to Malam Umar, "When we heard that there was crisis in Jos, we decided to hold a meeting of district heads, the Inspector in charge of the area, pastors and imams. At the end of

the meeting we concluded that we were not going to fight among ourselves and if any person from outside comes to fight, the Christians or Muslims in the area would be held responsible".

Malam Umar added, "But I later realized that the agreement might not work because I started seeing some youths roaming around our village, we tried to make some efforts to alert their head, but before we even reached him at his house around 10am in the morning they started attacking us". He added that the fighting which started at 10am did not stop until 6pm when security men intervened, adding that youths including women numbering about 15,000 surrounded their village with guns, machetes, gallons

of petrol and started killing people and burning their houses. "They were brought in Hilux vans from different areas with gallons of petrol, bottles, machetes and guns which they used in killing our people and burning our houses".

Malam Umar who at the time of compiling this report told our correspondent that he didn't know where his wife was, further alleged that he heard the youths saying that their leaders gave them 24 hours to finish the entire village. On how he was able to escape, Malam Umar said, "I was rescued by some security agents who were deployed from Jos to the area, but two of my sons have been badly wounded, while up till now I have not seen my wife and thousands of people were displaced". He

also said, "The number of people killed in Kuru village is over 300, including 80 children of between the ages of 3 and 4 years. Our herds have been looted by the rioting youths while our cars have been set ablaze". Malam Umar also alleged that the dead bodies were later removed and dumped inside wells by the youths. He also alleged that some policemen and members of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were seen evacuating the bodies and dumping them in a nearby river.

"I believe it was a conspiracy by mere looking and their leaders were aware of the attack as it looked well planned because they were brought in Hilux vans from other areas", he said.

1,265 orphans, 213 widows in Bauchi camps

From Isa Umar Gusau, Maiduguri

ON thousand two hundred and sixty five children whose fathers may have been killed in the Jos have been registered in two separate relief camps in Boto, Bauchi State. 213 women whose husbands may have also been killed were equally registered at the camps. They were among over 3,000 victims of the crisis who fled some places in Jos to seek refuge in Bauchi.

Our correspondent gathered from relief workers that registration of widows and orphans which commenced Sunday revealed that 54 widows were taking refuge at the Boto Central Primary School camp and 279 orphans were also there while at the Boto Government Secondary School

camp, 159 widows and 986 orphans were recorded at the close of the registration exercise around 3.00 pm Sunday.

The Public Relations Officer of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for North-east zonal office in Maiduguri Ibrahim Farinloye confirmed the records to our correspondent yesterday.

The victims fled Gembo, Panyam, Gura, Galeji, Gega, Lati, Dorowa, Fandadi, Ampank, Maijuju, Gindiri, Mararaba, Kadimu, Bugel, Nachoge, Kachunu and other places in Barikin Ladi, Mangu and Pankshin South of Plateau State during the crisis. NEMA said in a press release issued by its spokesman yesterday that the victims had appealed to be re-settled in Bauchi preferring never to return to their houses in Plateau State anymore.

AC suggests ways to curb violence in Nigeria

By Muideen Olaniyi

THE best way to end the wave of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria is to bring perpetrators to book and remove the conditions that have fertilized the recurring inter-cine violence, the Action Congress suggested yesterday.

AC's reaction was sequel to the resurgence of violence in Jos, which has left hundreds dead or

injured, warning that the crisis is pushing Nigeria to the brink.

The party's National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, also warned that the international community, especially the US which has included Nigeria in the list of 'countries of interest', will continue to see Nigeria as a hotbed of religious violence.

He said that while the recurring violence ultimately acquires

an ethnic and religious tone, the truth is that some unscrupulous, do-or-die politicians are behind the crisis, which has long given Nigeria a bad name.

"These politicians, who aid and abet these destructive acts for their own selfish purpose, have always worked behind the scene to shield those behind the senseless orgy of killing, maiming and destruction, or how else can we

interpret the fact that most, if not all, perpetrators of these killings have gone scot-free, emboldened to strike another day at the time and place of their own choosing?

"How many people have been brought to book over the 2008 crisis in Jos? Who has been punished for the Boko Haram violence that swept several states last year? Is it not true that all that the authorities

have done is to parade a few raggedy folks as those who have been arrested for perpetrating violence, only for the issue to die quietly until the next conflagration?", he queried.

AC said the authorities must also move beyond their current practice, in which they only react and issue threats long after the violence has ruined lives and property.

Austin Opara, Governor Uduaghan, others discuss electoral reforms

By Abbas Jimoh

FORMER Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chief Austin Opara, will today lead other political bigwigs, especially from the South - South geo-political zone, to brainstorm over the clamour for enduring electoral reforms in the country.

Opara would be a major participant at a one-day workshop on electoral reform in Nigeria, themed, "Targeting the Mindset of Politicians", in Asaba, Delta State.

Other politicians billed to speak at the workshop put together by the BTT consulting, in collaboration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), include the Delta State Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, the Chancellor of the Eastern Mandate Union (EMU) and National Chairman of the Peoples Mandate Party (PMP), Dr. Arthur Agwuncha Nwankwo.

INEC chairman, Prof. Maurice Iwu would be delivering an address at the occasion which the organizers said is targeted at proffering solutions to the lingering electoral problems in Nigeria.

Co-coordinator of BTT consulting, Hon. Ejike Nwankwo, said one of the major objectives of the workshop is "gaining access in to the mindset and attitude of the political class in Nigeria".



Mrs Maryam Gada (left) receiving DAG Hammarskjold medals for her later husband, Maj. Shehu from the President, Nigerian Army Officers Wives' Association, Mrs Hadiza Danbazau during the inauguration of the Peace Keeping Forward Operating Base in Abuja yesterday.

PIC: NAN

Unsafe abortion contributes to 68,000 maternal deaths annually - WHO

THE World Health Organization has said disclosed that about 68,000 women die every year due to unsafe abortions.

A survey released on Monday by the WHO and the Reproductive Health Research (RHR) said most of these deaths occur in the developing countries, especially Africa.

The report said that the rate of unmet need for contraception was highest in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

The WHO and the RHR conducted the survey on the back-drop of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to ascertain progress of the fifth goal which is

on maternal mortality.

The survey, made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), revealed that about 42 million unintended pregnancies got terminated each year, half of which were through unsafe abortions.

"Unsafe abortions kill an estimated 68,000 women every year which represents 13 per cent of all pregnancy-related deaths.

"Nearly all unsafe abortions, 97 percent, take place in low and middle-income countries," the report said. The decline in the maternal mortality ratio, according to the report, has been slow and uneven.

The report said there had been a

decline of 0.1 per cent of mortality rate between 1990 and 2005 in sub-Saharan Africa. The report said the greater declines in mortality rates were in East Asia, North Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

"None of the countries or regions reached the rate per year of 5.5 per cent required to achieve the MDGs target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015," the report said.

According to the report, about eight million of the estimated 210 million women who get pregnant each year experience life-threat-

ening complications. "Every year, 536,000 women die of pregnancy complications and during child birth and 99 per cent of these deaths occur in developing countries, making maternal mortality the health statistic with the greatest disparity between developed and developing countries," the report said.

Measures taken so far to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates include universal access to skilled attendants at childbirth, emergency obstetric care, postpartum care, discouraging unsafe abortion, and widening contraceptive choices.

(NAN)

Nigeria donates \$1.5m to Haiti quake victims

By AbdulMutallib A. Abubakar

THE Federal Government has donated \$1.5 million (N222 million) to the victims of Haiti earthquake where more 75,000 people were said to have lost their lives, the

Minister for Foreign Affairs Ojo Maduakwe said. The Minister who spoke to BBC in London en route New York where he will deliver the government's assistance said Haitians deserved moral and financial support to overcome the devastating

effect of the earthquake.

When he was asked why the country did not act earlier, the Minister responded that "giant prefer to move than to shout particularly those that want to make a remarkable impact" adding that the

affected individuals in one of the black countries in the world deserve the sympathy of all and sundry not too much noise. He also stated that the money was the first step in the form of assistance he will deliver to the victims on behalf of the govern-

ment and Nigerian people.

Maduakwe however said whenever he returns to the country they would ask Nigerians to give their personal donations of funds and food in order to relieve their brothers and sisters in the Caribbean nation.

Bafarawa's case stalls in Sokoto court

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

HEARING in the case brought before a Sokoto State High Court by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

against former Governor Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa and others was yesterday stalled following the industrial action by the Judicial Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN). The court therefore adjourned

the case till March 1, 2010. Speaking with journalists at the court premises, Bafarawa's counsel, Rickey Tarfa, said they all agreed to the adjournment as the judge did not have access to the case file

and records due to the strike by JUSUN. All those who came for the case yesterday including journalists, lawyers, security operatives and politicians were unable to gain entrance into the court

premises as all the gates were locked. It was after some hours that the Chief Registrar Bala Muhammed Gusau arrived and asked that the lock on one of the gates be cut open.



PIC: AFOLABI SOTUNDE

FROM left: Indian Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Murlidhar Deora, Minister of State for Petroleum Odein Ajumogobia and Special Adviser to President on Petroleum Matters, Dr. E.O. Egbogah, during the Indian minister's visit to Abuja yesterday.

Aliyu harps on respect for constitution

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

GOVERNOR of Niger State, Dr. Mua'zu Babangida Aliyu has called on Nigerians to respect the constitution.

He said the constitution was clear on the presidency, maintaining that there is no zoning in it. "We must respect the constitution even if it is imperfect until we are able to amend it as the issue of rotation of presidency is not in the constitution as it is only a PDP affair to have their candidates zoned in elections", he said.

Speaking on the debate about the Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan having full powers to operate while the president is away, Dr. Aliyu who was receiving a delegation of emirs from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) said constitutionally, the vice president should take over while the president is away. He called on Nigerians and the political class to eschew segregation between the two religious groups in the country, saying the lives of 150 million people could be at stake if such acts are allowed to continue.

"Are we to compromise the lives of 150 million people because of a party constitution and why must we determine leaders from religious background? Kingibe and Abiola were Muslims when they ran on same ticket as president and vice president. The Nigerian constitution is very specific about certain issues in the country and that includes that of the president when he is not on seat as it allows the vice president to take over pending when the president comes back", he said.

He advised the political elite to probe the condition the president was before leaving the country, adding that it would be preposterous to demand a hand written letter from him.

Aremu tasks northern govts on crisis mgt

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE Northern Governors Forum must ensure peace in the region and isolate any Forum member who cannot guarantee peace, Vice President of the NLC Issa Aremu has said. Reacting to the latest crisis that led to the killing of hundreds of person in Jos, Aremu said,

"Governor Jang exhibited gross incompetence and unacceptable indifference in the crisis. Given that it is now the military that is enforcing law and order in Plateau State, Governor Jang must go because he is no more in charge as a governor. Plateau is not different from other states in the country such as Kaduna and Kano.

But since the unfortunate system failures of 2000 in Kaduna, the state governors have commendably maintained peace from Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi to Arc. Namadi Sambo. What is good for Kaduna is good for Plateau and Bauchi States".

While urging security agencies in the country to wake up to

their responsibility of protecting the lives of the citizenry, Aremu said authorities charged with the security of lives and property must justify their pay.

He advised workers and all Nigerians not to be willing tools for senseless defence and acrimony, but should demand for justice for the victims.

Falana flays wealth display for Anambra guber

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Awka

HUMAN rights lawyer and National Chairman of the National Conscience Party (NCP) Mr Femi Falana has condemned the display of wealth by political parties for the February 6, 2010 gubernatorial election, saying the voters should reject them.

Speaking in Awka, Anambra State during a meeting of the NCP, Falana said only the NCP gubernatorial candidate, Ken Nwuba, was really "self made" and running for the position on his own merit. At Ndichie Square in

Awka while presenting the party's candidate, Falana urged the people of Anambra to cast protest votes against the elite who he said had kept them in perpetual bondage.

He noted that the NCP is a party synonymous with the down trodden, and had remained steadfast in fighting their cause even though it had never been in power. He also reminded voters that the founder of the party, late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, stood for the same cause until he died last year.

"You people should not vote for people who only remember to share money to you when there is elec-

tion. Do not vote for them because that money you see is your collective money. They do not even know what your problems are because they do not live here, they live in Abuja. NCP is presenting to you, your own son, who has been with you, and knows what your problems are. He is the only one who will truly remember you when he gets to power. If the other candidates bring their money, accept it because it is yours, but when you go to the polls, vote Ken Nwuba." Falana urged.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the meeting, the National Secretary of the party Mallam

Yinusa Tanko said,

"We deliberated on how to deliver our candidate for the Anambra governorship election. This is the main reason we brought this meeting to Awka. We cannot stay in Abuja like other parties and deliberate on an Anambra issue. We are a grassroots party, and we decided to see the people at the grassroots ourselves rather than letting them hear us only on the pages of newspapers." Tanko said the party was seriously mobilizing towards winning the election, and had been doing a lot of sensitization at the grassroots.

Commission organises prayers for dead teachers

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

THE Ogun State Teaching Service Commission yesterday in Abeokuta organized special prayers for four teachers in the state who died in a road crash at

the weekend.

The deceased, Mrs. Osinowo, Mr. Saula, Mr. Adejumo and Mrs. Akiode, all teachers of the Abeokuta Girls Grammar School died in a road crash along the Abeokuta-Sagamu road, after the bus conveying them and

nine others from an event in Epe area of Lagos back to Abeokuta crashed.

Nine others who sustained various degrees of injuries are still at the state General Hospital, Ijaiye receiving treatment.

When our Correspondent visited the school yesterday, the

atmosphere was solemn as students, teachers and non-teaching staff were seen wailing uncontrollably.

The state Chairman of the commission Akogun Olusegun Okeowo and other officials of the commission and the state Ministry of Education were also

in tears while the prayers lasted. A staff of the school who led the prayer session, prayed for the repose of the souls of the teachers.

Three of the teachers, Mrs. Osinowo, Mrs. Akiode and Mr. Adejumo have already been buried in their hometowns.



PARTICIPANTS of Course 82, Command and Staff College, Jaji, who visited Government House, Ibadan yesterday.

Jigawa govt condemns Jos crisis, donates to victims

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

THE Jigawa State government has donated N10 million to the indigenes of the state who were affected by the recent Jos crisis, just as it condemned the crisis. A statement signed by the Director of Press to the state Governor, Mallam Umar Kyari, said the donation was to alleviate the sufferings of the victims.

The statement added that the Emir of Dutse Dr. Muhammad Nuhu Sanusi was expected to give the money to the victims in Jos.

The statement added that the emir was also asked to assess the level of loss Jigawa indigenes suffered to enable government know how best to help them.

The Jigawa State government also called on authorities concerned to thoroughly investigate the matter and bring those behind the crisis to book.

The government further urged the Federal Government and Plateau State government to take steps to forestall a reoccurrence.

It consoled families of those who lost their lives in the crisis.

The Jigawa State government also called on authorities concerned to thoroughly investigate the matter and bring those behind the crisis to book

Nasarawa community decries police arrests, detention

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

THE people of Agwatashi district of Obi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State are lamenting over alleged police interest in the tussle over the traditional Osoho stool of Olosoho still pending at a Lafia High Court.

Some members of the community decried the arrest of some people in connection with the Christmas Day murder and arson in the community, saying it was targeted at one of the parties in the legal tussle.

The state Police Commis-

sioner Shehu Babalola had ordered the arrest of those suspected to have been part of the Christmas Day disturbances two weeks ago.

Nine persons were arrested with the commissioner saying, the command was still investigating the death of a youth in the incident.

Babalola told our correspondent that the yet to be sworn-in chief who was taken to court for illegally laying claims to the stool, was present when the shooting took place, but added that he was not arrested.

But counsel to Mr. Peter Ashiki who is laying claim to the stool, Barrister Boniface Ekeke, yesterday, alleged that the police commissioner was tilting the case to favour the Dr. Apeshi-led group.

The lawyer condemned the arrest of some people in the Ashiki group, saying,

"My clients are law abiding and that is why they did not take laws into their hands to oppose the naming of Apeshi as the chief.

They went to court to ask it to declare Peter Ashiki as chief

because four out of the five king-makers voted for him while Apeshi got only one vote", he said.

Barrister Ekeke appealed to the police commissioner to allow the detainees bail.

The police commissioner said the detainees could be granted bail, but that he was afraid they would return to the community and spark up fresh crisis.

He said he wanted Peter Ashiki to write an undertaking on behalf of the nine arrested that if released, they would not provoke a fresh crisis.

Gumel emir assures of PDP victory

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

THE Emir of Gumel in Jigawa State Alhaji Ahmad Muhammad Sani has assured victory for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the forthcoming local government election, saying, "PDP will capture all the local

governments in my domain". Speaking while receiving Governor Sule Lamido in his palace, the emir said, "Going by history, Gumel is a PDP territory and no other party has ever won election here.

Therefore, we shall do everything possible to ensure that we

capture all the available seats".

He called on the electorates to conduct themselves in a civilised manner to ensure a hitch free election, noting that violence and rancour during elections were no longer fashionable.

Earlier, Governor Lamido

said they were in the palace to pay homage and seek the blessing of the emir ahead of the February 13, local government polls.

He said they were determined to recapture majority if not all the local governments so that the leadership would con-

tinue with the good work they had started, adding that continuity in governance would go a long way in ensuring steady democracy.

Gumel Senatorial district has the largest number of local government councils with about 12 out of the 27 councils in the state.

Guinea, Niger political situation, setback in the region

By Aisha Umar

ECOWAS President Dr Mohammed Ibn Chamas has said that the fragile political situation in Guinea and Niger in 2009, increased in human trafficking, drugs and influx of light arms and weapons in the sub-region are some of the factors responsible for setbacks in the development and integration process in the sub-region.

At 7th annual ECOWAS/ development partners coordinating meeting held yesterday in Abuja, he noted that development partners have contributed greatly to the achievements of the organisation hence the need to strengthen cooperation between ECOWAS and its partners through the annual meeting.

Chamas explained that the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, ECOWAP,

and The Joint Financing Agreement plan were created to provide functional tools by which various partnership interventions and regional programmes can be promoted.

"The meeting is also aimed particularly at identifying our respective roles in the coordination of our efforts in order to achieve a harmonious implementation of the ECOWAS integration programmes".

The Spanish Ambassador to Nigeria

Angela Losada said for ECOWAS Commission to improve on its trade liberalisation, it must eliminate obstacles to free movement of people, goods and remove non-tariff barriers in the Region.

According to the Spanish Ambassador, for ECOWAS to successfully build a sub-regional market it has to prioritise its integration policies as well as double efforts aimed at monitoring the effectiveness of existing trade mechanisms.



FROM left: Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Bexaleel Development Initiative, Mr. Olanrewaju Aladeitan, Head Consultant, Restore Human Development Consultant, Mrs. Nneka Akwunwa, Head, Corporate Affairs Development, Unity Bank, Mr. Aliyu Matang during the Unity Bank Brand Public Endorsement session in Abuja yesterday.

WRAPA wants legislation against violence

By Akor Ojoma

THE passage of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Bill will address all forms of discrimination, abuses and denials suffered by women and other vulnerable groups in the country, Secretary-General of the Women Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative, Mrs Saudatu Mahdi has said.

Speaking at the weekend at a stakeholders meeting on the Harmonised Bill on Violence against Women by the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW), a network of 55 civil societies, religious and international human right

groups, Mahdi said although there are provisions in the Criminal and Penal Codes applicable in Southern and Northern Nigeria, there was a need for a compendium that cater for a wide range of offences and remedies that address the violations suffered by women and girls in Nigeria.

She said: "Because of efforts by law makers, individuals and front-line organizations in pushing for a law that punishes gender violence and offers redress to survivors of such violence, a total of 9 Bills on gender violence were laid before both the Senate and House of Representatives between May 1999 and April 2008."

She said the forum was convened

to design a productive line of action on way forward for the harmonised bill, set up working team for the thematic group and strategise on the long term modus operandi for the group in carrying out its responsibilities.

She said the proposed title of the bill is in consideration of concerns that previous Bills focused on protection of women only. "Consequently, the title of the Harmonised Bill was reviewed to incorporate a gender neutral stance as well as the fact that men and boys also suffer some forms of violations by women and men in state and non-state capacities among other provisions."

Anambra: Candidate sues party for unlawful substitution

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin

AN Abuja federal High court will rule on whether it has jurisdiction to entertain the suit challenging the African Liberation Party (ALP) for substituting the 2010 governorship candidate of the party in Anambra state, Clement Imoyeto Ikeotuonye for Mike Nwafor.

The plaintiff claimed that the conduct of the polls on February 6, 2010 without him would destroy the subject matter of his suit.

Counsel to the plaintiff, Ibe Ikwechegh in an originating summons told the court to order the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from recognizing any other candidate except him for the Anambra State governorship elections in the state.

He is also seeking the court's declaration for perpetual injunction restraining INEC from conducting the Anambra State governorship election which notice was published on September 8, 2009 except those

whose names appeared in its list and who must have contested and won the parties' primaries.

Consequently he asked the court to declare that him as the authentic governorship candidate of the 3rd defendant and the substitution of the plaintiff with the name of the defendant is null and void.

He expressed surprise that his name did not appear in the final list of the candidates for the February 2010 Anambra Governorship Election.

Okorocho faults Obasanjo on Yar'adua's resignation

By Muideen Olaniyi

A former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential aspirant, Owelle Rochas Okorocho, has said former President Olusegun Obasanjo lacked the moral right to ask ailing president Umaru Musa Yar'adua to resign.

He said this was on the account of the role Obasanjo played in bringing about the Yar'adua presidency.

Okorocho recalled that at the party's convention in Obasanjo vehemently

rebuffed attempts by other aspirants from addressing the delegates just to make way for Yar'adua, adding the governors running for the president were literally forced to step down and even threatened some of them with EFCC.

The former adviser to ex-President Obasanjo on Inter Party Affairs, said calling on Yar'adua to resign at this critical time that Nigeria is experiencing high political tension, is capable of creating an uprising and destabilizing the polity.

NIS to commence registration of security guards, others

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

THE Nigerian Immigration Service will soon begin the biometric registration of security guards otherwise called maiguards and other non-Nigerians across the country.

The Comptroller General of Immigration, Mr. Chukwurah Udeh who made this known yesterday stated that the exercise would commence in the first quarter of this year.

The CG who spoke through the Assistant Comptroller of Immigration Public Relation Officer, Ekpeme King said the purpose of the registration is to enhance the internal security in the country and to provide a data base of all foreigners resident in Nigeria.

He said Immigration will register only Africans, adding it already had a database for all Non-Africans resident in Nigeria.

He said the exercise is not aimed at removing illegal aliens from the country but it will benefit both the Non-Nigerian and Nigerians alike and also save the country from cross border

crime.

"Most people for example they cannot give the second name of maiguard working for in his house. If anything bad happen, he cannot trace him any longer. Sometime you may find that some of those people committed a crime back in their country." He said

He added that the exercise would also help in curbing child labour, trafficking, and other illegal activities in the country.

He also said, "The registration will be of immense benefit for aliens as there will be official records to prove that they are resident in Nigeria and therefore entitled for Federal Governments protection and other benefits that accrue to them in line with international practices."

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as FATIMA ABUBAKAR, now wish to be called FATIMA IBRAHIM DASUKI. Former documents remain valid. The general public to take note.

Online Reactions

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ON www.dailytrust.com



Ibru engaged 19,000 unwanted workers - CBN

ALL these were done under the watchful eyes of Soludo whom the PDP has now picked and given the ticket for governorship of a state? How can things be good in Nigeria if people that the world suspects are corrupt are the same ones 'forced' on people? ... Very unfortunate. All the crises in Nigeria, be it religious, ethnic or whatever has their root from the imposition of candidates on people during election there by strengthening sectarianism and grief among the people of this country. One thing we failed to take heed to in Nigeria is that "what goes around comes around". Nobody can be an Island. What you do today will certainly haunt you tomorrow as long as you are still alive! Let us be honest and do what is right!

Aji Isuwa Suleiman
suleimanaji@yahoo.com

This is the best thing to happen to the banking sector so far. It is good we discovered the ugly trends in the sector early, saving us the heartache of another batch of failed banks. Kudos to the CBN Governor.

Mikhail
hafmims@yahoo.com

Unwanted? Is that how you describe the Nigerian graduates who have made this industry what it is today? Besides, the industry as a whole just sacked over 8,000 staff. Is the CBN waiting for the bank to sack another 19,000, since they are now being labeled 'unwanted'? How can someone take delight in taking jobs rather than of creating them?

Brainy
brainy@fitch.com

One of the clearest indications of an economy in recession heading for collapse is without doubt the high level of unemployment which Nigeria has been ignoring since the 1980's. The Government seems to have turned a total deaf ear to calls from local and international experts concerned to, as a matter of emergency, tackle youth unemployment or face dire consequences on the entire socio-economic fabric of the Nation. It therefore baffles me beyond imagination that the Chief Manager of the Nigerian economy (the CBN Governor) does not see anything wrong in discharging young Nigerians from jobs magnanimously created by a patriotic banking sector. Ibru should be rewarded for contributing to job creation rather than being hounded by CBN.

Paul Tase
ahokahormo@yahoo.com

Failed burglar's defence

IT is now obvious that Chief Obasanjo's comment at the 7th trust annual dialogue has proven and exposed the mischief he is up to.

Ahmed Ibrahim
ahmedibrahim2488@yahoo.com

Yar'adua returns home this week

THANK almighty God that our humble president will be back soon and I know now that his enemies will be put to shame.

Hosea Shehu Yumana
brainboy.brain@yahoo.com

May Allah (S.W.T.) make it so. We wish him a safe return to the country. We also wish that he should have a strong ability of carrying out his duty diligently and efficiently.

Abubakar Chika Maru
abubakarsuleiman2009@yahoo.com

It is nice to hear that Mr President is coming home. God bless him & God bless Nigeria.

Ramakrishna
ramakrishna_badhei@yahoo.co.in

God has disappeared from the conscience of Nigerian leaders.

As it stands now, I doubt if President Yar'adua will ever be allowed to do his job again. In fact, I doubt if he is actually coming back this week. Something is going on that we all don't know about yet but it will all be public knowledge

Ubah John
ubajohn2003@yahoo.com

I would like to appeal to our respectful senators to act with expedience in any matter that involve governance for the unity and betterment of this country. Remember, Mr President is not supernatural. All what we will do is to pray for his quick recovery, and hope that he will come back to us hale and hearty.

Zanna Bukar Gashua
bukar.zanna@yahoo.com



PRESIDENT Umaru Yar'adua

PDP tackles former President: Obasanjo is ridiculous

AS the initiator of the flawed process that brought Umaru to power, Chief Obasanjo should not be talking of morality and honour.

Babangida Dangora
babangidadangora@yahoo.com

I wonder which one is more harmful to the nation between Obasanjo's opinions and the PDP's style of politics. Time will tell.

Imam Inuwa Gwale
iigimam@yahoo.com

I attended the 7th Annual Trust Dialogue, and heard the former president talking. What he said, and the circumstances that led to that speech do not warrant the comments being made about it since then. May be some people just don't want him to talk at all.

Adzu Midlu
adzumails@yahoo.com



FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo

I wish that the ruling People's Democratic Party will allow Nigerians to quietly lick the wounds of bad leadership that has been inflicted on the country.

Chukwuma
chuks@yahoo.com

How we escaped from Kuru Jenta, by witness

THIS is a very sad story. But this survivor should be given special cover as he said that he knows the culprits or else he will surely be silenced by their masters. He will be a handy weapon when the case comes up at The Hague.

Muhammad Mahmud
muhd.muhammad@yahoo.com

Government must sit up and do something decisive. It is not good enough setting up panel after panel. I believe government knows the big men who are stoking these crises. They should be arrested and dealt with if not, it would abate and continue later.

Nnamdi Nwachuku
prettydinxven@yahoo.com

But come to think of it what is the real cause of these barbaric acts? It is not a fight for religion but the greed of few people who use this means for their selfish aims.

Tell me who among our leaders in the North loves Islam more than Sir Ahmadu Bello or the Sardauna did? But they still choose the path of peace in their time and that is the reason why they were able to keep the North



PLATEAU State Governor Jonah Jang

together. Our leaders should not destroy what had been their strength (numbers) to satisfy personal greed.

Destruction awaits any man/woman and their families who has had a hand in the instability we are facing in this part of the country.

Jaff
jaffar@consultant.com

N200b Agric Fund: FG approves 5 more banks

IT is quite unfortunate that the government has consistently neglected the inclusion of development finance institutions in implementing some of its current development programmes especially those that affect the real sector. The Agricultural Cooperative

& Rural Development Bank being an agricultural financing institution of the government deserves to be included as one of the banks to disburse the fund. The Ministry of Agriculture & Water Resources being the supervisory ministry should take a second look at this

suggestion, particularly when some of the recently bailed out banks are being given opportunity to participate in the management of the fund, except it is a deliberate ploy to kill the NACRDB.

Cyril Okoye
cyrilokoye@yahoo.com

Gunmen abduct Edo CAN chairman

THIS is serious. Even Bishops are not spared? So how do the abductors want his family to get N50million?

Aji Isuwa Suleiman
suleimanaji@yahoo.com



By Yushau A. Shuaib

In defence of Abdul Mutallab

I admire the American and British governments and people for uniquely defending their citizens around the world, even when accused of criminality. They maintain the innocence of their citizens to ensure justice is done until decided otherwise by the court of law.

Recently there was a case of Meredith Kercher, a British girl schooling in Rome who was killed by Amanda Knox, her American roommate over drug-induced sex game. The case was decided in Italy where the crime was committed. The American and British press actively engaged one another in campaigns to support their respective citizens in the case. At the end the American lady Amanda Knox who is 22, was sentenced to 26 years in an Italian prison for killing Meredith. The debate still goes on.

The latest incident that gives us food for thought is that of Akmal Shaikh, a 53 year-old British citizen, though of Asian origin who was executed by Chinese government for drug trafficking. Not only did the ordinary Britons and their press campaign for leniency in favour of the suspect, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown personally mounted a campaign that persuaded the European Union to strongly condemn the execution of British citizen who was put to death by lethal injection for trafficking four kilograms of heroin. Gordon Brown, as the leader spoke, wrote and pleaded with his counterpart in China before the execution, claiming that the convict suffered from

The latest was a statement by EU deeply regretting that China did not heed repeated calls by Britain and the EU for clemency

bipolar disorder and was lured into carrying the drugs by the promise of a pop music career in China. The latest was a statement by EU deeply regretting that China did not heed repeated calls by Britain and the EU for clemency.

The essence for the above scenarios is to point out that there is pride in defending the integrity of a country and its citizens, even as suspects pending the determination of cases against them in competent Courts of jurisdiction.

The embarrassing attempted suicide bombing of a Detroit-bound flight from Amsterdam on Christmas Day by a young Nigerian; Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, caught the global community in unbelievable frenzy, because, Nigerians' notoriety has never reached a level of suicide bombing. It is worthy to note that the father of the suspect is a respected banker and retired top public functionary in Nigeria who had alerted the relevant security agencies of his son's untoward behaviour before the incident. This is an exemplary conducts which demonstrate that Nigerians and other Abdul Mutallabs are not fanatical and insane to encourage or undertake unnecessary suicidal expedition.

It is very unfortunate that immediately the news was broken that the bomb

suspect was a Muslim from Northern Nigeria, many self-pride bloggers and commentators with hidden agenda use the incidence to attack a section of the country and adherents of Islamic faith. So painful was their insinuation that they poured out balderdash to call for secession of the country and rained insults on the family of young Abdul Mutallab. In law, a suspect is presumed innocent until proven otherwise by a competent court, yet some Nigerians continued to sensationalise the incident with sectional and religious sentiments which exemplified our backwardness in public discourse. To one's bewilderment, foreign media and analysts exhibit more constraint in associating the conduct of the child to the character of Nigeria just as President Barak Obama of USA, pointed out that the boy was trained and armed in a foreign land, Yemen.

One of the organisations that shamelessly coloured the incident with sectional and religious undertone was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), whose official statement on the suspect was to urge governments around the world to pay more attention to northern Nigeria, claiming that the region is a threat to world peace and "fertile ground" for international terrorism. They also provoke ember of hatred by insinuating that "for decades, Christians have been murdered and raped in northern Nigeria with impunity." In essence, they are appealing to foreign forces to invade the North as if there are no Christians in Northern Nigeria.

Won't it sound unbecoming to associate social vices peculiar to some sections of the country to its people, because of the action of few who engage in international prostitution, drug trafficking, 419 fraudsters, armed robbery, kidnapping and the recruitment of young girls as baby-manufacturers in addition to ritual killings.

The cowardly Niger Delta militants who have similar attributes of Somali pirates who are notorious in kidnapping the rich for ransom, oil bunkering, piracy, gun running, killing and destruction of the environment, their victims are foreigners and local people alike.

The international community should realise that the MEND and their collaborators are the only criminally-inspired armed group in West Africa today that have attacked the interests of American, British and other nations exploring oil in Nigeria by kidnapping and killing their workers and destroying their investment such as infrastructures of Shell and Chevron among other oil companies operating in Nigeria.

Since 2006 when they started their armed struggle claiming to be fighting for a greater share of oil wealth for local communities, but unfortunately their members pocket ransom money and live ostentatious lives to the amazement of their kinsmen. They are so cowardly that they go with pseudo names while destroying their environment and damaging the reputation of peace-loving people of Niger Delta, a region that is now most scary and risky district for investment and tourism.

To be concluded.

Shuaib can be reached at yashuaib@yashuaib.com



By Mohammed Kabir

Re: Bafarawa and EFCC, let's talk issues, please

Yusuf Dingyadi was again at his worst when he dwelt on the above subject matter in the *Daily Trust* of Tuesday, January, 19, 2010. According to him, he was amused to have stumbled on a publication credited to Sani Umar in the same paper of January 5.

What Yusuf Dingyadi could not fathom is how the truth in Umar's write-up rubbished his idol, Attahiru Bafarawa.

Neither Yusuf Dingyadi nor Attahiru Bafarawa commands sufficient integrity to characterize the Wamakko administration as beleaguered. Besides, those in glass houses need not throw stones; Bafarawa who is currently facing trial for allegedly embezzling over N15bn during his reign, is one that is actually beleaguered. Let me educate Yusuf Dingyadi that Sani Umar is not necessarily a paid mascot as a special assistant to the governor on media. It is one of his primary constituencies not to only defend his master but to portray situations in their natural colours. Sani Umar is not an ordinary Special Assistant on Media as his credentials and track records of enviable experience in the media are there to speak for themselves.

Yusuf Dingyadi should sharpen his binoculars; Solid is not a faceless body in Sokoto, Sani Umar being its president is enough pointer to its being actually solid and existing. It is disgusting that in the Nigeria of 21st Century Yusuf Dingyadi is still talking of stateism or petty indigene-ship as if development depends on it. Sani Umar too has no

It is one of his primary constituencies not to only defend his master but to portray situations in their natural colours

other abode apart from Sokoto State, and is proud to be a bona fide Sokoto son Sani is never afraid of identifying with the laudable achievements of the Magatakarda administration. In any case it's Dingyadi and his ilk who should be on the defensive as their master is currently mired in the throes of having to defend himself in court against an array of established fraudulent transactions.

Wamakko did not in anyway mislead the public on the missing N13bn. It was not Wamakko who asserted that there was nothing left, but it was Bafarawa himself who by virtue of his brouhaha wanted to bamboozle the world that he indeed left N13bn which was later dramatically reduced to an untraceable N11bn. Yusuf Dingyadi again demonstrated his ignorance by saying that, Bafarawa set up the State and Local government Joint Accounts. Can Yusuf Dingyadi shed some light on where the authentic joint account law provided for the monthly allocation of N200m to SSG II Account maintained by his cousin Maigari Dingyadi?

The records are there for all to see, even when Aliyu Wamakko was the supposed supervisor of local governments in the state, he had no full powers; whatever memo he raised had to be duly approved by Bafarawa. In actual sense, Wamakko supervised the Ministry for local governments with the active co-supervision of Attahiru Bafarawa.

Wamakko's re-assignment to another ministry from that of local governments was routine as he was made to take charge of the Health Ministry. If he was not re-assigned to any ministry at the time, that would have raised some questions. The local government Joint Account was indeed meant to instil sanity on how funds are managed. But when Bafarawa, A'isha Binji and Habibu Modaci co-supervised the joint account, all sorts of things happened therein.

It is self indictment for Yusuf Dingyadi to speak of Shagari - Tureta, Isa Bafarawa roads as laudable achievements. These and many roads were washed away by rains as a result of the poor job quality. It is entirely not how many projects, but how well executed. For your information, the Illela road project was initially pencilled for execution by the Bafarawa administration, but it was mischievously ignored. Well-meaning people of the state and the neighbouring Niger Republic are hailing Aliyu Wamakko for enthusiastically starting the road construction; which will soon be completed. Sceptics like you are always quick to pass judgment; it is authoritatively too early to jeopardize the scorecard of the Magakarda in terms of rural roads. Dingyadi is indeed not at home with the series of rural roads constructions in his "home" state. When next you are in town, go to your village and see the wonders Wamakko has done to Dingyadi road, something your cousin Maigari Dingyadi who held sway as SSG and often times, defector Governor could not do.

Yusuf Dingyadi should relax as the Kano road overhead bridge will be well executed with all the necessary shoulders and culverts for effective drainage. People should not tell lies as a gateway to criticism, there is apparently no disaster in our education here students are enrolled free for both NECO and WAEC Exams, and as I write this piece, students are still currently collecting their results slips free from their respective former schools. I know that students could only collect their results as the state government had already paid. I doubt if Dingyadi is in tune with the current happenings in the country.

It is public knowledge that, there was massive poor performance nationwide in last year's results. Why should Dingyadi single out his home state for dismal mention?

Again, still on the independent power plant, Yusuf is a way from him 'home' state as just 2 weeks ago apparatus for the final installation of the core machinery of the IPP were delivered through the Sultan Abubakar III Airport. The Wamakko administration is keenly interested in the IPP and soon Sokoto will be rescued from the pangs of inadequate Megawatts.

Mohammed Kabir, Rima Radio, Sokoto.



Your Letters

Plateau: Give peace a chance

Peace, political stability and reconciliation are not too much to ask for. They are the minimum that a decent society provides. ---George Mitchell US politician.

Peace is much more precious than a peace of land. ---Anwar al-Sadat Egyptian Statesman (1918-1981)

Please allow me a space in your widely read newspaper to comment on the present Jos mayhem, that led to loss of many lives and properties, rendered many homeless, created instant widows and orphans; and to call people of the state to allow peace to reign in the

area, because trust and respect can never be sustained through hatred, rumour-mongering blackmail and names calling, nor could you live peacefully with the a person you constantly insult, fight, hate or kill.

One of the basic functions of a government is to provide security, freedom, safety, stability, equality, and social services to the citizens, maintain law and order and protect the citizens.

The federal government should take the Jos crisis very serious. Let justice be done, those found to behind this ugly and inhumane act should be punished to serve as deterrence for others with similar misguided mindset, they should be made to account for the hundreds lives and properties lost.

To be candid governments approach to so many issues in this country especially religious crisis was not the right thing to do and did not at all help the matter. At point in time, I will appeal to all the people of the state to forgive one another. The people of Plateau were peace loving people, whom we know they were loyal, tolerant and understanding but now the case is different. *Haba! Home of Peace and Tourism!*

All we are saying is Give PEACE a chance. ---John Lennon (1940-1980)

Also government should compensate those who were affected. May God bless Nigeria.

Adamu Muhammad Usman, Kafin-Hausa, Jigawa state, adammusman@yahoo.com

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

OBJ has his uses

THANK you Media Trust for inviting Obasanjo to chair your occasion. You have at least given Nigerians the opportunity to know his views on critical national issues.

IM, 08099495893.

Not him

OBASANJO is no position to preach honour and morality to Yar'adua.

SAIFULLAH, Kaduna, 07072083338.

Why always Jos?

BECAUSE this senselessness because there's no active, functional government capable of maintaining unity, peace, and security in the state. This creates a lacuna for such barbaric, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The government and people should wake up and join hands towards the progress and development of their state.

SALISU Aso, Suleja, 08069743517.

Learn from history

IN the mid-1960s, Dr Azikiwe met Ahmadu Bello and said, "let us forget our differences..." to which Premier replied, "No, let us understand our differences; I'm a Muslim and Northerner, you're a Christian and an Easterner. By understanding our differences, we can build unity in our country". Nigerians especially those resident in Jos should borrow a leaf and imbibe these words of wisdom from our great nationalists in order to establish sustainable peace and tranquillity among themselves; by understanding each other's religion as well as ethnic diversity.

ABDULRASHID Adamu, Bayero University, Kano, 08035682719.

DT, you are not fair

YOUR reports show as if Muslims are the only victims in the Jos crisis. But if investigated fully, you will discover that Christians were just as affected. Please try to

be balanced.

JACOB, Kaduna, 08036839965.

I agree

RE- Ethnic cleansing at Kuru Karama. Your front page comment on the subject was not only based on falsehood and mischief, but provocative and inciting. By this inaccurate report and ethnic bias, you are not only an accomplice in genocide in Plateau but also similar ones in Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe, Maiduguri, etc. Stoking fire at this time is gross recklessness and abuse of trust.

MUSA Enape, Garki, Abuja, 08033045520.

On the other hand...

I strongly appeal to Federal Government to urgently ferret out those who are responsible in the mass killing of innocent Nigerians at Kuru Karama village and environs in the name of ethnic cleansing and religious bigotry.

M Yusuf Basuganinka, Kano, 08099380010.



By Steve Anyebe

Letter to General Lawrence Onoja

Your write-up titled "Underdevelopment of Idoma Nation" in *Daily Trust* of Monday, January 18, 2010, refers. You premised your entire discourse on the approaching general election, maintaining the pertinence of addressing issues "that may preoccupy the direction of our decision - making as a nation." It doesn't surprise one then that nobody ever hears about Onoja until elections are around the corner. No wonder you have never taken part in serious Idoma functions, such as the First Idoma Economic Summit organized by the INF and Apa State Movement meetings. Your "astute and courageous people" deserve to be treated as permanent discussions relating to their wellbeing and their place in the national scheme of things.

Your write-up, unfortunately gives you out as a man out to attract the goodwill of an electorate by heaping all their problems (both real and imaginary) on a scapegoat chosen by yourself. In this attempt you leave the same electorate laughing but feeling sorry for you, like they would a palace jest that dreams of overthrowing the king but ends up making the same king crack his ribs with laughter. I feel sad because you are a man I have respected greatly as an elder Statesman from my own community who made it to the top of his career.

My intention here is to take a few of the issues you raised in your piece and extend my humble opinion on them. Let me stress right away that I have no intention of casting aspersions on your honourable self for any reason. And this is not a reaction on behalf of anybody. I am just writing as a concerned and interested stakeholder in the Idoma project. So help me God.

I would have easily agreed with you if you had propounded this directionless political leadership theory in the pre-1999 era of Idoma political history. By chronological comparative analysis of our national placing, using 1999 as a watershed, not even a freshly born Idoma baby will agree that the Idoma are presently trapped "in near directionless political leadership" because politically, we have never had it this good. Need I tell you that everything in present-day Nigeria has become political? You must agree that without the number three political position being with our son, the amount of dividends accruing to the Idoma now would have been much less. You can also not claim ignorance of the numerous MDG projects going on in all nine Local Governments of Benue South courtesy of the Senate President, Senator [Dr.] David A. B. Mark.

Nobody who is politically serious should even attempt to use unemployment as a factor for campaign in Benue South. Apart from the fact that it is both a national and global problem, Idoma are having the best of times now consequent upon the strong recommendations they get from the office of the Senate President. Many have thus been recruited into the armed and paramilitary forces as well as other federal organizations. A large number of these youths are from Ohimini. I thought you should have sent a commendation. Since Senate President David Mark took over the mantle of leadership of the National Assembly, accolades have continued to trail his handling of the law-making body.

You talk about an electoral and voting apathy because peoples' votes no longer count. It is now clear to my mind that elders like you can be mischievous for selfish purposes. Otherwise how can one understand your present posturing as against your role in the 2007 National Assembly elections in which PDP, your party, lost woefully in your Local Government?

In your unsure disposition you have merely accused the Benue State Govt. of putting Idoma people in the boards of state agencies which have no viability and usefulness to our nation. As usual you gave no figure or data, or even names, to support your claim. I put it to you Sir, that all you are trying to do is discredit the present performing Governor of Benue State. But concrete, tangible and visible achievements cannot be erased.

In your position as a highly placed party elder, it is disturbing that you show utmost ignorance about how the Federal Exco is constituted. I refuse to educate you on that. When an Idoma was appointed to the Federal Exco, nobody heard any commendation from you.

While you spare no minute, at the slightest excuse, in boasting of being singularly responsible for the creation of Agatu, Obi and Ohimini local governments you cannot put up with the idea that a state could be created as a political patronage for any single leader. But the most manifest expression of contradiction in your discourse is to then hold the famous *Newswatch* interview of April 12, 1994, granted by retired Gen. David Mark, responsible for the non-creation of Apa state.

Anyebe wrote from Otukpo, Benue State (steveanyebeogwu@yahoo.com)

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

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Curtailing the menace of bush burning

Indiscriminate bush burning in Nigeria has continued to constitute a disturbing annual ritual in many parts of the country, particularly in the dry season. Most of the people who indulge in this do so for banal reasons, like hunting rats and other rodents for their meat. Fulani herdsmen also set grass ablaze to make for fresh fodder for their cattle throughout the dry season when grazing lands wither out. Statistics show that more than half of this bush burning is started deliberately.

The damage caused by this is colossal. Natural resources including soil nutrients are destroyed in the burning process, to say nothing of the threat to the ecosystem. Soil fertility is equally affected and reduced in such bush burning sprees, thereby exposing arable land to some peril.

Bush burning, in some cases, has resulted in loss of lives and property especially when the fire gets out of the control of those who started it. Uncontrolled spread of fire has in the past extended in to residential houses and farmlands. Such fires are also known to have destroyed acres of farmlands and grain silos where large quantities of cereals, seeds and seedlings are stored. Trees that provide shelter for birds and their nests are likewise destroyed in the process. Some people also burn trees as a prelude to farming. Others burn trees to provide fuel wood, a major source of livelihood in some communities. This practice is common in the northern central states. The firewood from the burnt trees, usually in large quantities, are transported to far the north and other regions of the country where there are few or no trees at all to fell or burn in order to get firewood or coal for cooking. These environmentally unfriendly activities, according to experts, are not only inimical to the ecosystem, but they equally constitute threats to the green environment. Bush burning is an environmental hazard that leads to land degradation, deforestation, desertification, and economic deprivations when people lose farmlands and other properties.

Apart from the air pollution produced by the smoke from bush burning that is unsafe to human health, it adds to fears of depletion of the ozone layer and thus to the challenge of global warming. Adequate measures should be taken to avert bush burning in order to put the menace under control.

Relevant government agencies in the three tiers of government in the country must ensure that laws against bush burning are fully enforced and some form of deterrence applied in order to curtail the practice. Unless some perpetrators are caught and punished according to provisions of the law, bush burning is unlikely to cease in the country. There is need for government particularly at the local level to also embark on public enlightenment campaigns to educate people on the dangers of bush burning and the devastation it brings upon our habitat. As a means to checking indiscriminate bush burning, government should, by the same token, task traditional rulers and hold them responsible for any breach of the laws on bush burning in their wards or communities, as the case may be. This community-based approach to halting the menace could help in keeping surveillance over perpetrators, particularly those who take cover under darkness to indulge in the act at night. Government should also discourage people from burning bushes and trees for fuel by actualizing the long-awaited Liquefied Natural Gas Project (LNG) that is supposed to provide cheap and clean alternative.

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The method in Obasanjo's 'madness'

On a damp night in Kinshasa, Zaire in 1974, the world was treated to one of the most intriguing sporting spectacles in history. Muhammad Ali, guile, athleticism and elegance personified, confronted the burly, awesome punching machine called George Foreman in the bid to reclaim the world title he lost seven years earlier for choosing not to fight in Vietnam.

In what has passed into boxing legend as 'The Rumble in the Jungle', the contest was remarkable for the tactics employed by Ali the supposed underdog. Boxing virtuosos instantly called it 'rope a dope'. For eight pulsating rounds, Muhammad Ali virtually committed 'suicide' by staying on the ropes and inviting Foreman to come at him. He obliged.

Ali took most of the blows on his gloves and his torso, doing only enough to avoid disqualification in between. But even as his fans suffered and feared for him, midway into the eighth round, he demonstrated that there was a method in his madness. In his attempt to punch Ali into pulp, Foreman had not only wilted, fatigue, that nemesis of boxers who relied more on their punching power, over their pugilistic skills, was clearly evident on his rugged features. He was a spent force.

Ali required no further invitation. In a well synchronised display of speed, precision, and clinical finishing, which only Ali in his prime could conjure, a dozen short, crisp, punches, had Foreman on the canvas gasping for air. That unforgettable night in boxing history may have earned its mention in the boxing Hall of Fame, but it also provides me with an effective backdrop to why I suspect the former President Olusegun Obasanjo called on his handpicked candidate Umaru Musa Yar'adua to resign his presidency last week because of ill health.

Muhammad Ali and Olusegun Obasanjo may be worlds apart in terms of their physical attributes and contributions to humanity, but when the former President advised Yar'adua to resign from office if he was no longer physically possible of executing its functions, I smelt a bit of Ali's 'Rope a Dope' tactics at play.

The only difference is that while Muhammad Ali displayed remarkable courage in absorbing Foreman's punches, there was nothing courageous about Obasanjo's imprudent intervention. In fact, it was cowardly. It lacked artistic flavor or even intellectual ingenuity. It had cunning and patience in abundance, no doubt. But then, so do all scavengers like vultures, foxes and the rest!

In case we have forgotten, scavengers go hungry for prolonged periods because they lacked the requisite courage to pounce on their preys while they are still healthy and capable of defending themselves. By taking on Yar'adua even as he lay on his sick bed in Saudi Arabia therefore, Obasanjo effectively dispelled all previously held notions about his courage if he had any, that is.

He proved why hiding in Chief S. B. Bakare's Ikoyi residence when Dimka's marauding lieutenants

Muhammad Al-Ghazali

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08052100432 (SMS only)

threatened the polity in 1976 came naturally to him. Obasanjo succeeded only in proving that even among scavengers and predators he was the most vile and spineless.


The guy who rudely interrupted the former President at the Trust Dialogue he chaired was within his rights to do so in my opinion. It was typical of the shameless rant we have come to expect from many of the so-called leaders foisted on us today. It had little to do with courage or patriotism, but everything to do with Obasanjo and his insatiable ego.

Unless we accept that we are now effectively a banana republic,

pots in our corridors of power are yet to acknowledge one fact in their accelerated march towards infamy.

Nigerians are now simply too intertwined and inter-mingled to be foisted with the kind of mediocre leadership provided by characters like Obasanjo to perpetuate themselves in power. The fact that Nigerians as a collective, are yet to embrace the reality in the choice of effective leadership also contributed to the tragedy that has become Nigeria today.

Let me state very clearly that there is nothing wrong with anyone calling on President Umaru Yar'adua to resign from office on the grounds of ill health. Readers of this column will testify to that fact that I have repeatedly stressed the need to respect our constitutional provisions should the president become incapacitated. My views on the matter have not changed a bit. What I can-

 In a well synchronised display of speed, precision, and clinical finishing, which only Ali in his prime could conjure, a dozen short, crisp, punches, had Foreman on the canvas gasping for air

in a more civilized nation, Obasanjo would be hauled before an appropriate jurisdiction to answer questions on why he proceeded to impose a sick President on the nation despite abundant and privileged knowledge of his medical history. Obasanjo was not just an ordinary citizen of this nation.

He was the President. And as the President, he had unhindered access to security dossiers meticulously kept by the nation's security apparatus. Yar'adua's well-documented truancy while he was the Governor of Katsina state must have occupied a prominent space in those reports.

Therefore, unless the former President had ulterior motives, the mere suspicion of ill health, should have been enough to disqualify him in a field bristling with other supremely qualified candidates. That is even more so given the fact Obasanjo knew fully well that being President of Nigeria is not a tea party.

As it were, Obasanjo's comic act did little to dispel the various conspiracy theories in the grapevine on the precise reasons for his choice of successor. In case he does not know it, his pronouncements at the Trust dialogue last week would have given credibility to the theories. He surely played into the hands of those who claimed that Obasanjo was so miffed over the failure of his infamous third term project he only anointed Yar'adua to be his booby-trap. He surely got those who believe he chose Yar'adua because he thought the man would not survive a year in office rubbing their hands with glee in self-justification. More important still, his rant illuminated the widely held notion that Obasanjo chose Yar'adua purely to spite and punish the north even if it is now obvious that the entire nation has clearly suffered from collateral damage in the process. The petty thieves and des-

not stomach however, is when the call is part of a premeditated agenda or evil plot consummated in nocturnal orgies of self-delusion.

William Shakespeare may have written that there was no art in the world to tell the mind's construction on the face, but with Obasanjo's antecedents, we hardly require the poet's timeless admonition to know the reasons why he has suddenly rediscovered his voice.

For a man who serially blew the tremendous public goodwill he assumed office in 1999, it couldn't have been a mere accident that his call coincided with the current efforts of the opposition and activists to get the appropriate national institutions to invoke the full provisions of the constitution to remove Yar'adua.

But even at that, Obasanjo could not have acted so decisively unless he knew one thing: like Muhammad Ali, he must have arrived at the conclusion that the timing was right to move in for the kill to rescue whatever plot he might have nurtured since 2007. He must have concluded that Yar'adua is now a spent force and incapable of getting back at him.

Either way, the former President has already crossed the Rubicon in the matter of his future relationship with Yar'adua and his tiny cycle of diehard loyalists. My suspicion is that Obasanjo may know something other Nigerians do not know on the exact health status of the President. There could be a method to his madness after all. It is either that or Obasanjo has suddenly chosen to discard his toga of cowardice by embracing heroism so late in his life.

These, obviously are interesting times for all Nigerians. Let us all enjoy the unfolding power spectacle, while also praying that democracy is the ultimate winner end.



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INTERNATIONAL

Main witness in Zimbabwe treason trial 'tortured'

ZIMBABWE'S high court yesterday struck out evidence from

a key witness in the treason trial of a top aide to Premier Morgan

Tsvangirai, after the man said he had been tortured into testifying.

Roy Bennett, the treasurer of Tsvangirai's party, is accused of



ZIMBABWEAN premier Morgan Tsvangirai and Roy Bennett (left), the treasurer of Tsvangirai's MDC party, are seen here in Johannesburg.

plotting to assassinate President Robert Mugabe in 2006 in a conspiracy already dismissed by the courts in an earlier case.

Peter Hitschmann was initially charged with Bennett but later was convicted of a lesser charge of illegal possession of firearms in 2006.

He had been called as the main witness to testify against Bennett, but in court he accused security forces of torturing him while in custody to extract a statement.

Justice Chinembiri Bhunu said statements made by Hitschmann could not be used as evidence since they were not signed and Hitschmann said his interrogators used force to make him implicate Bennett.

"He said he involuntarily made the statements under torture. The statements were obviously inadmissible and not used at his own trial," Bhunu said.

"It's common cause that if they were inadmissible at his own trial they are equally inadmissible in this case."

Bennett was Tsvangirai's pick for deputy agriculture minister in the power-sharing government with President Robert Mugabe, formed nearly one year ago.

He is accused of providing Hitschmann with funds to buy weapons to be used to topple Mugabe.

His prosecution is one of the issues hampering the work of the power-sharing government.

Commissions negotiate Guinea government

GUINEA'S junta and the opposition have each set up commissions to negotiate the membership of a transitional government, a source close to incoming Prime Minister Jean-Marie Dore said yesterday.

Talks were under way between the interim president, General Sekouba Konate, and the prime minister, in order to form a government team that could run the West African country for six months and organise elections, the source said.

"Two commissions have been set up, one by the Forum of Active Forces (a coalition of opposition parties, trade unions and civil society organisations) and the other by the junta, in order to come up with a consensual governmental structure," added the source close to Dore, who asked not to be named.

Guinea has been under military rule since December 23, 2008, and a crisis erupted last September 28 when troops massacred more than 150 people during an opposition rally in a Conakry stadium. Hundreds of others were injured and many women and young girls were raped, according to a United Nations investigation and human rights groups.

The UN has blamed junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, among others, for the killing, but Camara has been sidelined in Guinea's politics after being shot and seriously wounded by his aide de camp in an apparent assassination bid on December 3. He is currently convalescing in Burkina Faso.

In the past few weeks, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso has been mediating a way out of the crisis and military rule and the rival parties have agreed to share power in a transitional government that will hold elections within six months.

The make-up of the government could be known "before the end of the week," the source said, though "with what we're currently seeing on the sidelines, there's a risk it will take some time."

Other sources said that the transitional government would not be formed until the middle of next week.

The formal transfer of power from outgoing Prime Minister Kanibe Komara and the 71-year-old Dore, is due on Tuesday, said the source close to the incoming leader, who was appointed on January 19.

Sudan's ousted PM to challenge Beshir in election

SUDAN'S former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, who President Omar al-Beshir ousted in a military coup 20 years ago, will run against him in the April elections, his party said yesterday.

Mahdi, 74, heads the influential Umma opposition party and is spiritual leader of "Ansar," a Sufi brotherhood that venerates the famous Mahdi who defeated British colonial forces under General Gordon in 1885.

"He has been nominated presidential candidate," an Umma party official told AFP.

Descended from Sudan's legendary Islamist ruler, Sadiq al-Mahdi has held the premiership twice before, in 1966-67 when he was just 30, and again after his party won Sudan's last multi-party elections in 1986. Umma is the main opposition party in the north, alongside the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), while Beshir heads the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Rumours have circulated in Khartoum for weeks of Mahdi's plan to run as a presidential candidate, but his party's political bureau only took the decision to nominate him on Sunday evening.

Several members, who over the last few years abandoned the Umma and the DUP to join Beshir's party, could then rejoin the two opposition parties, Hikmat believes.



SUDAN'S former prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi

International

Saddam's top aide 'Chemical Ali' hanged

SADDAM Hussein's notorious aide "Chemical Ali" was executed yesterday, an Iraqi government spokesman said, a sentence carried out around a week after he received a fourth death sentence. "The condemned Ali Hassan al-Majid has been executed by hanging until death today," said spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh in a statement.

On January 17, Majid was sentenced to death for ordering the gassing of Kurds in the northeastern town of Halabja, one of the worst atrocities of late dictator Saddam Hussein's regime that killed an estimated 5,000 people.

Three-quarters of the victims at Halabja were women and children, in what is thought to be the deadliest ever gas attack carried out against civilians.

The conviction for the gas attack that came as the Iran-Iraq war drew to a close in 1988 was the fourth time that Majid, better known by his macabre nickname, has received a death sentence.

Handing down the ruling, Judge Abud Mustapha al-Hamrani branded Majid's offences as "deliberate murder, a crime against humanity" when the verdict was delivered amid muffled applause in the courtroom.

"Al hamdulillah, Al hamdulillah (praise be to God)," said a stone-faced Majid, in a hearing broadcast on television.

Majid's execution had previously been held up by legal wrangling. The first execution was due to have been carried out by October 2007 but delayed so as not to coincide with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

A close cousin of Saddam, Majid earned his moniker for ordering poisonous gas attacks in a brutal scorched-earth campaign of bombings and mass deportations that killed an estimated 182,000 Kurds in the 1980s.

He had already been sentenced to hang for genocide over the Kurdish offensives when in December 2008 he received a second death sentence for war crimes committed during the ill-fated 1991 Shiite uprising in southern Iraq. Last March, the Iraqi High Tribunal handed down a third death sentence over the 1999 murders of dozens of Shiites in the Sadr City district of Baghdad and in the central shrine city of Najaf.

Majid was the King of Spades in the pack of cards of most wanted Iraqis issued by the US military in 2003 and was arrested in August of that year.



ALI Hassan Al-Majid, alias "Chemical Ali".

Karroubi recognises Ahmadinejad as Iran president

IRAN opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi, who had refused to accept Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election, revealed yesterday in a major position shift that he now recognised the hardliner as president.

Karroubi's son, Hossein, told AFP about his father's new stance, making him the first opposition leader to explicitly accept Ahmadinejad's victory in the June 12 poll which returned him to office for a second term.

"I am still of the same belief that the election was unhealthy and massively rigged. But since the (supreme) leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) endorsed (Ahmadinejad's victory), I believe that he is the head of the government, meaning he is the president," Hossein quoted his father as saying.

Hossein spoke to AFP when asked to confirm an earlier report by Fars news agency quoting his father as acknowledging Ahmadinejad to be the president. Fars asked Karroubi whether he now recognises Ahmadinejad as president.

The ex-speaker of parliament, who won the fewest number of votes in the June election, replied: "I still maintain that there were problems (in the poll), but with regard to your question, I should say that I recognise the president."

Karroubi, along with main opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, had earned the wrath of the Islamic republic's hardliners over the past eight months for vociferously campaigning against Ahmadinejad's re-election.

At least 36 dead as bombs target Baghdad hotels

AT least 36 people were killed and 71 wounded in three massive apparently coordinated minibus-borne bombings that targeted hotels in Baghdad yesterday less than six weeks from a general election.

Iraqi politicians and US forces have warned of rising violence ahead of the March 7 vote, the second parliamentary ballot since the 2003 US-led invasion ousted Saddam Hussein but ushered in a deadly and long-lasting insurgency.

The first bomb struck near the Palestine and Sheraton hotels in Abu Nawaz, close to where a giant statue of Saddam was symbolically toppled almost seven years ago, at around 3:30 pm (1230 GMT), an interior ministry official said.



IRAN opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun

Kullu Nafsin Dha 'Ikat-ul Mawt

(Every Soul shall have a taste of Death)



Late Alhaji Abdallah Mohammed Sallam Hashim, OFR
(1940 - 2009)

It is exactly **ONE YEAR** and a day today since you answered
the call of Allah (Subhanahu wataallah)

May Aljanna Firdaus be your place of abode (Ameen)

Alhaji Salem Ali Sallam
for the family

International



MYANMAR'S detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi

Myanmar junta could free Suu Kyi in November, party says

THE political party of Myanmar's detained democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi has heard that the military regime could set her free in November, a spokesman said yesterday.

The Nobel peace laureate has been kept in detention for 14 of the past 20 years, and in August she was ordered to spend another 18 months in detention after being convicted over an incident in which a US man swam to her house.

According to media reports and local residents, Home Affairs Minister Maung Oo told a meeting of local officials in central Myanmar four days ago that her release would come in November.

"We also heard about it. But it's difficult to confirm," Nyan Win, her lawyer and a spokesman for her National League for Democracy (NLD) party told AFP. But he added that the news was "not a strange thing at all".

"If we calculate the period, Daw Suu's house arrest will be completed in November," he said.

A local resident in the town of

Kyaukpadaung, where the meeting was held, said he had heard the same date from witnesses of the speech.

"We were told by some local officials who attended the meeting last Thursday that... Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would be released in November," he said, asking not to be named. Daw is a term of respect in Myanmar.

Suu Kyi's house arrest remains a sensitive issue in Myanmar and officials contacted by AFP refused to comment on the minister's remarks.

The extension of her detention sparked international outrage as it is expected to keep her off the stage for elections promised by the regime some time this year, although a date for the polls has not yet been announced.

An initial appeal by her lawyers to overturn the sentence was rejected and a decision from Myanmar's top court on another appeal is expected in the next three weeks.

Her NLD won a landslide victory in the last democratic elec-

The United States, followed by the European Union, has shifted towards a policy of greater engagement with Myanmar, as sanctions have failed to bear fruit

tions in 1990, but the junta, which has ruled Myanmar since 1962, never allowed the party to take office.

In recent months the United States, followed by the European Union, has shifted towards a policy of greater engagement with Myanmar, as sanctions have failed to bear fruit.

Kurt Campbell, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs, noted last week there had been a "mixed bag" from Myanmar on calls for political reform.

Bombs kill 2 in Afghanistan; rocket hits base

BOMB strikes killed two NATO soldiers — a Briton and a Norwegian — while a rocket attack at the major international military base in southern Afghanistan wounded eight other international troops, officials said yesterday.

The violence came three days before a London conference on Afghanistan that is expected to focus on a government plan to reintegrate Taliban militants willing to lay down their arms.

The top US and NATO commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, said the Taliban could be part of a peace agreement if an influx of 37,000 foreign troops succeeds in bringing stability to the country.

"As a soldier, my personal feeling is that there's been enough fighting, and that what we need to do all of us is to do the fighting necessary to shape conditions where people can get on with their lives," he said in an interview published yesterday in the Financial Times. "I think any Afghans can play a role if they focus on the future, and not the past."

An Afghan government plan to offer jobs, vocational training and other economic incentives to tens of thousands of Taliban foot soldiers willing to switch sides will be discussed at the Jan. 28 international conference in London.

Officials have said the program would allow individuals to

lay down their arms while top Taliban leaders are urged to negotiate peace. The Taliban leadership has rejected this so long as foreign forces remain in Afghanistan.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the international community would likely endorse the plan at the London conference, telling reporters Monday that it is "right to believe that over the long-term we can split the Taliban."

The Norwegian soldier died Monday when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Faryab province in the north, the country's military said. An explosion Sunday in the southern of Helmand killed a British soldier, according to the British Defense Ministry.

The latest deaths bring the total of NATO forces killed in Afghanistan this month to 37, compared with 23 in January 2009.

Sunday's rocket hit inside Kandahar Air Field after dark, injuring four Bulgarians and four Romanians, said Flight Lt. Wendy Wheadon, a spokeswoman for the international force.

The attack occurred as Bulgarian Defense Minister Nikolai Mladenov visited 270 of his country's troops who guard the inner zone of the Kandahar airport, the ministry said. Mladenov was about 400 yards (meters) from where the rocket hit and was not hurt.



A young child drinks milk from a bottle outside his home in Beijing.

More tainted milk products found in China shops

MELAMINE-LACED milk products have been found on sale in China, state media said yesterday, more than a year after the chemical was blamed for six deaths in a huge scandal over contaminated dairy goods.

Authorities in the southwestern province of Guizhou found that products made by three food companies contained illegally high levels of the toxic substance, the *China Daily* said.

It quoted a former dairy industry official as saying it was likely more tainted goods remained in supermarkets despite a major

recall after the 2008 scandal, which highlighted China's persistent product safety problems.

The suspect products in Guizhou have been pulled from stores, the *China Daily* said, adding that the firms involved blamed milk powder bought from suppliers.

The report illustrated the apparent continued threat from tainted dairy goods long after the 2008 scandal when it was revealed that the industrial chemical -- which can, in large quantities, cause kidney failure and death -- was being abused by food pro-

ducers.

At that time, melamine was found to have been added to milk to give the appearance of a higher protein content and was blamed for killing six infants and making nearly 300,000 others sick, according to official figures.

The scare led to foodstuffs containing dairy products being taken off shelves around the world.

A total of 21 people were reportedly convicted of wrongdoing, with two executed and others sentenced to jail terms. But other cases have since surfaced.

SALE OF PROPERTIES BY SEALED BID

Sterling Asset Management & Trustees Limited is desirous in selling the under listed properties through competitive bid process.

S/N	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
1	2 UNITS OF 4 BEDROOM SEMI DETACHED HOUSES	17, YESHAYAHU LASODE CRESCENT OFF LIGALI AYORINDE STREET, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS.
2	21 UNITS OF 3 BEDROOM TERRACE DUPLEX + 2 UNITS OF 5 BEDROOM SEMI DETACHED DUPLEX	PLT 480, UMARU DIKO STREET, OFF EBITU UKIWE STREET, JABI, ABUJA

INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS

1. Bid package should include the following:
 - i. Completed bid form
 - ii. Copy of identity card, certificate of incorporation (for companies)
 - iii. N10,000 Draft in favour of Sterling Asset Management & Trustees Limited

SUBMISSION OF BIDS

All bids must be enclosed in a properly sealed envelope marked at the top left hand corner thus "BID FOR THE PURCHASE OF (address of property) and addressed to:

Manager in charge

SALE BY BID PROCESS

Sterling Asset Management & Trustees Ltd
Plot 1703A, Adetokunbo Ademola Street,
Victoria Island, Lagos

OR

Sterling Asset Management & Trustees Ltd,
Plot 17, Sheda Close Area 8 Garki, Abuja

INSPECTION/BID FORM

Prospective bidders are free to pick up bid form at **Sterling Asset Management & Trustees Limited** office located at Plot 1703A, Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island. And all **Sterling Bank Plc** Branches in Abuja.

Inspection of property can be carried out from Tuesday 26th January 2010 till Thursday 11th February 2010, between the hours of 9am and 5pm daily.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

All bids must be submitted on or before 4.00pm on Thursday 11th February 2010.

OPENING OF BID

DATE: Friday 12th February 2010

Time: 10.00am

Venue: Sterling Ass et Management & Trustees Limited, Lagos office BOARD ROOM

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES CONTACT:

08023458887, 08033036057, 08058047017 and 08023125493



Federal Ministry of Works, Housing and
Urban Development,
Headquarters, Mabushi, Abuja.

**PUBLIC NOTICE
MINISTERIAL PRESS BRIEFING**

The Federal Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development will hold its Ministerial Press Briefing as follows:

Date: 29th January, 2010.

Venue: Conference Hall,
NICON Luxury Hotel,
Garki, Abuja.

Time: 10.00am

The occasion will afford the Ministry the opportunity to provide detailed information on its activities and projects to members of the Public, Media, Project Communities, Consultants, Contractors, Members of the National Assembly, Road Transport Owners and Workers, and other Stakeholders. It is also a unique opportunity for the Management of the Ministry to receive direct feedback from the Public, Project Communities and other Stakeholders on the performance of its projects in all the States and Geopolitical zones, in its bid to position the Ministry to offer quality service to the Nigerian public.

The Honourable Minister of Information and Communication, Prof. Dora Akunyili will chair the occasion.

Management therefore wishes to invite members of the Public, the Media, Project Communities, Consultants, Contractors, Members of the National Assembly, Professional bodies, Transport associations and all other stakeholders to the Ministerial Press Briefing as scheduled above

Signed

Dr. Tukur Bello Ingawa, OON, mni
Permanent Secretary

International

117 Russians in hospital after drinking holy water

MORE than 100 Russian Orthodox believers have been hospitalized after drinking holy water during Epiphany celebrations in the eastern city of Irkutsk, an official said yesterday.

A total of 117 people, including 48 children, were in the hospital complaining of acute intestinal pain after drinking water from wells in and around a local church last week, said Vladimir Salovarov, a spokesman for the Irkutsk Investigative

Committee. Salovarov said 204 people required some medical treatment after consuming the water, the source of which was a stagnant lake. He said, however, that it was too early to say what caused the illness. Many Russians consider any water obtained on Epiphany, which they celebrate on January 19, to be holy.

The water is typically bottled for consumption later. Tap water in most of Russia is undrinkable.



CHRISTIAN Orthodox believers fill up bottles with water from an icy pond to mark the upcoming Epiphany in Kiev, Ukraine.

NOTICE TO ALL SUCCESSFUL ALLOTEES OF UNION TRUSTEES' 4,000,000,000 UNITS OF N1.00 EACH MIXED FUND

The Management of Sterling Registrars Limited wishes to notify and advise holders of the above fund as follows:

1. Our attention has been drawn to a regrettable error relating to the allotment date printed on the certificates issued in relation to the above stated fund.
2. Following this discovery, we have commenced the process of effecting necessary corrections on the earlier certificates issued.
3. The correction borders on changing the allotment date from 24 March 2008 to 18 April 2008.
4. Fund holders who are still in possession of the initial certificates bearing 24 March 2008 are advised to kindly return such to the address given below for necessary corrections to be effected:

- The Managing Director/Registrar
Sterling Registrars Limited
24, Campbell Street
Lagos. Or

- At any Sterling Bank branch closest to you.

Any inconvenience relating to this error and exercise is highly regretted.

We wish to reassure our clients and the general public of our commitment to serving them in the best possible manner and in line with the best standards established by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Thank you in sincere anticipation of your co-operation.

Signed
Management

Sterling Registrars Limited
RC: 248500



**NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES
LAGOS, NIGERIA
ROUNDTABLE ON AVIATION TERRORISM: IMPERATIVES FOR BEST PRACTICES
JAN. 19, 2010**



COMMUNIQUE

On 25 December, 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian, boarded a plane from Lagos, Nigeria en route Detroit in the United States of America and had a change over at Amsterdam to Delta Airlines. While on board the flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, he was alleged to have attempted to blow up the plane with a view to killing all the passengers and crew on board. His arrest, detention and trial in the US have had a negative impact on Nigeria and Nigerians to the effect that Nigeria is now included by the US Government in the list of 'Countries of Interest' and security at airports worldwide tightened. Such tightening includes the introduction of body scanners. It is in realisation of the negative effect that such acts portend for Nigeria that the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies organised a One-Day Roundtable on 'Terrorism in the Aviation Industry: Imperatives for Best Practices in Nigeria.'

The One-Day Roundtable which was held under the auspices of the Bayo Ojo Centre for Aviation and Transportation Law of the Institute was held on Tuesday, 19 January, 2010. The Perspectives for the Roundtable included Airport Security, Anti-Terrorism Bill, Human Rights Implications of Body Scanners, International Relations and Issues Arising from Abdulmutallab's Arrest and Trial in the United States. Various Speakers made presentations at the event. In attendance were representatives of the Ministries of Aviation, Defence and Justice. The Honourable Minister of State for Interior, Hon Demola Seriki was personally present as well as the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Marvel Akpoyibo. Other agencies present include, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria, Immigration, NDLEA, Nigeria, Security and Civil Defence, representatives of foreign embassies, airlines, academics and other stakeholders in the aviation industry.

OBSERVATIONS

The Roundtable made the following observations

- 1) That terrorism in whatever form is a threat to world order and a violation of human rights in particular, the rights to physical integrity, life, freedom and security. It, and impedes socio-economic developments through destabilization of the state. It is therefore imperative to prevent and/or combat this menace through effective, enforceable anti-terrorism legislations.
- 2) Of the sixteen international legal and regional instruments and conventions against terrorism the Federal Government of Nigeria has signed and ratified nine. This is an indication of the commitment of Government to fight terrorism. But the remaining seven instruments should be promptly ratified and domesticated.
- 3) Frequent cases of religious and ethnic uprising in Nigeria could be described as internal terrorism which Government has continued to combat with decisiveness. To the extent that Government addressed the Boko Haram crisis promptly, the perpetrators of the crisis in Jos should be brought to book immediately.
- 4) Airport and border personnel should shun corruption and favouritism in the screening of passengers. Corruption in this regard is manifested by exemption of some government functionaries or so called very important personalities from routine screening at the ports. As a matter of policy all functionaries should be screened at the borders.
- 5) There is yet no valid and reliable National Identity Card to determine who are true Nigerians.
- 6) A State should be labelled a terrorist state if the state overtly or covertly supports terrorism. All those arrested in the UK for acts of terrorism bearing British passports have not led to the UK as a nation being labelled a terrorist state.
- 7) Nigeria's airports meet ICAO standards in terms of security but countering terrorism is like chasing a moving target because current screening procedures target metals and not powdery substances. Just as the taking on board of liquid has been banned so also should powdery substances be banned.
- 8) Nigerian Airports have Stop List and Watch List which are updated regularly. Security personnel need to be trained and re-trained regularly to perform this function.
- 9) The ECOWAS smart electronic passport is powered by biometric technology in tandem with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's specification for international travels.
- 10) Noted that the Nigerian e-passport has the inherent potential to eliminate forgery, passport falsification and multiple acquisitions of passports and make identify theft by unscrupulous elements in the society impossible.
- 11) Since human trafficking victims could easily be recruited into terrorist groups due to a combination of factors including desperation, poverty, extreme religious views and contempt for organised society whom they may blame for their unfavourable social status, the efforts at eradication of human traffic should be sustained.
- 12) The Bill for an Act to Provide for Measure to Combat Terrorism and Other Related Matters before the National Assembly is unknown to many Nigerians. Though comprehensive the bill should be popularised and subjected to robust national debate by posting on the website of the National Assembly in addition to other measures to publicise it.
- 13) Upholding human rights is not at odds with battling terrorism because the moral vision of human rights viz. the deep respect for the dignity of each person is among our most powerful weapons against terrorism. Therefore derogation from human rights to permit use of body scanners is permissible to fight terrorism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should ratify and domesticate the remaining international and regional instruments designed to combat terrorism.
2. In domesticating the international instruments Nigeria should take account of local peculiarities in order to ensure that the legislation is effective.

3. Government should periodically appraise national efforts at implementing international obligations and best practices in the area of combating and financing of terrorism. In this regard Governments should demand financial transparency in the operation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as it has been found that some terrorists use NGOs and other not-for-profits for their operations.
4. Government should challenge the parameters used by the US Government to categorise Nigeria as a 'Country of Interest' because it is the only country so named that is not a member of the Organisation of Islamic Council (OIC) or an Islamic state.
5. Where diplomacy fails Government should reciprocate all forms of indignities and degrading and inhuman treatment meted out to Nigeria by any country. By so doing a strong message will be sent to the international community that Nigeria protects her own.
6. The Bill on Terrorism before the National Assembly should be passed quickly subject to amendments to bring it in conformity with the Constitution.
7. While the use of body scanners is inevitable in a globalised world, proper mechanism should be put in place to ensure that the information gathered is not used for improper purposes. Its use should take into account religious and cultural sensibilities.
8. The National Assembly should endeavour to enact a law to back-up the use of Body Scanners since it basically violates the privacy of the individual and a derogation from this fundamental human right requires a legislation that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.
9. Nigeria's researchers and scientists should be proactive in identifying with global research on terrorists methodologies and help to advance the course of combating terrorism.
10. Aviation terrorism is not limited to acts or conduct on board an airline. Security around the airports must be enhanced to forestall terrorism inside the airport itself.
11. Realising and recognising the fact that the acts of terrorism is either imported or exported through the land, sea and air borders, it is imperative that Government put in place measures to forestall, pre-empt and/or prevent other occurrences.
11. Government should consider approval for use of "Sky Marshals" in domestic flights in Nigeria.
12. All Institutions, agencies and organizations relevant to combating terrorism must be continuously strengthened through capacity building, modern equipment procurement and engagement of world class experts.
13. Realising and recognizing the fact that the acts of terrorism is either imported or exported through the land, sea and air borders, it is imperative that Government put in place measures to forestall, pre-empt and/or prevent other occurrences. Thus it should-

- a. Prevent the country from being used as a safe haven for the planning, organising and/or execution of terrorist acts;
- b. Develop measures and methods for the monitoring and detection of plans or activities aimed at the illegal cross-border transportation, importation, export, stockpiling and the use of arms and ammunition and explosives and other materials and means of committing terrorist acts
- c. Develop and strengthen methods of controlling and monitoring land, sea and air borders and customs and immigration check-points in order to pre-empt any infiltration by individuals or groups involved in planning, organisation and execution of terrorist acts.
- d. Strengthen and protect the security of persons, diplomatic and consular missions, premises of regional and international organisations in accordance with relevant conventions and rules of international law
- e. Promote exchange of information and intelligence gathering and expertise on terrorist act and establish data bases for the collection and analysis of information and data on terrorist elements, groups, movements and organisations amongst the various security agencies at our sea, land and air borders
- f. Take necessary measures to prevent the establishment of terrorist support networks in any form
- g. Ascertain and prosecute the perpetrators of terrorist acts and where necessary hand over such perpetrators to any country that requests for the extradition of such perpetrators in accordance with the existing Extradition Treaties with that country
- H. Establish effective co-operation among relevant security officials and services and the citizens and respect the confidentiality of the information and intelligence shared amongst the security officials

Lagos, Nigeria
19 January, 2010.

Signed:

Professor Epiphany Azinge, SAN
Director General.

**NEXIM**

NOTICE TO ALL DEBTORS OF THE NIGERIAN EXPORT-IMPORT BANK (NEXIM)

THE NIGERIAN EXPORT-IMPORT BANK HEREBY NOTIFIES ALL THE BANK'S DEBTORS WHOSE LOAN FACILITIES HAVE FALLEN DUE BUT REMAIN UNPAID DESPITE SEVERAL DEMANDS, THAT THE BANK IS GIVING A 30-DAY ULTIMATUM WITH EFFECT FROM THE DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION TO SETTLE ALL THEIR LOAN OBLIGATIONS WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

FAILURE TO REPAY THE LOAN OBLIGATIONS WILL LEAVE THE BANK WITH NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO PUBLISH THE NAMES OF THE DEBTORS AND THEIR DIRECTORS IN THE NATIONAL DAILIES.

IN ADDITION THE BANK SHALL IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE ALL POSSIBLE LEGAL ACTIONS AND OTHER MEASURES TO RECOVER THE OUTSTANDING FACILITIES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO COMPLAINT TO RELEVANT LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

Signed
MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS

0805 1000 536

Manufacturers battle FG over new port charges

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

THE implementation of Cargo Tracking Note System as part of procedure for cargo security and safety in Nigeria will stifle economic growth and blur the country's vision to be among the best twenty economies in the world by the year 2020, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria [MAN] has warned.

President of the Association Alhaji Bashir Borodo conveyed this warning in Lagos yesterday at a news conference on the reaction of his members and the Organised Private Sector [OPS] to the system.

According to Borodo, who was represented at the occasion by Chairman Apapa Chapter of MAN, John Aluya, the new system is an unnecessary burden designed to hurt the nation's economy and encourage further diversion of cargoes to neighbouring countries with consequent challenges to the Nigerian Custom Services in terms of increase in the tempo of smuggling.

The Federal Executive Council had at its meeting held on December 9, 2009 approved the implementation of Cargo Tracking Note System which stipulated that with effect from January 11, this year, every commodity loaded with Nigeria as its final destination has to obtain a Cargo Tracking Note from a Nigerian Ports Authority representative at all Ports around the world.

The Federal government also designated a Belgium-based company, Transport and Ports Management System Limited Antasar Afrique [TPMS] as the sole representative of Nigerian Ports Authority and the only agent to issue a Cargo Tracking Note.

Speaking at the press conference, he said the implementation of the policy involves the mandatory payment of a fee determined by NPA's sole representative.

He said the Federal Executive Council [FEC] has been misled to approve a policy that is capable of inflicting great damage to the business environment in Nigeria. "We have informed His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan that the process of initiation and approval of this policy was not given expected publicity to allow for incisive and inclusive deliberations as well as extensive debate



PRESIDENT of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) Bashir Borodo

by the public especially the numerous maritime stakeholders of which MAN members constitute the majority.

From all account, no public hearing or sensitization which have become features of good governance and Public-Private Partnership were organized to provide the country the best of positive opinion and global best practices.

"The fee payable in foreign exchange of the originating country of shipment is supposedly payable by the shipper at the point of cargo shipment to NPA through the Belgium based company. In practice, this payment will normally be passed on to the consignees for payment as part of cargo shipment charge/fee. In the final analysis, the financial burden

remains that of the importer or exporter and ultimately, the Nigerian consuming public."

Borodo, who questioned the choice of a foreign based company as the sole representative of NPA for the collection and issuance of the CTN, craved for the immediate stoppage of the implementation of the new policy pending the review of the total considerations of its implications for the economy. He also urged the Federal government to consider the inclusion of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria [MAN] as members of the Governing Board of the Nigerian Port Authority as well as set up panel consisting of stakeholders in the industry to review the new policy.

Engineers advocate nuclear power option for Nigeria

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

PARTICIPANTS at the two-day seminar on sustainable development of the department of electrical and electronics engineering of the Kaduna Polytechnic have urged the federal government to explore the nuclear power option in addressing the power supply problem of the country. In a communiqué jointly signed by Engineer Mohammed Lawal and Engineer Abubakar B. Yusuf, all of Kaduna polytechnic, said the harnessing of the nuclear option would bring about rapid expansion of the energy production capacity of the country within a short period of time. "For sustainable development in Nigeria, current energy supply which is 90 percent from thermal and hydro power stations across the country, must be expanded in other areas like solar, wind coal power station and other feasible sources of energy," they said.

The participants of the seminar that saw the presentation of 32 papers all revolving around energy sector also said that ICT being an area that has successfully interfaced with power generation and distribution must be given adequate attention in form of training, research and development.

Market capitalisation appreciates on NSE

THE Nigerian capital market opened the week's trading on Monday on a good note with many more shares appreciating in value. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the appreciation grew investors' cumulative net worth by 1.02 percent.

Market capitalisation went up by N55 billion to close at N5.360 trillion in contrast to the N5.305 trillion recorded on Friday.

The All-Shares Index rose by 224.38 points to close at 22,254.56 compared to the 22,030.18 achieved on Jan.22. The sector analysis shows that the banking sub-sector dominated transactions on the exchange, trading 175.54 million shares worth N1.16 billion in 3,399 deals. The sub-sector was boosted by the activities in the shares of UBA which had 27.9 million shares valued at N313.26 million sold in 289 deals.

The insurance sub-sector followed, transacting 48.21 million shares worth N60.91 million in 348 deals while the packaging sub-sector followed with 24.96 million shares exchanging hands at N43.70 million in 23,473 deals. The shares of 46 companies appreciated in value in contrast to the 32 which share prices dropped. (NAN)

CBN EXCHANGE RATES				BUREAU OF CHANGE RATES	
11/1/2009					
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	Selling (NGN)		
CFA	0.3014	0.3114	0.3214	BUYING	
DANISH KRONER	28.7781	28.8757	28.9733	DOLLAR.....	N152
EURO	214.231	214.9577	215.6843	EURO.....	N218
POUNDS STERLING	238.4799	239.2888	240.0977	POUNDS.....	N250
RIYAL	39.3093	39.4427	39.576	SELLING	
SDR	231.8759	232.6624	233.4489	DOLLAR.....	N153
SWISS FRANC	145.003	145.4948	145.9866	EURO.....	N220
US DOLLAR	147.41	147.91	148.41	POUNDS.....	N253
WAUA	228.6019	229.3773	230.1527	Source: S&J Bureau de Change, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.	
YEN	1.595	1.6004	1.6058		

Stock Market Index	
Date :	Monday, January 25, 2010
Index :	22,030.18
Deal :	29,534
Volume :	569,326,684
Value :	N 2,075,152,353.10
Cap. :	N 5,305,585,671,179.59

Business

Nigeria's 12% inflation rate defies market survey

By: Fidelis Mac-Leva

NIGERIA'S inflation rate recorded a decline in December last year, dropping by 0.4 percent from what was obtainable for November, data from the National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] has shown.

This comes as a surprise to many in view of the rising cost of food and other consumer items that usually herald the yuletide season.

The data showed that although there was an increase in the urban and rural All Item Index by 0.1 and 0.5 percent respectively, compared to November's, this did

not however affect the drop in the inflation rate which has fallen to 12 percent year-on-year in December from 12.4 percent the previous month.

The escalation in prices of food items which form the bulk of the inflation was the reason for the increase in the rise as there was 13.6 percent year-on-year food items from 13.5 percent in November, the report indicated.

Attributing the rise to increases in the prices of some food items like: Yam, garri, meat, sea foods, onions, fresh tomatoes and vegetables, the report, however, showed that there was a balance as the rise in the

prices of food items was considerably countered by the decline in the prices of some staples like, sorghum and millet.

But contrary to the data from the NBS, an independent survey by Daily Trust showed an increase in food items, even as both traders and buyers attributed the price increase to several factors, including high cost of transportation occasioned by fuel scarcity and low harvest.

Apart from transportation cost, a cross section of respondents who spoke to Daily Trust at some markets in Abuja attributed the hike in food prices to other issues such as government relegation of the Agricul-

tural sector, bad road network across the country as well as high foreign exchange.

A female trader at the Wuse market, Abuja, who wouldn't want her name in print said: "We [traders] spend huge sums of money to transport our goods and products from different parts of the country to Abuja for sale. Therefore you cannot expect us to sell at a loss."

Quarterly records from the Bureau [NBS] previously showed that the country witnessed a rise in its inflation rate throughout the year even as quarterly figures showed that All Items index increased at the end of every quarter.



FROM left: Mac Atasi, CEO, Nextzon Business Services; Jessica Ziegler and Jane Nsunwara, both TEMPO consultants; and Adedayo Ojo, CEO, Caritas Communications at the launch of the Cross River Quality Ambassador program at Oceanview Restaurant in Lagos last week.

Nuclear: Nigeria recruits 40 scientists

By: Fidelis Mac-Leva

AS part of the strategic plan for the implementation of the National Nuclear Programme of the Federal Government, the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) has recruited forty young scientists who are currently undergoing a three-month intensive training program in nuclear science and engineering at the Obafemi Awolowo University [OAU] Ile-Ife.

At the completion of the three-month training programme, the scientists, according to NAEC, will form the nucleus that will eventually drive the Nigeria's nuclear programme having acquired a suitable foundation which will equip them for post graduate studies in nuclear science and engineering.

Also as part of the implementation plan for the programme a three-day national workshop on the theme: Human Resource Development and Workforce Planning opened in Abuja yesterday.

Jointly organized by the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission [NAEC] in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] the workshop, is part of efforts

at capacity building, infrastructure development and human capital development aimed at generating the critical mass of manpower needed to drive the national nuclear programme.

The Director General of NERC, represented by the Director Nuclear Power Plant Development, Dr. J. I Umeh, thanked the IAEA for their continued support towards the implementation of Nigeria's 'Nuclear Energy Programme. Umeh expressed the hope that the targeted mandate of NAEC by 2020 would be actualised.

Chairman of the occasion and Director General, Sheda Science and Technology Complex, Abuja, Professor Sunday Thomas, stressed the need for an efficient workforce as well as infrastructure needed to establish the Nuclear Power Plant in Nigeria.

Both the National Security Adviser and the Director General NEMA who sent their goodwill messages through representatives harped on the need for the creation of security awareness, high ethical standards as well as a high level of emergency preparedness as preconditions for the take off of the proposed Nuclear Power Plant in Nigeria.

30,000MW required to attain Vision 20:2020 - Minister

By Fidelis Mac-Leva

MINISTER of Power Lanre Babalola has said that 30,000MW of electricity had been estimated for the attainment of 20:2020 vision.

Speaking at the first Power Sector Ministry, Departments and Agencies [MDA] Retreat held in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital at the weekend, the Minister, however, added that funding remains the major challenge towards ensuring its realization.

Babalola said time had come for a paradigm shift from the federal government's sole financing of power projects to what he called 'mutually rewarding partnership' between the federal, state and private sector.

He said the retreat was aimed at reviewing the Power sector's 2009 targets and performances with a view to charting a clear path for the year 2010 and beyond.

Noting that the inability of the power sector to meet up with the 2009 target was as a result of a combination of factors beyond its immediate control, the Minister said the role of the oil, gas and financial sector to ensure the overall success of the power sector cannot be overemphasized.

Kogi State Governor, Alh. Idris Abubakar, who was represented by his Commissioner for Special Duties, Science & Technology, Prof. Aaron Baba, called on the sector to shift from conventional ways of power genera-

tion, pointing out that the State has an abundance of coal which can provide the power needs of over 20 States when developed.

Abubakar also commended the Federal Government for the establishment of a 330KVA Station in 3 locations in Kogi state and urged participants at the Retreat to carry the current synergy beyond rhetoric's, down to the level of practical implementation.

The Retreat was attended by management staff of the Power Ministry, Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) and Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Company (NERC) amongst others.

GESON to sign bio-fuel deal with oil marketers

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

THE Green Energy Society of Nigeria (GESON), an organisation established to support the development of the green energy industry in Nigeria, will, next month, sign an off-take agreement with marketers on the supply of bio-fuel to blend with petroleum production.

The Director General of GESON Mrs. Tokunbo Jakande

announced this at a press conference in Lagos.

According to her, the company was working in partnership with the Department of Petroleum Resources (PPDRA) and Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), apart from the marketers to achieve the E10, which would help the Federal Government to reduce the gas emission in the country.

She said that some of individual members of the Major

Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN) have agreed to sign ethanol supplying agreement with GESON in February, 2010.

She said: "The discussions with the PPPRA and DPR have been very successful. They came to our office here and we introduced an off-take agreement, which is an agreement between the producers and the marketers, so that when we produce, you must buy."

Business / Finance

'Unity Bank will soon get mass patronage'

By Sunday Williams

THE re-branding of Unity Bank coupled with its partnership with the stakeholders will pave way for mass patronage by the general public, Mrs Nneka Akwunwa of Restore Human Development Consultants has said.

She made the remarks yesterday in Abuja during Unity Bank brand public relations forum with the theme, 'Unity Bank brand essence: building partnership with stakeholders.'

She said the new Unity Bank brand partnership with the public, private and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) would create a win-win situation for both the Bank and their stakeholders.

She said the bank's envisaged long term sustained brand value is adapted to clients demand, based on universally financially institutions best practices.

She said the Unity Bank today is a product of nine "near death" banks which no observer of the sector gave a chance of survival,

adding that the bank today is not a child of necessity but is the necessity itself.

She said that realities today is nothing but the true position and health status of the banking sector in Nigeria which call for repositioning or total restructuring of the financial sector.

She said: "The truth must be told, strategies must be revisited, tools must be overhauled and techniques must be reshaped to suit the need of the ultimate target; the clients."

In her presentation on building partnership, Cecile Agwu, said partnerships with CBO/CSO/NGOs is critical and promotes sustainable development as well as enhances the brand of a business.

She said Unity Bank may consider more attractive loan packages/conditions than are currently available to entrepreneurs through NGOs, to enable them grow their business.

In his presentation on 'Building partnerships: Challenges

and expectations facing Unity Bank, Adeniyi Olagunleko, said stakeholders expect among other things that the products and services of Unity Bank will be adjusted to reflect a strong commitment to partnerships.

"The partnership concept is the clear way to go for businesses that want to endure. Unity Bank has initiated this noble dimension to sustainable business growth, setting an example that is worthy of emulation by other players in the banking sector," he said.

Conservative Values...



Timeless Promise

Our values, though conservative, do not limit us.

They enable us to evolve with the times, so that we can always be there for you.

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Star Feature

Is Gwarimpa bridge notorious for accidents?

The newly completed overhead bridge at Gwarimpa has become notorious for accidents. The absence of traffic signs and street lights, and a marked carelessness by drivers, seem to worsen the situation.

By Nathaniel Jonah

WHEN Salisu Ahmed, a driver with one of the private firms in Abuja, decided to drive through the Kubwa-Gwarimpa road en route his Wuse II office, he did not envisage any mishap. But half way through the newly constructed overhead bridge at the Gwarimpa Junction, he met his Waterloo. Unknown to Salisu, another car was approaching at top speed and before he could check himself, his Toyota Hilux pick up van had collided with the car. He escaped death by the whiskers with some minor bruises. "I did not know that the road is a one way road, I thought it was a dual carriage meant for vehicles going to town and coming to Gwarimpa," he said.

But Josiah Elemue, a civil

servant with the Federal Inland Revenue service, Abuja was not as fortunate. According to the middle aged father of four, "I was on my way home to Kubwa, and in the attempt to avoid the heavy traffic along the Kubwa express way, I decided to cut the journey short by driving through the new overhead bridge along Gwarimpa road from Kado estate. But unknown to me, another car was approaching with speed, and to even complicate issues, his headlamps were blinding, so I could not easily maneuver my way until it was too late. The impact of the head on collision was so severe that I passed out on the spot, only to wake up in a hospital bed in Garki."

While lamenting the spate of road traffic crashes along the road, a traffic warden sta-

tioned at the busy junction that leads to the Gwarimpa estate, explained that the newly completed overhead bridge has recently become a notorious spot for road accidents. According to the traffic police who spoke to this medium on the condition of anonymity, "almost every day, we witness road traffic accidents here, and majority of them are caused by motorists coming from the Kubwa side of the road, who decide to drive against the traffic on their way to town. The way the bridge is constructed, it is almost impossible for vehicles coming from the Kado estate side of the road, to know that vehicles are approaching them. There was a particular driver who was coming from Kubwa and was trying to drive against the traffic, I tried to stop him but he just drove past me with top speed. But a few min-



A driver in an argument with the traffic police.

“But Kassim Murtala, a resident of Gwarimpa estate, is of the view that the absence of road signs is a prominent reason for the unpleasant trend. According to him, “the way the bridge is constructed, if you are not familiar with the route, you will not know that it is not a dual carriage way, because there are no road signs to warn you. So, drivers coming from the Kubwa end of the road, will just assume that it is one of the roads that lead into the city centre.”

utes later, he rammed into an oncoming vehicle.’

But Kassim Murtala, a resident of Gwarimpa estate, is of the view that the absence of road signs is a prominent reason for the

unpleasant trend. According to him, “the way the bridge is constructed, if you are not familiar with the route, you will not know that it is not a dual carriage way, because there are no road signs to warn you. So, drivers coming from the Kubwa

end of the road, will just assume that it is one of the roads that lead into the city centre.”

Apparently, taking a different line of thought from Murtala, Emmanuel Obeah, who

Bridge a magnet



wrong. But because Nigerians are lawless, those driving coming from Kubwa on their way to town, in their bid to get to their destinations quickly, take the risk and drive against the traffic.”

When asked about the reasons for driving against the traffic, Bayo Oloke, a commercial taxi driver, explained “the reason why most drivers drive against traffic on this particular road, is as a result of ignorance. Many people don’t know that it’s a one way road, and vehicles coming from Kubwa and other places along the road are not supposed to drive in that direction. So it is up to the authorities to erect a road sign forbidding motorists from driving against the traffic.”

Similarly, Lawal Akeem, a commercial bus driver who boasted that he has been plying the Wuse/Suleja route for over three years, decried the absence of road signs on the roads. In his words, “I have been driving on Abuja roads for more than three years now, and I can tell you that there are insufficient road signs to alert drivers and educate them while driving. For instance, along the Berger/Mabushi road that was just recently completed by Julius Berger, there are no directional signs for motorists along that road. If I am driving along the

expressway and I want to veer off to drive towards Maitama, there are no clear signs or directions to assist drivers. So you are left to guess about which route leads where. I think the government really needs to do something about this in order to reduce road accidents in Abuja,” he counselled.

Investigations by Daily Trust however reveals that the fly over bridge is usually very busy in the evenings, when motorists who reside in Kubwa, Suleja and other satellite towns along the axis, try to circumvent the traffic build up along the Kubwa expressway.

While speaking with this medium, Jacqueline Obiora, who resides in Galadima, a suburb along Kubwa road, lamented “part of the contributing factors to the problems on this road is the lack of street lights. Driving along this road at night is really very frightening for me, because it is difficult to make out the layout of the road, especially because it’s still quite new. If there are provisions for streetlights which will illuminate the roads, it will go a long way in reducing the rate of accidents, because visibility would be better.”

An engineer with Julius Berger, the construction firm handling the road construction project, who doesn’t not want

his name in print explained to *Daily Trust* “this over head bridge is actually still under construction. The bridge is supposed to extend from Wuse II hovering across Mabushi all the way to Gwarimpa. The importance of the bridge and link road, is to decongest the Jabi airport route to Gwarimpa, which is always congested, especially during rush hours when people are returning from work. So until the road is fully completed, you can’t expect the company to erect sign posts and traffic signs, because the road is still under construction,” he said.

While giving an insight into the rising trend of reckless driving in the city, John Alumona, a special marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC explained “Generally, Nigerian drivers are very reckless. Everyone is always in a hurry to get to his destination, and when you are in that state of mind, you will always violate traffic rules and regulations in the name of looking for short cuts to arrive your destination. Initially, it was not like this in Abuja, but with the heavy influx of people, most of whom are in search of greener pastures, you discover that the roads are getting congested, and the available infrastructure is getting overstretched.”

also lives in Gwarimpa estate, explained to this medium “the reason why there are frequent accidents on this road is because drivers who ply the road are very lawless and reckless. You don’t need any road sign to tell you that this is not

a dual carriage way. It is clearly meant for those coming from town either on their way to Kubwa, or those going into the estate. So those coming from the other side of the road have no business driving through the road because it is clearly

“ Apparently, taking a different line of thought from Murtala, Emmanuel Obeah, who also lives in Gwarimpa estate, explained to this medium “the reason why there are frequent accidents on this road is because drivers who ply the road are very lawless and reckless. You don’t need any road sign to tell you that this is not a dual carriage way. It is clearly meant for those coming from town either on their way to Kubwa, or those going into the estate.

Business/International

Venezuela oil 'may double Saudi Arabia'

A new US assessment of Venezuela's oil reserves could give the country double the supplies of Saudi Arabia.

Scientists working for the US Geological Survey say Venezuela's Orinoco belt region holds twice as much petroleum as previously thought.

The geologists estimate the area could yield more than 500bn barrels of crude oil.

This assessment is far more optimistic than even the best case scenario put forward by President Hugo Chavez.

The USGS team gave a mean estimate of 513bn barrels of "technically recoverable" oil in the Orinoco belt.

Chris Schenk of the USGS said the estimate was based on oil recovery rates of 40% to 45%.

Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA), Venezuela's state oil company, has not commented on the news.

However, Venezuelan oil geologist and former PDVSA board member Gustavo Coronel was sceptical.

"I doubt the recovery factor could go much higher than 25% and much of that oil would not be economic to produce", he told Associated Press news agency.

Venezuela holds the largest oil reserves outside the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has proven reserves of 260bn barrels. BBC.



KING Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

Ferrero pulls out of Cadbury race

ITALY'S Ferrero has formally declared itself out of the takeover battle for UK confectioner Cadbury.

The announcement came on the deadline for companies to make firm offers, with America's Hershey having already ruled itself out of the running on Friday.

Ferrero, which makes Nutella and Tic-Tacs, had reportedly been mulling a joint bid with Hershey for Cadbury.

Last week, Cadbury's board agreed to a takeover offer from US company Kraft Foods. At the time the deal was agreed, Kraft's cash and shares offer valued Cadbury shares at 840 pence each.

In a statement, Ferrero said: "Further to its announcement of November 18, 2009, Ferrero International SA confirms that it does not intend to make an offer for Cadbury."

Kraft, the maker of Oreo cookies, now has until 2 February to convince Cadbury shareholders to accept its offer. If Kraft's takeover of Cadbury goes ahead, the combination will create the world's largest confectionery company. BBC.

Google co-founders to sell shares

GOOGLE co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin are selling 10 million of their shares, raising \$5.5bn (£3.4bn).

The stock sale means they will no longer have majority control.

Their 59% voting rights will be reduced to 48% when the sale is completed.

Shares will be sold over a period of five years to avoid hurting the stock price as much as possible.

"They are both as committed as ever to Google," a spokeswoman said.

"They are integrally involved in our day-to-day management and product strategy.

The majority of their net worth remains with Google" she added.

The fact that the pair are ceding majority control is seen as more symbolic than practical. Mr Brin and Mr Page run Google together with the chief executive Eric Schmidt, who has 10% voting power. BBC.

Fiat sales lifted by scrappage schemes

FIAT has thanked the positive impact of the various government-backed car scrappage schemes across western Europe for a rise in sales last year. The Italian firm said global sales of its Fiat, Lancia and Alfa Romeo models had risen 5.7% to 1.84 million cars.

It said the scrappage scheme in Germany saw its German sales almost double, while UK sales had risen by 17.7%.

However, parent company Fiat Group made an annual net loss, which it blamed on its taking of a 20% stake in Chrysler.

Although Fiat Group did not pay for this share of the US carmaker last June, it said "the strategic realignment with Chrysler" caused significant restructuring costs and write-downs. This contributed to an annual loss of 800m euros (\$1.1bn; £702m), which compares with a profit of 1.7bn euros in 2008. The results for the wider Fiat Group, which saw its annual revenues fall 16% to 50.1bn euros, also include the company's agricultural machinery business, and its trucks and buses unit Iveco.

"After a particularly negative start to the year, the introduction of incentives in several major markets led to a gradual recovery in demand in western Europe," said the company. Under the various scrappage schemes, owners of old cars are given a subsidy towards their purchase of a new vehicle.

Nomura analyst Michael Tyndall said that Fiat chief executive Sergio Marchionne had "put a little bit of a sting in the tail" in his statement by saying that if scrapping incentives were not extended, then profits would not improve.

Fiat's decision to pay a dividend of 0.17 euros per ordinary share was seen by analysts as significant.

"It shows the company thinks the worst is behind us and it has been able to manage the crisis and is confident it can restart a dividend," said Thierry Huon at Exane BNP Paribas. BBC.

Wal-Mart to cut 11,200 jobs at Sam's Club stores

RETAIL giant Wal-Mart has said that it is cutting 11,200 jobs at its Sam's Club warehouse chain in the US.

The majority of the cuts will hit staff running in-store promotions at the chain, after Wal-Mart decided to outsource these functions.

Last November, Mike Duke, Wal-Mart's chief executive, said that the trading environment for the whole group continued to be "difficult".

Sam's has tried to steal customers from rival warehouse stores such as Costco Wholesale by offering more everyday goods like food and health and beauty items, and cutting back on furniture and clothes.

But revenue at Sam's slipped nearly 1% to \$11.55bn in the last quarter, while Wal-Mart stores reported a 1.2% sales increase to \$61.81bn. Earlier this month, Wal-Mart Stores closed 10 under-performing Sam's Club locations, with 1,500 job losses.

"Sam's has been the relative laggard," said Craig Johnson, president of retail consultancy Customer Growth Partners. "It has lagged relative to its direct competitors, Costco and the smaller BJ's Wholesale Club," he said. BBC.

Ericsson cutting an extra 1,500 jobs

SWEDISH telecoms equipment group Ericsson has said it is cutting an extra 1,500 jobs, as it reported a 92% fall in quarterly profits.

Hit by the cost of its restructuring work, and a continuing drop in orders, its net profit for October to December was 314m kronors (\$43m; £27m). They're saved by cost cuts, and that will probably be the case in 2010, so it's in no way a disaster. Ericsson said the cost of its continuing restructuring work totalled 4.3bn kronors between October and December, and 11.3bn kronors for 2009 as a whole. Its sales for the last quarter of 2009 fell by 13% to 58.3bn kronors, as global spending on telecoms equipment continued to fall, and as Ericsson faced increased competition from China's Huawei.

Ericsson's latest results were much worse than market targets.

Analysts had expected the company to report a quarterly net profit of 3.23bn kronor. For 2009 as a whole, Ericsson saw its net profit fall 67% to 3.7bn kronor. "You know, the market is weak, but one might have hoped for some recovery in quarter four," said analyst Michael Andersson of Evli Bank. BBC.

Business

Nigerians should pay appropriate prices for fuel, power — Asiodu

CHIEF Philip Asiodu, the Chairman of the Central Working Committee of the Vision 20:2020, said in Abuja that "appropriate pricing" would create stability in the supply of electricity and petroleum products.

Asiodu on Sunday, said the reluctance to deregulate the downstream sector of the oil industry and fix a

right price for electricity had created a burden on the people.

He said the cost of fuelling generators by households and institutions was much higher than paying for electricity.

"If you have power, the drudgery of the woman who goes to buy corn or goes to buy pepper and comes

back home to start grinding is gone.

"Somebody has a little mill in the market and in 10 minutes, she will grind the corn and grind the pepper.

"And that woman has time to do other things like looking after the children and, maybe, do either one or two crafts that she could sell," he said.

Asiodu noted that the lack of power had slowed the growth of small and medium-scale industries (SMEs) in the country.

According to him, the SMEs form about 80 per cent of the industrial pyramid in emerging and developed economies.

"We are flaring the equivalent of 20 million tonnes of gas per year, more than we are consuming.

"I was part of the Ministry of Mines and Power long ago, more than 40 years, and we had it in our books and agreed with the oil companies that the government can take free gas at the flare stack.

"In short, we can take that gas without paying the oil companies a penny. We can take it to where we need it for generating power, but it is not as simple as that," he said.

According to him, the gas can be free, but the gathering and scrubbing as well as the laying of pipelines to take it to the various points will attract costs.

"You can calculate the cost of doing that, investing in all those things and running them at 20 per cent or so for profit," he said.

Asiodu said Nigerians must foot the bill to enjoy steady supply of electricity.

"Because if government is to do it and go and charge something less, it will take the money from

education, water and so on, which are also important.

"It is not necessary in terms of power because you now pay the appropriate price for gas and you generate the power.

"And you pay an appropriate price for the power so that the power company can pay the gas company. We will end up with a cost of power in Nigeria which is internationally competitive," he said.

On petroleum products, Asiodu said Nigerians always paid higher prices during scarcity, which had become regular, noting that the time wasted at the filling stations and the high pricing could be avoided.

"The average motor owner, when there is a hiccup in distribution, goes quietly behind the fuel station to pay N150 for a litre of fuel.

"And when they say let us pay N80 for uninterrupted supply, he says 'over my dead body'.

"Now this sort of deceptiveness must stop and I think one of the things we have to do is to show what price is being paid across the world," he said.

The working committee chairman said for the supply of electricity and petroleum products to be steady, Nigerians must be willing to pay the appropriate prices. (NAN).



FROM left: Mrs Nneka Akwunwa, Head, Counselling Team, Restore Human Development Consultants, Aliyu Ma'aji, Head, Corporate Affairs, Unity Bank, Malam Umar S. Mairami, Divisional Head, Operations, Unity Bank at the bank's brand public relations/civil society brand endorsement session in Abuja, yesterday.

Nando's investment in Nigeria hits N100m

By Hamisu Muhammad

THE South African fast food firm Nando's has invested over N100m in Nigeria within its five years of operation, an official of the company said.

Nando's brand promoter, Tayo Odunowa said at a facility tour of the Abuja branch of the company, adding that with the launch of Abuja branch, the company has a total of six

shops in Nigeria. He said plan to open four new shops in on, with three additional ones in Lagos and one in Abuja.

Odunowa said Nando's brand is all over the world with about 250 branches, headquartered in South Africa, adding that the company is well known with its premium brand of chickens and burger.

According to him the slow roll out of the branches in

Nigeria is due to the company's commitment to ensuring quality and standard of their brand worldwide.

He said insisting on tests and quality of its food everywhere is what makes Nando's different.

Also speaking, the Area Manager, Abuja, Joseph Ekechukwu said Nando's foods has less oil and fat that make them healthier compare to others.

Nigeria to host African postal confab

By Yunus Abdulhamid

FOLLOWING the request of the General Secretariat of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) has accepted to host the training of about 60 postal officers from different Postal Administrations in Africa.

The training is aimed at improving the knowledge of the officers in understanding the new Terminal Dues and Inward Land Rate System approved by the Universal Postal Union, a statement issued by NIPOST said.

The training comes up in February and will hold place at the Adesba Hotel, Abeokuta in Ogun State.

"It is aimed at imparting skills necessary to understand the new procedures in determining the new rates with the overall objective of ensuring that PAPU member-states do not lose vital result from the new system which became operational in January 2010," it said.

The statement which was signed by NIPOST Public Relations Manager, Hussaina Charity Ato also said officials from the British Royal Mail and the

French Post including UPU officials are also to take part in the training.

To boost mail circulation nationwide in 2010 and be able to face the growing competition, it said, Postmaster General of the Federation, Malam Ibrahim Mori Baba has said that NIPOST is seeking a waiver from the federal government for the purchase of new mail delivery vans and motorcycles.

The Federal Government in 2009 had placed embargo on the purchase of new vehicles, construction and acquisition of new office buildings until 2011.

Why NDE is creating 4,790 jobs — Official

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

THE aim of creating additional 4,790 jobs by the National Directorate of Employment is to address the pressing need of unemployment and its consequences, an official of the directorate Alhaji Lawal Musa has said.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* at the weekend in Kano, Musa said the job creation is part of the attempt by the directorate headed by Malam Abubakar Muhammad to redesign its programmes in tune with wealth creation across the country.

He said armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, social exclusion and poverty are few of the consequences of employment which the directorate intends to address.

He said the areas identified for self employment by the directorate include Information/Communication Technology (ICT), event management, interior decoration, oratory/comedy, technical skills comprising injector/lubricator repairs, auto card and environmental waste management.

Musa further explained that the scheme will engage graduates considering the scarcity of white collar jobs in the country as well as women and the physically challenged in the society with a view of addressing the issue of marginalization.

He said in an attempt to contribute to the labour based sector, the NDE has introduced youths to labour based jobs generation areas such as the soft and hard landscape where it attached graduates of tertiary institutions to acquire skills in order to be self employed.

Musa said the directorate is also engaged in development of rural agricultural development through integrated practices ranging from animal production, crop production, irrigation and agricultural services.

Business

'Why N100bn textile fund will fail'

MINISTER of Commerce and Industry, Chief Achike Udenwa

By Jibrin Abubakar

THE N100 billion bailout loan facility earmarked for the textile sector is 'death on arrival because the government is building a house from the roof'. This is the consensus of informed experts and industry players who spoke to *Daily Trust* at the weekend.

The Olusegun Obasanjo government had announced a policy of N70 billion Revival Fund for the textile sector.

Although the Umaru Musa Yar'adua government was keen but slow in adopting the policy of its predecessor, it however changed rechristened the scheme to Cotton, Textile and Garment Development scheme (CTG) and jerked up the fund to N100 billion.

Only recently, the government announced that it is making N10 billion of the N100 billion available to the Bank of Industry (BOI) for onward disbursement to cotton farmers and textile manufacturers. The loan is to be disbursed at 6 per cent interest rate.

Members of the presidential committee who worked on the scheme include: The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Debt Management Office (DMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bank of Industry (BOI), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Power, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Cottage and Textile Union among others.

These initiatives were taken following the continuing dwindling of the fate of the country's cotton and textile sector; and because the banks were not lending to the real sector which they considered as very risky.

Between 1990 and 2010, no fewer than 151 textile firms closed

shop. The few surviving companies are now in the region of 24, while 15 were out of business in 2009 only, Senator Walid Jibrin, National Trustee of the Nigerian Textile Manufacturer Association had told *Daily Trust*.

Speaking to *Daily Trust*, the man who wrote the report that led to the scrapping of commodity boards in 1985, and the first man who exported Nigeria's cotton abroad after the closure of the boards Mr. Mike E. Okpere said the new N100 billion Textile and Garment Development scheme (CTG) is bound to fail because the criteria set up by the government are deficient.

He said at the end of the day it will amount to 'pouring water' in the basket because the government has missed the fundamentals.

Mr. Okpere who is now the Managing Director of Gymsar Commodity Limited said: "The criteria set up are deficient. It is like attacking the end of the problem. How do you pump money into the milling sector without telling the manufacturers where to get the cotton from? But as you can see there are no seeds in the whole of the country. Nigeria must tackle this first and the question of the farmers and marketers before talking about the millers. What are you going to feed the textile industries with? So, where is the seed and where is the cotton?"

"The last time Nigeria developed cotton seedlings were in 1971 and 1977, and that is why you have the Samaru 71 and the Samaru 77. Since then there haven't been improvement of our seeds. We have been using recycled seeds. For this year there is no seed to plant in Nigeria.

"So where do we get the seeds?"

Although, two Indian companies, Olam and WACOT have opted to provide Nigeria with 500 metric tonnes of seeds each but the fact is that Nigeria needs at least 7,500 metric tonnes. Where do we get this? So you can see that the government is putting the cart before the horse. It just can't work! Seed multiplication and improvement is the first thing to be considered in trying to revive the cotton and the textile sector."

Mr. Okpere said it has become necessary for him to raise alarm because the government has shown discrimination in the formula adopted for the disbursement of the fund by relegating cotton farmers and marketers to the background. According to him, the sharing formula shows that: Textile mills will get 70 per cent; Ginners will have access to 20 per cent while Marketers and Cotton farmers can draw a 'paltry 10 per cent' only.

He said the government would have failed woefully by given money to the millers because the money would later leads to capital flight. Buttressing how the money will benefit foreign economies, he said the textile manufacturers will buy their machines and equipment from outside Nigeria. They will buy the gin and dye from outside; they may buy the cotton and the seeds from outside if the local farmers are not helped.

According to him, another factor that must be addressed before disbursing the fund is the issue of smuggling. He said this must be quickly checked if the sector must be revived. *Daily Trust* had reported that there are over 170 smuggling routes in Nigeria, making the country one of the most porous borders in the world. Over the years, Nigeria has been reduced to a dumping ground, where cheap textile materials are imported unhindered from China.

But Mr. Ahmed Rabiu, President Kano Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (KACCIMA) had told this paper that the indigenous businessmen are to be blamed for Nigeria's porous borders and importation of fake products.

According to him: "The Chinese are not the ones importing inferior goods into the Nigerian markets. It is the Kano business people that do that. What they do is, they take an original fabric to China and request that an inferior quality of same be produced for them at a cheaper price and they bring them to the market."

The fear here, according to experts is that the importation of foreign fabrics and textile materials may, as it were, force the Nigerian investor to close shop because he would not be able to sell his products at a lower price compare to the ones imported.

Another major obstacle to reviving the textile sector is the issue of power. Speaking to *Daily Trust*, an Executive Director of the Admiral Environment Lim-

ited Mr. Shedrack Madlion said the first thing to do is to tackle the issue of power. He said the money may lead to capital flight because the millers will start importing power generators to power their machines because of the power problem in the country.

President Umaru Musa Yar'adua last year admitted at the Annual General Meeting of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) that the availability of power is central to the revival of the textile sector, without which it is impossible.

He however assured: "All ongoing projects under the National Integrated Power Projects (NIPPs) will be pursued with greater vigour. Other Independent Power Projects (IPPs) will also be supported."

Mr. Madlion also said that if the issue of power is not properly addressed, the cotton so produce may eventually be smuggled out to other countries that have power and functional textile factories.

He advocated for a separate programme for farmers and marketers.

On the other side of the coin, textile manufacturers said the N100 billion scheme will succeed.

Executive Chairman Adhama Textiles & Garment Industries Ltd Kano Sa'idu Dattijo Adhama told *Daily Trust* in a phone interview yesterday that as a garment and textile manufacturers for over thirty years, he knows that the policy would not fail.

He said: "We have operated when there was smuggling. It is not a new thing. Our quality then was able to compete with foreign fabrics. Smuggling, agreed, is bad but cannot be stopped overnight; we need to compete to stop smuggling. We need to meet them, we know them. It is not government alone that will stop smuggling but it has to do with mass and quality production, which we can do."

He added that government deserves commendation because it is making available all the enabling environment for the sector to be revived. He said for instance, the government is making available the loan at 6 per cent interest rate as against 23 per cent.

"The government is doing everything possible. They are given us cheap black oil (LPFO) and diesel (AGO) directly from NNPC, they have promised to give us at least 12 hours power supply as against the six hours we currently enjoy and this can go a long way to

helping us. It is gradual. We need to restart again from somewhere. If we can get this 12 hours power supply, we can balance it up with generators. With cheap oil, I am sure the cost of production will fall.

"I can also tell you that we can compete with textile or garment companies in the world. We have good quality. There is nothing to fear. Our quality of underwear at the Adhama Textile can compete with any underwear in the world. We will not wait until we get everything ready."

Speaking on the unavailability of cotton seeds for takeoff, Alhaji Adhama said: "The government is doing that. I know there is cotton revival committee. The government will make the cotton seeds available. They are doing their best."

"It is not proper to say it would fail. If properly managed it would not fail."

But Mr. Shedrack Madlion and Mr. Mike E. Okpere insist that those who design the N100 billion do so in such a way that it would fail. "We know that President Yar'adua is trying to work because his seven points agenda is a good one."

"They have different agenda. We want to let people know that no farmer has access to the N200 billion commercial agric fund and now again, we are seeing this one flying out of the shores of Nigeria like a dove," Mr. Madlion added.

Mr. Okpere also insists that the whole exercise at the end will lead to capital flight because cotton and equipment may be imported if farmers and marketers are not reconsidered.

He said the aim of government of generating employment for Nigerians would have been dashed if cotton farmers are not properly incorporated. He asked: Who generate more, is it the textile millers or the farmers? If the farmers are given just 10 per cent and the textile mills are given 70 per cent, how are you going to generate the employment?

"The greatest advantage we have as Nigerians is marketing cotton and not manufacturing textile and fabrics because if the boarders are left open Nigerian textiles cannot compete with their international counterparts," he said.

He however expressed optimism that the sector, if given priority, has stronger potential to grow the Nigerian economy over oil and gas.

"I can also tell you that we can compete with textile or garment companies in the world. We have good quality. There is nothing to fear. Our quality of underwear at the Adhama Textile can compete with any underwear in the world. We will not wait until we get everything ready."

Business/Finance

Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE)

Monday, January 25, 2009

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	11	0.50	250,522,700	125,261,350.00
SECTOR Totals	11		250,522,700	125,261,350.00
AGRICULTURE				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.86	3,250	2,795.00
FTN COCOA PROCES. PLC	13	0.69	812,964	565,470.16
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	21	0.65	1,540,292	938,461.80
PRESKO PLC	14	4.81	148,000	726,372.00
SECTOR Totals	49		2,504,506	2,233,098.96
AIR SERVICES				
AIRL/SERVICES & LOG. PLC	6	2.92	120,352	349,285.60
NIG. AV. HANDLING COY PLC	86	8.41	1,009,756	8,535,431.88
SECTOR Totals	92		1,130,108	8,884,717.48
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
INCAR NIGERIA PLC	1	2.51	65,370	164,078.70
R. T. BRISCOE (NIG.) PLC	13	5.96	94,000	561,020.00
SECTOR Totals	14		159,370	725,098.70
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	200	8.16	7,364,313	59,931,961.29
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	113	2.63	8,084,424	21,253,120.29
DIAMOND BANK PLC	91	8.00	4,377,710	34,681,047.00
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	4	9.12	39,133	339,283.11
FIRST CITY MON. BANK PLC	82	8.80	4,412,203	37,969,087.00
FIDELITY BANK PLC	156	2.51	23,134,684	57,307,858.55
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	868	14.50	11,473,627	166,198,799.46
FINBANK PLC	107	0.69	26,160,580	17,895,697.72
GTBANK PLC	471	16.99	16,013,470	270,585,732.31
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	50	7.99	2,008,047	15,547,789.77
INTERCONTINENT. BANK PLC.	92	2.11	5,727,296	12,076,666.20
OCEANIC BANK INT. PLC	124	2.36	5,397,963	12,609,016.57
BANK PHB PLC	32	2.08	1,758,016	3,656,673.28
SKYE BANK PLC.	101	6.00	2,064,500	12,107,048.83
SPRING BANK PLC	20	0.98	799,264	783,278.72
STERLING BANK PLC	86	1.48	8,489,166	12,056,973.11
UNT. BANK FOR AFR. PLC.	289	11.30	27,994,245	313,262,811.82
UNION BANK OF NIG. PLC	176	6.40	2,749,237	17,733,341.42
UNITYBANK PLC	43	0.99	6,940,600	6,924,302.00
WEMA BANK PLC	53	1.10	5,237,460	5,596,470.28
ZENITH BANK PLC	241	15.07	5,313,417	78,805,540.55
SECTOR Totals	3,399		175,539,355	1,157,322,499.29
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	48	12.48	420,153	5,467,783.85
BEN. CEMENT COY PLC	51	50.00	1,200,454	59,990,473.69
CEM. CO. OF N/NIG. PLC	37	14.50	729,070	10,466,110.40
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	29	30.11	326,566	9,812,323.70
SECTOR Totals	165		2,676,243	85,736,691.64
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
CHEM. & ALLIED PROD. PLC	6	28.00	11,942	322,934.00
DN MEYER PLC	1	5.13	4,600	22,448.00
SECTOR Totals	7		16,542	345,382.00
COMMERCIAL/SERV.				
AFROMEDIA PLC	2	0.70	47,000	31,490.00
COURTVILLE INV. PLC	6	0.50	1,735,000	867,500.00
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	29	2.42	1,002,350	2,464,250.66
SECTOR Totals	37		2,784,350	3,363,240.66
COMP. & OFFICE EQUIP.				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC	5	8.13	102,350	832,105.50
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	30	0.65	2,661,000	1,622,840.00
TRIPP/GEE AND COY PLC	1	4.60	166	725.42
SECTOR Totals	36		2,763,516	2,455,670.92
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIG.) PLC	13	2.68	284,320	733,587.00
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	50	25.80	985,001	25,481,541.89
TRANS. CORP. OF NIG. PLC	55	0.50	9,489,524	4,744,762.00
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	80	39.80	2,638,925	104,014,347.28
UNILEVER NIG. PLC	61	23.84	2,684,524	64,034,021.88
SECTOR Totals	259		16,082,294	199,008,260.05
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	31	4.06	1,061,799	4,254,824.95
G. CAPPA PLC	2	14.46	600	8,244.00
JUL/BERGER NIG. PLC	27	28.50	129,832	3,527,000.56
MULTIVERSE RES. PLC	4	0.50	945,500	472,750.00
ROADS NIGERIA PLC	5	3.46	43,232	149,582.72
SECTOR Totals	69		2,180,963	8,412,402.27
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOB.				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	22	30.60	112,741	3,427,422.94
BIG TREAT PLC	15	0.78	2,114,775	1,649,549.50
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	79	16.00	950,701	15,203,254.13
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	140	12.57	1,434,535	17,739,382.71
DANGOTE SUGAR REF. PLC	122	15.00	2,462,976	36,943,914.54
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	41	38.00	95,188	3,603,923.45
H/WELL FLOUR MILL PLC	18	8.07	68,400	545,787.00
NATIONAL SALT COY NIG. PLC	117	7.03	3,615,895	24,964,369.60
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COY PLC	24	26.00	400,164	10,412,199.00
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	40	252.00	109,956	27,568,482.28
TANTALIZERS PLC	21	0.91	1,495,690	1,359,076.90
UTC NIGERIA PLC	10	0.90	66,943	62,926.42
SECTOR Totals	649		12,927,964	143,480,288.47
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	13	1.09	1,132,800	1,238,282.00
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	41	2.09	1,153,232	2,546,240.28
GLAXOS. CONS. NIG. PLC	9	23.11	151,620	3,502,486.85
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	23	5.50	270,961	1,495,450.02
NEIMETH INT. PHARM. PLC	21	1.67	648,161	1,140,554.15
UN/DIAG. & CLIN. SERV. PLC	22	0.70	1,176,963	809,871.29
SECTOR Totals	129		4,533,737	10,732,884.59
HOTEL & TOURISM				
CAPITAL HOTEL PLC	1	1.72	50,000	86,000.00
IKEJA HOTEL PLC	5	1.03	121,556	125,206.68
SECTOR Totals	6		171,556	211,206.68
IND./DOMESTIC PROD.				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIG. PLC	2	0.50	100,000	50,000.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC	34	5.02	613,084	3,088,820.02
SECTOR Totals	36		713,084	3,138,820.02
INF. & COMM. TECHNOLOGY				
CHAMS PLC	19	0.67	1,465,000	969,150.00
STARCOMMS PLC	12	2.05	268,592	543,486.16
SECTOR Totals	31		1,733,592	1,512,636.16
INSURANCE				
AFRICAN ALL. INSUR. PLC	2	0.73	692,868	505,793.64
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	42	0.95	1,420,311	1,345,571.61
CONTINENTAL REINS. PLC	6	1.08	6,022,515	6,094,591.05
CORNERSTONE INS. CO. PLC.	9	0.53	177,000	94,130.00
CUST. AND ALL. INS. PLC	11	2.83	758,177	2,099,056.21
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	37	0.54	3,623,000	1,956,620.00
GUARANTY TRUST ASSUR. PLC	39	2.15	17,048,367	37,392,454.99
CONSOL. HALL. INSUR. PLC	1	0.50	6,400	3,200.00
INTERN. ENERGY INS. COY PLC	32	0.63	2,484,087	1,512,246.89
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	56	0.52	6,415,900	3,346,358.45
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASS. PLC	2	0.64	10,000	6,400.00
N.E.M. INS. CO. (NIG.) PLC.	28	0.55	1,836,691	1,005,949.34
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	5	0.92	1,356,533	1,247,799.04
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	6	3.80	82,400	297,560.00
SOV. TRUST INSURANCE PLC	5	0.50	222,960	111,480.00
STAND. ALL. INSUR. PLC	25	0.61	850,186	518,583.46
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	21	0.69	2,367,500	1,680,545.00
UNIVERSAL INS. COY PLC	4	0.50	2,342,489	1,171,244.50
INTERC.WAPIC INSUR. PLC	17	1.05	493,524	518,180.20
SECTOR Totals	348		48,210,908	60,907,764.38
MARITIME				
JAP/OIL & MARIT. SERV. PLC	91	1.24	1,963,639	2,399,392.86
SECTOR Totals	91		1,963,639	2,399,392.86
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNIC. PLC	12	0.56	433,000	242,480.00
SECTOR Totals	12		433,000	242,480.00
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAVINGS & LOAND PLC	25	0.62	3,889,550	2,436,106.00
RES. SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	3	0.50	203,500	101,750.00
UN/HOMES SAV. & LOANS PLC	33	0.94	2,419,827	2,294,854.94
SECTOR Totals	61		6,512,877	4,832,710.94
OTHER FINANCIAL INST.				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC.	19	1.14	3,225,503	3,679,026.15
NIG. ENERGY SECTOR FUND	1	552.20	50	26,229.50
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	3	0.63	6,731	4,259.15
SECTOR Totals	23		3,232,284	3,709,514.80
RETAILING				
AVON C/CAPS & CONT. PLC.	1	7.65	30,000	218,100.00
NIG. BAG MANUF. COY PLC	23,473	1.79	24,969,005	43,704,278.60
POLY PRODUCTS (NIG.) PLC	1	4.23	6,500	26,130.00
SECTOR Totals	23,475		25,005,505	43,948,508.60
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	61	36.50	174,524	6,101,072.95
BECO PETROL. PROD. PLC	5	2.18	30,223	62,863.84
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	9	69.79	9,250	647,980.10
CONOIL PLC	28	33.57	112,609	3,604,676.81
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	38	6.05	588,807	3,609,663.82
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	17	99.95	35,358	3,428,539.00
OANDO PLC	5	93.99	3,580	336,484.20
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	8	150.00	55,289	8,293,350.00
SECTOR Totals	171		1,009,640	26,084,630.72
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	1	7.21	400	2,740.00
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	7	9.76	105,000	975,400.00
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	11	5.20	194,532	985,561.60
SECTOR Totals	19		299,932	1,963,701.60
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROP. DEV. CO. PLC	20	21.00	283,750	5,750,294.70
SECTOR Totals	20		283,750	5,750,294.70
ROAD TRANSPORTATION				
ASSOCIATED BUS COY PLC	16	1.05	906,750	952,087.50
SECTOR Totals	16		906,750	952,087.50
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXT. PLC	1	1.56	51,000	79,560.00
SECTOR Totals	1		51,000	79,560.00
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANS. INCORP.	19	14.50	631,000	9,228,340.00
SECTOR Totals	19		631,000	9,228,340.00
OVERALL Totals	29,534		569,326,684	2,075,152,353.10

What is Beta?

A measurement of the relationship between the price of a stock and the movement of the whole market.

Google

GAINERS

7UP	1.20
GLAXOSMITH	1.10
BCC	0.95
PZ	0.80

LOSERS

UNILEVER	1.25
ASHAKACEM	0.52
NAHCO	0.44
NCR	



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE MAINTENANCE SUPPORT OF SUN SERVERS AND NETAPP STORAGE DEVICES IN CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Central Bank of Nigeria is desirous to undertake the following projects.

1. Maintenance of Sun Servers
2. Maintenance of Netapp Storage Devices

Consequently, the Bank wishes to invite reputable and competent companies to tender for the projects as stated below.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

Maintenance Support of the above stated Infrastructure in CBN (REF: CBN2010SPMO-02)

a) The scope of the bid requested is for the comprehensive and basic maintenance support of the following Sun Servers and NETAPP Infrastructure at Garki Office, the Head Office and Lagos Office of the Central Bank Of Nigeria.

- a. Sun Fire E6900
- b. Sun Fire V480
- c. Sun Fire V20z
- d. Sun Fire V445
- e. Sun StorEdge 980c
- f. Tape Library (L100)
- g. FA2020storage System

b. The services will be offered for Normal Business Availability by Resident Engineers on site between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and Off-hours Availability (on needs basis).

- c. Ensure at least 99.99% performance availability

3.0 GENERAL REQUIREMENT

Interested and competent companies wishing to carry out the above job must submit the following documents for verification:-

- a.) Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission
- b.) Evidence of payment of tax for the last three (3) years as and when due.
- c.) Comprehensive company profile including registered address, functional contact email address, GSM phone number(s), facsimile number(s).

- d.) Verifiable evidence of similar jobs successfully executed in the past.
- e.) Reference letter from a bank stating financial ability to carry out such project(s).
- f.) Current company's audited statement of accounts.
- g.) Evidence of employees Retirement Savings Accounts (RSA) with a pension Fund Administrator.
- h.) Evidence of remitting employer and employee pension contributions to the appropriate pension fund custodian.
- i.) Evidence of transferring all Pension Funds and Assets prior to the commencement of the pension Reform Act to licensed pension operators.

3.0 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- a). The vendor must be an Original Equipment manufacturer (OEM) or an Authorized Dealer of OEM of the items under the scope of works.
- b). The Company must be registered by Computer Professional Registration Council of Nigeria.

4.0 Collection of Bid Document

Interested and competent contractors wishing to carry out the above job should collect the information for Bid (IFB) from Secretary Major Contract Tenders Committee, PSSD (2nd Floor, wing C) on the payment of a non-refundable fee of N50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Naira Only) for each bid. The payment will be in Bank Draft payable to CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA.

5.0 SUBMISSION

The submission will be in two separate envelopes.

A. the General Requirements should be submitted in one wax sealed envelope boldly marked at the top left Corner:

“Maintenance Support of SF&NS.... (Indicate the project and its Reference number)”

B. Financial bid should be submitted

in wax sealed envelope boldly marked at the top left corner:

“Financial Bid for the Maintenance Support of SF&NS.... (Indicate the project and its Reference number)”

The submission should be addressed to:-

The Secretary,
Major Contracts Tenders Committee
2nd Floor, Wing C
CBN Head Office Complex,
Central Business District,
Abuja, FCT Nigeria.
Fax NO: 09-462-38239
E-mail: tenders@cenbank.org

CLOSING DATE

All submission must be received at the above Address on or before 16.00 hours two weeks from the date of this publication.

OPENING DATE

The tenders shall be opened on Monday 8th, February, 2010.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

1) Only successful pre-qualified company(s) will have their financial Bids evaluated. Full tendering procedure will be applied to contractors pre-qualified and found capable of executing the project.

2) Nothing on this notice shall be construed to be commitment on the part of CBN.

3) The successful contractors will be contacted.

Signed:
MANAGEMENT

DIGEST

Still single at 30? Then settle for Mr Second Best not Mr Right

SINGLE women who continue their search for Mr. Right after the age of 30 are consigning themselves to a lonely future.

Author Lori Gottlieb caused a storm in the US for encouraging single women in their 30s to settle for Mr. Second Best or Mr. Right Now.

Now her book **Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough**, is to be published in the UK this week, and it is already sparking heated debate.

Single mother Gottlieb, 40, admits she wishes she had 'settled' for any of the 'perfectly acceptable but uninspiring' men she rejected during her search for the perfect man.

The author believes the notion of The One is nothing but a myth. And she accuses a glut of romantic fiction and film for betraying women by encouraging them to hold out for true love.

Single women in their 40s who maintain they are happy are fooling themselves, she claims.

'My dream, like that of my mother and her mother, was to fall in love, get married and live happily ever after,' writes Gottlieb.

'Of course, women are loath to admit it in this day and age, but ask any soul-baring 40-year-old single heterosexual woman what she most longs for in life, and she probably won't tell you it's a better career or a smaller waistline or a bigger apartment. Most likely, she'll say that what she really wants is a husband (and, by extension, a child).'

Gottlieb's book is based on an article she wrote in 2008 for Atlantic magazine.

The piece created such a sensation that it was picked up by Oprah Winfrey's O magazine and polarised readers.

Warner Independent and Tobey Maguire's Maguire Enter-



WOMEN should settle for second best if they are unmarried by the age of 30, according to a top U.S. author

tainment have bought the book and film rights, with Maguire to produce the film. In it Gottlieb claims that we have idealised marriage.

'We're conditioned to crave that Big Love,' she writes. 'It's painful how pervasive the fantasy is that The One is out there.'

'We grew up idealising marriage, but if we'd had a more realistic understanding of its cold, hard benefits, we might have done things differently. 'So we walked

away from uninspiring relationships that might have made us happy.'

Gottlieb claims that settling for Mr Second Best could make women happier in the long run.

'When we're holding out for romantic love, we have the fantasy that this level of passionate intensity will make us happier,' she writes.

'But marrying Mr Good Enough might be equally viable, especially if you're looking for a

reliable life companion.

'What makes for a good marriage isn't necessarily what makes for a good romantic relationship. 'Marriage isn't a passion-fest; it's a partnership formed to run a very small, mundane and often boring non-profit business. And I mean this in a good way.'

Gottlieb's frank admissions have been refuted by fellow author Elizabeth Gilbert. Gilbert warns that women are wrong to believe marriage will

make them happy. In her new book, *Committed: A Sceptic Makes Peace with Marriage*, she writes: 'We marry most often because we are in love and we think it will make us happy.'

'Yet married women are more likely to suffer from depression than are single women. Married women are not as successful in their careers as single women.'

She adds: 'The fact is women generally lose in the exchange of vows.'

Missy the cat: World's first feline recipient of artificial knee

MISSY the cat has become the world's first feline to have an artificial knee replacement.

Vets found her close to death after she was run over by a car, but she made a recovery after undergoing pioneering new surgery to rebuild her limbs and fit a specially-made metal joint.

The eight-year-old family pet had been lying injured in a bush for two days with one hind leg broken in eight places and the other with a completely dislocated knee before she was found

by her owners.

Dr Noel Fitzpatrick, the vet who performed the operation at his clinic in Guildford, said: 'It was a case of putting Missy to sleep forever or developing an artificial knee, which had never been done before. Amputation was not an option since the other hind leg was broken in eight places.'

The skin and tendons at the back of her other foot had died due to crushing of the blood supply and the tissue had all fallen off,

leaving raw bone exposed.

In order to regrow tissue and cover the bone, a collagen mesh made out of pig's bladder was used. The various broken bones were then placed in a scaffolding of pins called a SPIDER (Secured Pin Intramedullary Dorsal Epoxy Resin Frame) until the bone and tissue healed.

The new total knee replacement implant was designed by Dr Fitzpatrick, Professor Gordon Blunn and Mr Jay Meswania of OrthoFitz Implants. It is made

of two parts which are linked together with a hinged mechanism so that the knee ligaments - which had all been shredded - would no longer be required and the knee could no longer dislocate.

Uniquely, the implant was custom-designed based on a scan of Missy's knee and exactly fitted Missy's measurements, both in terms of the size of her bones and the range of motion of her knee joint. The three-inch long implant is made out of stainless steel and is bonded to the thigh bone and the

shin bone using cement.

Dr Fitzpatrick added: 'The most difficult thing about the operation was miniaturising the implants and matching the hinge motion to allow walking, running and jumping, which cats do a lot of. A human patient with a knee replacement would probably walk and maybe even run but would rarely expect to jump.'

The operation took two-and-a-half hours to cut the old damaged knee out and replace it with the new implants.

Sign Language



Oops! Is it swimming or swimmung?
 Photo location: Sea of Galilee, Israel, by Susan Isabell
 Culled from www.signspotting.com

SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given" - these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

72

2		7			9			
				1		8		
5	8	1		2	3			
7			1					3
			3		9		5	
	2				5			7
				6	3		7	2
		6		4				
			5				6	1

EASY CROSSWORDS

- ACROSS**
- ___ dish
 - Sheep sound
 - Waffle brand
 - Thought
 - Sports official, for short
 - Thunder sound
 - Early video game
 - Parking place
 - Sock defect
 - Litters
 - Planted seed
 - Stick fast
 - Place (out)
 - Midsection
 - Obvious
 - Hockey's Bobby ___
 - Had supper
 - Kanga's baby
 - Alphabet members
 - Singer Ross
 - Hockey surface
 - Tightened
 - Carved brooch
 - Advanced degrees (abbr.)
 - Ardent
 - Zodiac lion
 - Maladies
 - Lima's land
 - ___ and
- DOWN**
- Examinee
 - Ready a patient
 - "Goodness!"
 - Buster Brown's canine
 - Tiny drink
 - Bride's response (2 wds.)
 - Family room
 - "Bald" birds
 - Protrude
 - Andy's sidekick
 - Suitable
 - Resounded
 - Lightning bug's output
 - Strong gust
 - Page for viewpoints (hyph.)
 - Style of the '20s (2 wds.)
 - Lost control of a car
 - MP's prey
 - Be bold
 - Trumpeter Al
 - Seth's mom
 - Pulver's rank (abbr.)
 - Pitchers' stats
 - Not one
 - Frog's kin
 - Fury
 - Unavailable (2 wds.)
 - Demand
 - The ones there
 - Marryin' Sam's creator
 - Declare firmly
 - Bog down
 - ___ le Pew
 - Drag
 - Island garland
 - Table part
 - Mariner's dir.

60

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19				20		
21	22	23			24			25	26	27
28				29				30		
31				32				33		
34				35				36		
37				38				39		
40	41	42			43					
44				45				46	47	48
49				50				51		52
53				54				55		

Solution to Easy Crosswords

59

S	M	U	G		M	I	T		O	R	C	A	
P	I	P	E		O	D	D		R	E	A	R	
A	L	A	N		P	O	S	S	I	B	L	E	
R	E	C	I	P	E				S	E	A	M	S
		R	E	O		P	A	W	N				
S	H	E		E	D	I	T		T	B	S	P	
R	U	E		M	A	N	O	F		E	U	R	
I	N	K	S		M	E	M	O		L	E	E	
				H	E	E	D		R	B	I		
E	D	N	A	S				S	E	R	E	N	A
A	D	O	P	T	I	O	N			I	V	A	N
S	A	M	E		S	A	O			B	E	N	T
E	Y	E	D		A	F	B			E	R	A	S

Solution to Sudoku 71

4	9	6	5	8	7	2	1	3
7	3	2	6	1	4	5	8	9
8	5	1	9	3	2	4	7	6
2	7	4	3	6	8	1	9	5
9	6	3	7	5	1	8	2	4
1	8	5	2	4	9	3	6	7
5	2	7	8	9	3	6	4	1
3	4	8	1	7	6	9	5	2
6	1	9	4	2	5	7	3	8

News Extra

Ethiopian airliner carrying 90 people plunges into Mediterranean sea



THE Ethiopian Boeing 737 ET-ANB plane that crashed off the coast of Lebanon yesterday slowing down after arriving in Dubai from Addis Ababa on November 19, 2009.

Two Britons were among 90 people on a jet which crashed into the Mediterranean after taking off from Beirut, a Lebanese minister said yesterday.

The Ethiopian Airlines plane crashed into the sea just minutes

after leaving the ground, with witnesses saying they saw a 'ball of fire'.

Four bodies have already been recovered and wreckage can be seen in the sea near the crash site, two miles off the coast.

Ethiopian Airlines chief executive Girma Wake said there was

no word of any survivors.

'I have contact with the Lebanese authorities, who have not yet confirmed any survivors.'

Lebanon's transportation minister Ghazi Aridi said two Britons of Lebanese origin were among the passengers on board, with the rest being mainly Lebanese and Ethiopian.

A Foreign Office spokesman was unable to verify the report, saying British embassy officials in Lebanon were checking.

The Boeing 737-800 took off from Beirut at around 2.30am local time (12.30am GMT) heading for the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, said Mr Aridi.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but police ruled out terrorism and said it was probably

weather-related.

Heavy rain and lightning had been reported in the area.

Heavy rain and lightning had been reported in the area

Helicopters and naval ships scoured the choppy waters in search of the plane, which was carrying 83 passengers and seven crew.

Mr Aridi said the passengers were 54 Lebanese, 22 Ethiopians,

one Iraqi, one Syrian, one Canadian of Lebanese origin, one Russian of Lebanese origin, a French woman and the two Britons.

The wife of the French ambassador to Lebanon was on the plane, according to an embassy official.

Relatives later began arriving at Beirut airport, many of them crying and hugging one another. They were led into a VIP area.

Ethiopian Airlines said on its website: 'A team is already working on gathering all pertinent information.'

'An investigative team has already been dispatched to the scene and we will release further information as further updates are received.'

The state-owned airline has positioned itself as a major player in international air traffic in Africa and has recently expanded its Asian network.

Last Friday it announced an order for 10 of Boeing's Next-Generation 737-800s for a total price of £475 million.

The airline has long had a reputation for high-quality service compared with other African airlines, with two notable crashes in more than 20 years.

A hijacked Ethiopian Airlines jet crash-landed off the Comoros Islands in the Indian Ocean when it ran out of fuel in November 1996, killing 126 of the 175 people on board.

The plane had just left Addis Ababa when three hijackers stormed the cockpit and demanded to be taken to Australia.

In September 1988, an Ethiopian Airlines jet crashed shortly after taking off when it ran into a flock of birds, killing 31 of the 104 people on board.



A woman is comforted by a friend as she collapses in despair at Beirut airport upon news that a relative was aboard the Ethiopian Airlines plane that plunged into the sea



A Lebanese soldier carries remains of the Ethiopian Airlines plane on the beach yesterday morning.

News Extra

Miracle escape for passengers

...As plane catches fire on landing in Iran

Passengers had a miracle escape Sunday when a plane in Iran caught fire as it was coming into land.

Amazingly, there were no fatalities after the Russian-made Tupolev aircraft set alight as it was about to arrive in the north east of the country.

'About 42 passengers, out of 157 aboard, were injured when the plane was landing at Mashhad city's airport,' said Gholamreza Massoumi, head of Iran's emergency medical services.

There were no fatalities, said Iran's civil aviation spokesman Reza Jafarzadeh.

The official IRNA news agency said the incident occurred when the rear end of the plane, which belonged to Iran's domestic Taban Airliner, caught fire while landing.

The cause of the incident was being investigated, IRNA said.

In the worst plane crash in Iran in the past six years, a Tupolev aircraft crashed in 2009 in Iran on its way to Armenia, after catching fire mid-air and crashing into farmland killing all 168 people on board.

Iran has suffered a string of

Iran has suffered a string of crashes in the past few decades, many involving Russian-made aircraft

crashes in the past few decades, many involving Russian-made aircraft.

U.S. sanctions against Iran have prevented it from buying new aircraft or spare parts from the West, forcing it to add to its ageing fleet of Boeing and Airbus planes with aircraft from Russia and other former Soviet Union states.



FIREMEN put out the remnants of fire in a plane that caught fire while landing in Mashhad, north west of Tehran



FIREMEN work to put out any remains of the fire. More than 40 passengers were injured



THE Russian-made Iranian passenger plane after its crash landing at Mashhad airport

News Extra



WORSHIPPERS during an outdoor Sunday service at a makeshift camp in Port-au-Prince.

Haiti earthquake: Religion fills the void left by aid agencies

Haiti's evangelical and voodoo priests are providing spiritual and material aid to the homeless and injured.

A fierce gust of wind lashes across the sprawling camp, carrying with it the bitter aroma of pepper spray and faeces. Above, Black Hawk helicopters clatter through the cobalt blue sky. On the ground clusters of homeless Haitians with hammers and rusty saws set about cobbling together improvised shacks out of corrugated iron and shreds of plastic sheeting.

Welcome to Pont-Rouge, a refugee camp for about 15,000 displaced people, and one of Port-au-Prince's most recent shanty towns. It is here, on waste land near the city's international airport, among rickety shacks and smouldering campfires, that an evangelical revolution is gathering speed.

With the government's presence all but invisible, and humanitarian agencies and the UN struggling to cope with the demand for aid, groups of preachers are moving in to fill the void.

"I've started a school and we are trying to give people food and clothes," said Reverend Sauverne Apollon, 75, whose church - the Eglise Mission foi Caribéenne



LOOTING is now the order of the day as the much needed aid is not getting to the people.

Independence d'Haiti - was one of the first to be constructed in the slum after its headquarters was destroyed in the quake.

"The people need hospital help, food and homes. I'm trying to do what I can," Apollon added.

As he spoke, UN troops used pepper spray and rubber bullets to contain Pont-Rouge's residents who were crushing together in their thousands in a queue for water and food. Peruvian soldiers from the UN stabilisation force waved their shotguns about in an attempt to repel children who were trying to push into the seemingly endless queue.

Haiti has two official religions:

Catholicism and voodoo, and the majority believe in some form of voodoo. But as in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of born again Christians has risen sharply over the last 10 years. For Port-au-Prince's Pentecostal leaders the earthquake is an opportunity further spread their word among the city's homeless people.

"When God speaks we must listen," said Apollon, known in Pont-Rouge as "le pasteur". "The earthquake is God's voice and He will do other things. The stars will crash down onto the earth."

Apollon's improvised church consists of three wooden pews and a plywood altar. Behind the altar, a green sheet has been tied to a sheet of corrugated iron. On it are the words: God is great.

For those who have lost their homes, Apollon offers not just an explanation but also physical aid and security.

"I've been here for nine days," said Thamara Berlome, a 20-year-old recruit to Apollon's church, wearing a black cap with words: I'm the boss. "I don't have anything. There's no government. People here are fending for themselves. I'm waiting for President René Préval to say where we

should sleep. At the moment the pastor is the one helping."

"He's a good guy, he stops the fighting, there's discipline around the church," added Berlome, who is living in the camp with her mother, father and brother after their house was destroyed.

Across town the message repeated itself. In a Pentecostal-run orphanage in Peguy-Ville, home to nearly 50 orphaned or abandoned children Gerard Ganthier, from the Church of God of the Mountain, summed up his feelings about the earthquake by quoting from Matthew 24. "And Jesus said unto them: See ye not all these things?" said the blind preacher.

Meanwhile, members of Haiti's voodoo community were spreading an equally bleak message.

Ouida Alva, a 38-year-old voodoo leader, said: "We have three elements, water, earth and fire. Now we are waiting for the fire. Only he who believes will survive."

"Whether you are a [Pentecostal] preacher, a Catholic priest or voodoo, it's the same. Humanity needs to say: 'Stop. Stop now. Stop the sinning.'"

For now, Pont-Rouge's residents have more worldly issues to address.

"I don't know how long we'll have to stay here. It's not up to me," said Pierre Rubens, the dreadlocked president of the shanty town's community association, who is also among the estimated 1 million people displaced by the earthquake. "Right now we need food, water and tents."

HEALTH REPORT

Restless legs linked to erectile dysfunction

MEN with restless leg syndrome are more likely to have erectile dysfunction, a new research has suggested.

"There is an association between the two conditions, but we don't know which one comes first," said study author Dr. Xiang Gao, an instructor in medicine at Harvard University School of Public Health. If researchers do discover how they're connected, it could lead to more effective treatments, he said.

Restless leg syndrome "afflicts a significant portion of our population and in a minority of cases can cause insomnia and other important consequences," said Dr. Robert Vorona, an associate professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Virginia who studies sleep disorders.

Its causes remain a mystery, Vorona said, but some evidence suggests it's related to reduced levels of iron and the neurotransmitter known as dopamine in the brain. Those who have the neurological disorder complain of an almost irresistible urge to move their legs.

In the new study, colleagues examined responses from 23,119 medical professionals, including physicians, veterinarians and pharmacists, who were asked questions about restless leg syndrome. Of the men surveyed, 395 reported having restless legs at least 15 times a month. They were more likely than the other men to use antidepressants and more likely to smoke.

After researchers adjusted their statistics to reduce the effect of age on the results, they found that those with the most restless leg syndrome symptoms were about twice as likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction. The rate was still higher after the researchers adjusted their figures to account for the effects of other factors, such as antidepressant use and smoking.

Source: HealthDay

'Why primary healthcare must be enhanced'

HEALTH Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) is a nongovernmental organisation of health practitioners rooting for better healthcare. Its Executive Secretary, Ahmed Gana, discusses why primary healthcare delivery should be enhanced, among other health issues.



AHMED GANA

By Ruby Rabi

WHAT have you identified as the most serious challenges facing the health sector in Nigeria?

I should first explain what we as a nongovernmental organization do. We are not here to implement programmes for government but to support what the government is doing. In doing that, however, we work closely with the government to ensure that problems are solved for the benefit of all Nigerians. To answer your question, our health system in the past 10 to 20 years has been very poor. Hospital buildings are dilapidated and human resources are lacking, especially in the North. For example, doctors are more available in the South than in the North. These are critical challenges that need to be addressed.

WHAT do you feel about the funding of health services?

Underfunding is not the problem that you may think. There are certain critical issues which outcomes we need to look at. One is the health status of the population. We have

very high mortality and infant mortality. Acute malnutrition is widespread. Hospital services are bad. Efficiency of health workers is generally low. Investments in the health sector are not producing expected results. Money going into the system at the federal, state and local government levels is huge. Development partners are putting in much money. There has been the debt relief fund that is coming which is also huge. So, it is not that money is not coming for health delivery.

WHAT then is happening?

Many things. There is lack of proper coordination between the different tiers of government. Nigerian is a federal state. We have the federal, state and local governments. Each of them is expected to participate. The critical point of implementation is at the state and local government levels. If these arms of government are not involved in planning, you will end up with documents that are just sitting at the federal and state levels. Kudos should be given to the Ministry of Health under the leadership of Prof. Babatunde

Ostimehin. The approach to the new national strategic health development plan enhances the concepts of participatory programme formulation and implementation. The Ministry has come out with a template and the states are expected to be part of it. It is of national application but for states to adapt to their own situations. They are to implement for their citizens following indicated standards.

One area where we have a critical challenge in the entire health sector is the primary healthcare (PHC) implementation. The primary health care not only in Nigeria but the entire developing world is vital. Way back in the 1970s when the concept was activated, PHC basically was meant to address some development backwardness at community levels. But it has suffered neglect. If you don't have a good PHC system, it will end up with majority of the population not having access to health care delivery. You know of the extreme poverty in most of these rural areas. Amidst that, you will find that when people are sick in the rural areas, they will have to travel long distances to get to facilities. People in the position of leadership should accept that democracy is not just about building physical structures. If you do not have a healthy population, if you do not provide basic health services for the people, you have not done much.

WHAT is the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) instituted to solve some of the problems of health delivery. How do you rate its activities?

NHIS came fully when former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, lunched it. You know, it's a bit too early to begin to assess it. Besides, the complexity of the whole country is not really making it easy for

the primary health care system to work. We are working with the NHIS and we know of refusal of many state governments to join the scheme. The states are spending so much money in health care services, such as free maternal health, but it is not just about voting money, it is also about ensuring that money voted is spent prudently and promises made are delivered faithfully. For the past hundred years, Germany has been in what we are trying to perfect. There are other good examples that were studied before the Nigerian scheme was drawn. So far, I think the Federal Government has done well in getting the formal sector involved at the federal level, but until we are able to get the state governments to join the NHIS scheme, we will continue to have a very terrible state of health. The governors, if it gets to the point of begging them, we need to collectively beg as Nigerians and tell them to give us health insurance, not just the formal sector because it constitutes just about one percent of the population. So, there has to be a sort of community-based insurance scheme that the states can help with.

YOU said something about inadequate human resources. Part of what the Federal Government has done to address this is the mobilization of midwives to states around the country. What do you think of the initiative?

These are critical issues that generally have to be looked at when talking about human resources for health. The mid-wives free scheme is a short-time measure to me but it is attempting to redistribute midwives and other PHC workers from areas where they have access to places where there are critical needs. I have talked about the difference between the southern and northern parts of the country. The scheme is now trying to redistribute midwives and make them available to places where they are mostly needed. The critical challenges might be useful in the short term but what

happens in the long run is what we need to monitor and predict because it might not be successful as we think. You can imagine bringing a midwife from Lagos which is an urban state to somewhere like Jigawa and probably she is not going to be stationed in Dutse but a very remote area where there is no infrastructure, no good roads, no good water supply system, and probably no electricity. There could be communication problem, language barrier, ethnic differences, and in many cases even religious problem.

Sustainability is not just about getting the nurses and sending them to these areas. It's about long term planning and preparations on how to make it last. Indeed, many things need to be considered if we are to sustain the programme. Most of these women who are nurses and midwives are mothers of children and wives of men. When transferring them, you don't expect them to be transferred with their entire family. The local communities need to be involved, they need to be encouraged to get their own people to replace the nurses being brought from other places when such ones leave, if the scheme is to endure.

IN your view, how well has the pursuit of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) helped health delivery in Nigeria?

We have critical challenges in the health-related MDGs. Almost all the challenges that burdened the health sector prior to MDGs are still prevalent and if you do not collectively address the issues in the health sector, MDGs interventions alone cannot solve the problems. I have said it severally that the fundamental problem of the health services in Nigeria is not much about inadequacy in funding as inefficiency and high level of corruption. People come up with beautiful plans which implementers mess up. When you look for the money, you don't find it because there is no good monetary and supervisory system.



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Minister of Finance Dr. Mansur Muhtar elected Chairman, Board of Governors of the 2010 World Bank – IMF Annual Meetings in Washington.

Nigeria made history at the recently concluded 2009 World Bank - IMF Annual Meetings in Istanbul, Turkey when the Honourable Minister of Finance – Dr. Mansur Muhtar OFR, was elected by the Board of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to chair its 2010 Meetings holding in Washington.

The Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund each year brings together central bankers, ministers of finance and development, private sector executives and academics to discuss issues of global concern.

This is the first time an African country is being given the position in the history of the Bretton Wood Institutions. Dr. Mansur Muhtar takes over from Dr Nguyen Van Giau Governor of the Central Bank of Vietnam.

Accepting the position of the Chairmanship of the Board of Governors of the 2010 World Bank – IMF Meetings, Dr. Muhtar re-iterated the need for continued modernization of the institutions in order to enhance their effectiveness and meet emerging challenges. "The unprecedented global challenges facing the World, must be

matched by unprecedented global solutions", he emphasized. He recognized the Bank's leadership in "addressing the human crisis that has resulted from the financial and economic crisis through continued measures to tackle poverty via projects focused on social protection, long term infrastructure investment and private sector led economic growth". He called on the World Bank and IMF to "work closely with member governments to better understand the causes of the crisis, and apply lessons drawn from these experiences, to support financial and economic stability and broad based prosperity". The Bank must press forward with actions to revive global trade and address climate change effects.

With this rare feat, the administration of President Yar'adua has again scored a point in the realm of international finance.

The Federal Ministry of Finance congratulates an achiever and our indefatigable Minister Dr. Mansur Muhtar. We wish him a successful tenure as Chairman, Board of Governors of the 2010 World Bank – IMF Annual Meetings in Washington.

Ochi C. Achinivu
Permanent Secretary

An honour well deserved

The Board of Directors and
Management and Staff of



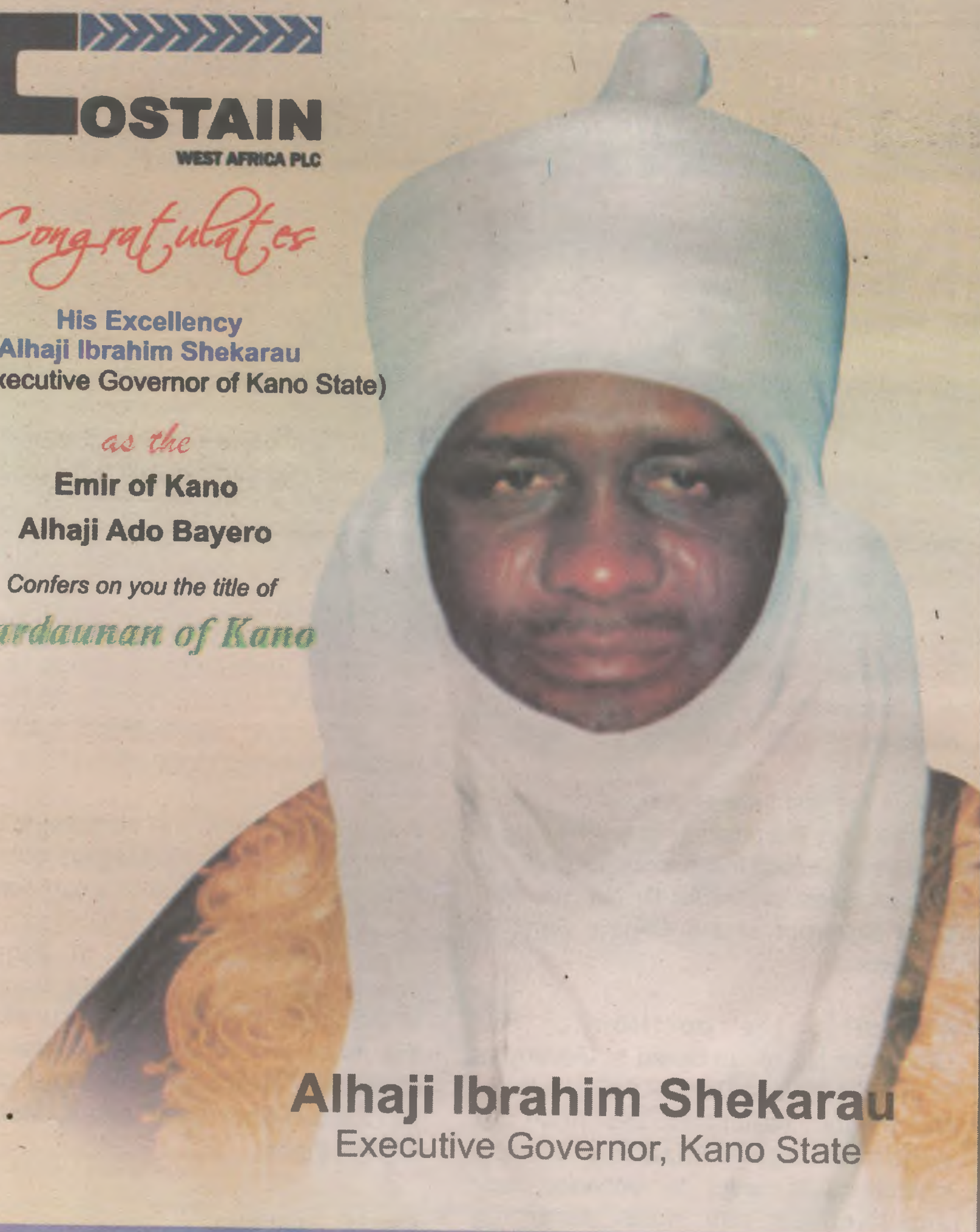
Congratulates

His Excellency
Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau
(The Executive Governor of Kano State)

as the

Emir of Kano
Alhaji Ado Bayero

Confers on you the title of
Sardaunan of Kano



Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau
Executive Governor, Kano State

Signed:
Management

ENVIRONMENT

property@dailytrust.com

HOTLINE: 07041632079

Water scarcity hits Jos metropolis

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

WATER scarcity has worsened the living condition of residents of Jos and environs after the two days crises that left hundreds of people dead in Jos and Bukuru environs.

Daily Trust correspondent who went round Jos metropolis saw women and children with jerry cans, buckets and other

containers looking for water. In some places they joined long queue at wells and boreholes where they stayed between two to three hours.

Some people that spoke to our correspondent blamed the Plateau state government for deliberately refusing to release water to their taps which worsened the condition in their houses.

On Wednesday people vio-

lated the 24 hour curfew set up by the government and went out to look for water in Kwanan Sogai, Kwanan Soja and Dilimi, Nassarawa and British America.

A community leader, Alhaji Sani Mudi, said people must go out to look for food and water because they cannot live without these two basic amenities, adding that relaxing the curfew will give people opportunity to get food

but since there is no supply of food stuffs in the town for some days, there is fear that even if people open their shops the food stuffs they have in stock will finish and appealed for donors and philanthropists to assist.

Plateau State Commissioner of Information, Mr Gregory Yenlong, said government will not subject its citizens that elected them to power into hard-

ship. He said even now water was released to the people's taps "as I am speaking with you I am in front of some people fetching water from the taps in the street."

Mr Yenlong said government will assist people with water and food items to ease their suffering and appealed to people to remain calm and law abiding and report any suspicious character to the Police.

Umuahia timber market gutted by fire

ABIA state indigenes watched helplessly as goods worth over N50 million were gutted down by fire in the wee hours of Friday at the Timber Industrial market in Umuahia, Abia state.

The fire which razed down a total of 12 shops, affected mostly the line involving upholstery, timber and casket-making shops and known as the carpenter line.

Though, the cause of the fire

outbreak could not be ascertained, eyewitness however said that the incident of fire disaster has become an annual ritual in that market, while accusing fingers were being pointed at some ritualists in the market.

It was gathered that the ritualists burn their properties in the market and that of others so that they would get more money after the incident.

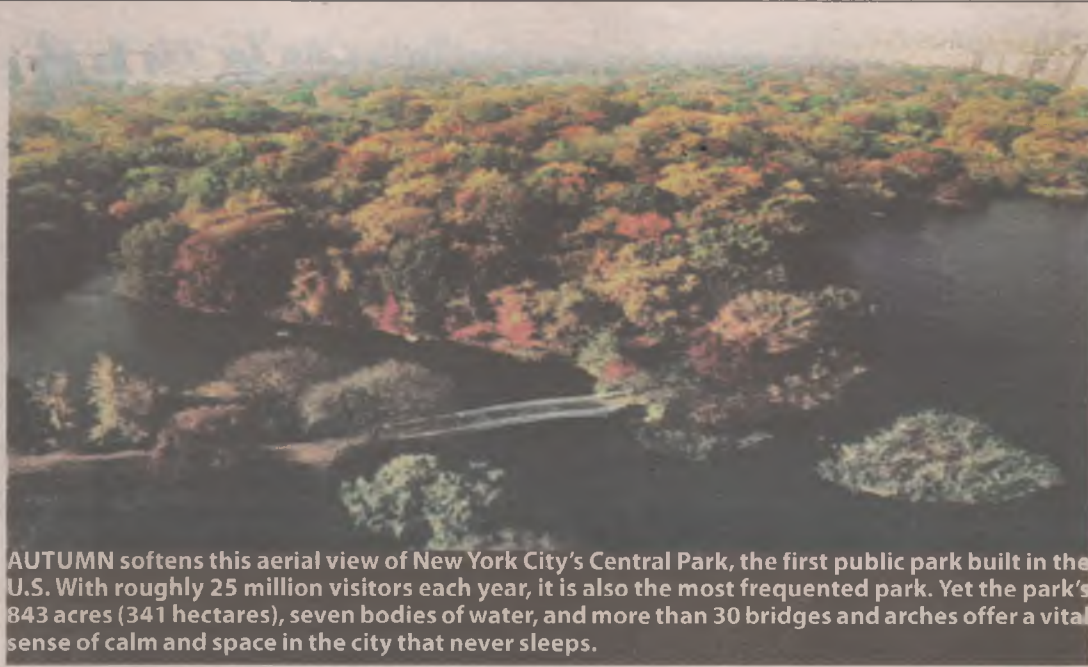
It was a strong belief among many in the market that the outbreak of the fire must have been caused by some people, adding that gallon of petrol and match box were found around where the fire started last year.

Speaking when he paid a sympathetic visit to the market at the weekend, Governor Theodore Orji regretted that most of the fire outbreaks in the market occur at night, a situation he said makes it difficult to check its spread and prayed that such ugly incident does not reoccur.

The governor, who made a donation of N2 million to help cushion the effects of the fire on the victims, advised them not to let their spirit be dampened by the incident.



GOV Theodore Orji



AUTUMN softens this aerial view of New York City's Central Park, the first public park built in the U.S. With roughly 25 million visitors each year, it is also the most frequented park. Yet the park's 843 acres (341 hectares), seven bodies of water, and more than 30 bridges and arches offer a vital sense of calm and space in the city that never sleeps.

Erosion threatens 5 communities in Imo

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

FIVE communities in Ikeduru local government area in Imo State have been devastated by serious erosion menace.

A member of Imo State House of Assembly, Chief Samuel Anyanwu, said yesterday in Owerri that the affected communities include Ezizama, Avuvu, Amokohia, Uzoagba, Okwu and Ugiri Ike.

He said that the five communities are not only threatened but are currently at the verge of caving into the disaster and cutting off from the neighbouring communities.

Anyanwu who expressed regret over the deteriorating erosion menace threatening his constituency, maintained that the challenges of the erosion has gone beyond the scope of the state government owing to its magnitude of the menace.

The state legislator called for urgent intervention of both the Federal Government and the National Ecological Management Agency (NEMA) fund to safe the ugly situation.

He said that a letter had being sent NEMA office in Abuja and the federal government for their

immediate intervention over the deplorable state of erosion sites in the area.

He recalled that the situation made it possible for the Federal Ministry of Environment and Urban Development and Senate Committee on Ecology to pay finding visit to these areas.

The lawmaker, who is also House Committee Chairman on Commerce and Industry, appealed to NEMA to urgently intervene in order to save lives and properties as well as restore economic and social activities in the affected communities.

FG establishes 7 mineral purchasing centres

FEDERAL government said it has established seven mineral purchasing centres across the country to facilitate the export of solid mineral products.

As part of measures to step-up development of the mining sector, the Miners Association of Nigeria said it would be worthwhile if government deploys some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) funds to promote mining activities in the country. The Chief Environmental Officer, Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in the Federal Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, Mr. Yanusa Moham-

med, regarding the Work Bank-sponsored training workshop for Gemstone miners held in Jos said the aim of setting up the centres is to help provide ready market where local miners can sell their product at a good price.

He said the Ministry is also encouraging the formation of cooperatives by miners in order to enable them pull their resources together for sustainable mining activities.

"Government has established seven Mineral Buying Centres where miners in the country can take their products to for maximum returns. Part of the mining

law stipulates that mining products must not be sold in the open market except through the buying centres", he said.

Mohammed said many cooperative societies have registered with the ministry and are being assisted to access loans from the banks for their operations. He said one of the sought after mineral product in the international market at present is Gemstone which Nigeria is greatly endowed with.

According to him, the Ministry decided to embark of the training programme in collaboration with the World Bank Project Office in

order to enable Nigerians avail themselves of the economic opportunities inherent in the mining of Gemstones.

He said the aim is to expose the local gemstone miners to some of the modern technologies and worldwide practice for the mining of the product so that they learn a better of carrying out their mining operation.

For a long time mining activities have witnessed a declining fortune in the country with most of the mines either neglected or abandoned. However, Mohammed said the situation is being reversed at

least in the last three years as federal government has been redirecting attention to investment in the sector.

National Secretary of the Miners Association of Nigeria, Mallam Sani Shehu, while commenting on the training described the workshop as significant milestone which has brought together the informal miners to acquaint themselves with the latest technology in the mining of Gemstone.

Shehu said the association is asking government to adopt mining as one of the MDG projects for eradicating poverty and to deploy more funds to the sector.

ENVIRONMENT

Sanitary condition in Nyanya horrible - Residents

RESIDENTS of Nyanya in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) on Wednesday described the sanitary condition of the area as "horrible and unbearable".

Some of the residents said in Abuja that occupants of government quarters designated Area A to Area F had formed the habit of disposing human waste on the roads.

Mr Charles Obiora, a businessman, said that some of the residents evacuated their septic tanks themselves.

The people do not bother to engage the services of AEPB or private companies to pack their excreta with the proper equipment.

"Once the toilet is filled up, they engage men who do not have the right equipment to pack their waste and they end up disposing it on the road or in the gutter.

"The people normally pack the excreta in the night and dispose them on the streets, most especially the main road where people pass every day, such an

act is very bad, especially on the health of little children living in the area.

"This situation is very bad, some of the people living in such areas who claim to be educated are illiterates, they know the right thing to do but ignore it, they want government to do it for them," Obiora said.

Another resident, Mr Ade Oludare, said that sometimes the residents would break the septic tank and remove the human waste through the gutter or dig a

hole and pack it inside and cover it up.

He advised government to enact a law that would arrest such a practice and described the situation as dangerous on the health of residents.

He also said that the roads that led to Area A and Area F had deteriorated, adding that they are no longer motorable during the rainy season.

He, therefore, called on government to come to the aid of the residents while the drainages

should be rehabilitated to arrest flooding in the area.

Reacting to the development, Mr Tijani Ado, the Chief Environmental Health Officer in the area, said that the council was not aware of the disposal of human waste on the roads.

He said that AMAC had been trying its best to make sure that all areas under the council were clean, but expressed regret that residents of Nyanya, Karu and Jukwoyi had refused to embrace a decent environment.

Oil spill at Texas port dumps 450,000 gallons

A tanker ship loaded with oil in the Port of Port Arthur, Texas, collided with two barges being towed by a tug boat, resulting in a spill of about 450,000 gallons of crude, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

No injuries were reported, but a 50-block area around the port was evacuated out of caution, as the tanker was carrying a type of oil containing sulfide.

The portion of the port where the collision occurred will remain closed until it is deemed safe for workers and other vessels to return, Petty Officer Richard



Brahm said. The Coast Guard has deployed 4,000 feet of boom, which helps corral the oil, with 10,000 more

feet available for cleanup. Also on the scene are oil skimmers, three boom vessels, four 25-foot Coast Guard boats, the Coast Guard cutter Manowar and authorities from the local police and fire departments.

The spill is in a "very still" area of the waterway, which is helping contain it, Brahm said.

"There is almost no water flow in the area, so the oil isn't spreading out," he said.

The port is primarily for industrial use, but Coast Guard Capt. John J. Plunkett said there are environmental concerns to

marsh areas both up- and downstream of the spill. He said the spill hadn't reached those areas.

The Coast Guard did not indicate how long cleanup will take. The investigation into the cause of the collision is ongoing.

Port Arthur is about 100 miles east of Houston, near the Louisiana border.

The biggest oil spill in U.S. history occurred in 1989 when the Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef in the Gulf of Alaska, resulting in the spill of 11 million gallons of crude.

CNN

'FCT sanitation task force should be professionalised'

Mr. Augustine Ebisike is the Registrar of Environmental Health Officers Registration Council of Nigeria (EHORECON). In this interview, he spoke on the activities of the council and other sundry issues. Excerpts:

By Mustapha Suleiman

CAN you tell us briefly the mandate of EHORECON?

THE mandate of the Council is to register Environmental Health Officers and regulate the practice of the profession of environmental health, we also conduct examination, we accredit training institutions where the training of Environmental Health Officers are carried out, in a nutshell, that is our mandate. But the wider powers can be deduced from the phase of "Regulating the profession". Other powers are embedded in the Environmental Health Practice Regulations 2007. To regulate the practice of the profession entails, providing the needed guide, how you want those who are practicing within the profession to operate, be they individual, corporate bodies, whatever they are, as long as they are practising within the field of

environmental health are responsible to the Council to guide on how the Council wants the practice to be carried out.

In short we are the profession of the sanitary inspectors, anything sanitary / hygiene is within the council's mandate.

I remember in those days sanitary inspectors go on house to house inspection, why is it that there is decline in house inspection now?

Why there is decline is because of the number of Environmental Health Officer engaged by the various governments. For example we have only 20 registered environmental health officers working in Abuja both at the local government and the federal capital administration. Some of them are in waste management, some of them are in other programmes and project. This is because the health officer is a polyvalent official. He can work in many programmes. A state as big as the FCT, we only have 20 of them, even if this number works for 24 hours, there is no way they can cover the entire FCT.

If government re-focus attention on core preventive health services, engage adequate numbers of Environmental Health Officers and provide logistics and other tools to them for the work, the situation will change for the better. In some states basic things they use to work such as abatement notices, inspection forms, vehicle to move round they don't have.



MR. Augustine Ebisike

What are the other challenges facing the Council?

As a new organization, we are supposed to have a bigger office space; we have not effectively existed for more than 3 years officially in the budget. The government funding is not so much to go round all our needs, so our challenges include funding. It includes the problems of states and local government. The states and the local government need to re-order their priority and what I mean by re-ordering their priority is that today preventive health is where the priority should be.

If we must continue to bring down the rate of diseases in our country, we must go back to the drawing board and this drawing board, it is to go back to where we started, which is to make sure that, preventive health come back to what, it used to be, so with this, the state and local government must all agree that the need to get Health Inspector, to do the work he is trained to do and put adequate

number of them to do the work. If this is done, the health profile of Nigeria will improve because we will have less people going to the hospitals.

AEPB sanitary inspectors in FCT, how would you assess them?

They are over worked. To start with they are only 20 of them. There are so many quacks that are parading themselves under AEPB Task Force as Environmental Health Officers or doing the job of Environmental Health Officers. For example, our findings show that the Chairman of the Task Force in Kubwa is somebody who dropped out of school.

He has no training in any area of environmental health yet he is heading an enforcement duty in a regulated profession. The case of Kubwa is not isolated as this is wide spread.

To make the situation most serious, he is not even a staff of AEPB. Yet he is given an AEPB vehicle with government cover in persons of some armed mobile policemen.

How can somebody who is not your staff, be given the responsibility to go about generating revenue for government. Most of the monies realised will be used by himself and his cronies,

If any civil servant does anything wrong, the government can subject him to discipline but when someone who is not paid salary

and not really responsible to anybody assumes the force of law as is the case of these sanitation task-forces then they would be working on their own to look.

Now, how do we make Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, the model that it is meant to be?

You see most of what we are doing is panic measures, the other day, I read it on newspapers that policemen would now be in charge of sanitation, I laughed. This is on top of the crime they are to control they will also assume the responsibility.

One of the problems we have is that people see environmental sanitation as an all comers affair.

There is no human endeavour in the world today that is everybody's job, even if health is everybody's work but when one is sick, he still needs to go to hospital and see a doctor. One can draft a legal document but when a lawyer drafts it he will introduce those legal finesse that makes him a lawyer.

In the same way if sanitation must move in FCT, they should go back to the drawing board and look for the professionals, who will help them.

The only professional recognised by law in Nigeria for this is the Environmental health Officers (previously called Sanitary Inspectors or Health Inspectors). It must be done in a professional systematic manner. But what I see is what I call a fire brigade approach.

ENVIRONMENT

AMML purchases 300 waste bins for Garki model market

By Nasir Imam

IN a sustained effort at complementing the vision of the FCTA administration to enthrone a befitting and sanitized capital territory to its residents and visitor, Abuja Markets Management Limited (AMML) is to provide 300 of 240 litters waste bin for all the shops in Garki Model Market. A batch of 120 was delivered at the weekend.

Abuja Markets Management in a statement signed by its Head Corporate Affairs, Innocent Amaechina stated that the waste bins procured from Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) are to be distributed to all the blocks of shops and the informal sector in the Garki Model Market.

According to the statement, the idea is to ensure that there are sufficient waste bins in the market to discourage the market users from littering the market environment and through that, the cleaners will find it easier to collect and dispose refuse.

The Managing Director, Abuja Markets Management Limited, Abubakar Usman Faruk was quoted in the statement as saying that AMML will not renege on its mission of providing a safe, shopper friendly, efficiently managed, flexible and pleasant market environment for FCT residents and visitors.

He assured that rather than go back to the old filthy status of the market which led to its closure mid last year, FCTA through its relevant agencies is determined to make Garki Model Market a model as its name suggests.

"The procurement of these waste bins in spite of the existing ones, the waste dumps, the dedicated compactor truck and all other cleaning efforts, is geared towards attaining this goal", he explained.

He however enjoined the traders to partner with the Market management in its effort in order to realize the good objective of the FCT Administration for the market.



Community commends MDGs for boreholes, pit latrines

COMMUNITY of Salihawar Kalgo and Kalgo village in Safana local government council in Katsina State has commended Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for providing them with boreholes and pit latrines.

The leader of the two areas, Alhaji Tasi'u Yusuf, while leading hundreds of people to MDG's office in Katsina, said the construction of the boreholes has addressed the problem of shortage of water in the area.

"We are here to express our gratitude to MDG's office for bailing us out of the problem of water," he said.

Alhaji Yusuf said, "the construction of boreholes has brought to an end daily search of water to few places by our people".

"We suffered a lot before the

construction of the boreholes, but today, we are happy that we have water to drink," he added.

He explained that construction of pit latrine had also ensured a clean environment for the people of the two areas.

Alhaji Yusuf assured that the people of the two areas will ensure the protection of the boreholes and pit latrines.

Responding, chairman of MDGs, Alhaji Isyaku Dikko, said so far MDGs had constructed 87 boreholes in the state last year.

Dikko further said 120 pit latrines were constructed last year to ensure a clean environment.

The chairman assured that MDGs will continue to construct boreholes and pit-latrines in different parts of the state.

Communicating global climate change

By Nasiru Idris Medugu

GLOBAL Warming is a dramatically urgent and serious problem. We don't need to wait for governments to find a solution for this problem; each individual can bring an important help adopting a more responsible lifestyle and it's the only reasonable way to save our planet, before it is too late. While worries connected to global climate issues are not new, much has happened during the past two decades. Firstly, a world body which evaluates the risks of climate change brought about by humans and which issues periodical reports on the world's climate: the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in 1988. Secondly, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted on 9 May 1992 by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee established for its negotiation. In early June 1992, the UNFCCC was opened for signature and entered into force on the 21 March 1994. The UNFCCC has over 200 parties and observer states, which makes it one of the most universally-supported and most influential multilateral environmental agreements.

The last decade has shown a particularly intense increase in the degree of emphasis to climate issues as a whole and the level of attention pay to climate change in particular. The Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted at the third Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 3) in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005, has provided an extra impulse to the international debate on climate change. Over 180 parties have ratified the treaty to date. The conference of the parties of UNFCCC (COP 13) held in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007, was attended by over 10,000 people and the Copenhagen conference which is still under discussion is considered as the biggest and the largest climate summit ever. These developments illustrate the fact that climate change is a matter of worldwide concern and relevance. When objectively analysed, climate change is seen as related to a set of natural causes such as: solar radiation; volcanic activity; continental drifts; and earth's tilt.

These are complemented anthropogenic action such as emissions of greenhouse gases from industry. The combination of natural and human-induced causes in turn lead to a set of effects (e.g. global warming, ozone layer depletion, changes in socio-economic conditions) and consequences (e.g. disruptions in agriculture, rising sea level, increases in the frequency of droughts/floods). Finding prac-



NASIRU Idris Medugu

tical, workable and cost-efficient solutions to the problems posed by climate change is now a world priority and one which links government and non-government organisations in a way not seen before. A sound understanding of the economics of climate change is needed in order to underpin an effective global response to this challenge.

Adapting to climate change is important, so as to reduce vulnerability and for a better understanding of what this means. Climate change is: a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods of time. Climate change can thus be regarded as: a process which studies the implications of climate variations; a phenomenon influenced by natural processes and by human activities; an issue with impacts on nature and on quality of life; and a problem with wide-ranging economic and social implications. Owing to its scope, it is necessary to consider climate change as a process influenced by various variables. Therefore, the search for solutions to the problems caused by climate change cannot be one-dimensional: it needs to be pursued in an integrated way.

Plan of action on climate change, clean energy and sustainable development, emphasis should be given to: transform the way we use energy by improving efficiencies in power generation, transportation, buildings and appliances; power a cleaner future by promoting the use of nuclear power, clean coal technologies, clean diesel and methane, renewable energy, bio-energy, and more efficient power grids; strengthen research and development of hydrogen-powered vehicles that emit only water, not fumes; finance the transition to cleaner energy through a strengthened international and national policies that support markets, remove barriers to direct investment, leverage private capital, and promote investment; manage the impact of climate change through strong funding of climate change science, improved scientific and monitor-

ing capabilities of poorer regions such as Africa, and combat illegal logging by working with poor countries struggling to enforce their own forest management laws to prevent harm to ecosystems and land use changes that are a factor in climate change.

In order to better understand climate change, it is important that one has an understanding of what it means to different people in different parts of the world. A recent study undertaken in the UK by Leal Filho has shown that climate change "worries children". A sample of young people was asked about the world's problems and climate change was often referred to as young people's biggest concern for the world's future. In this context, it is important to acknowledge that there are some factors that influence attitudes towards climate change and that, at the same time, there are some barriers seen when one tries to communicate climate change. One of such barriers is related to some misconceptions of what climate change in fact is. If not addressed, they may lead to a negative view of climate change or to a wrong assumption of what it means. Similar studies carry out by Medugu in rural area of northern Nigeria on public awareness on climate change shown that majority of respondents interviewed were not even aware of the global phenomena.

Another recent study by Leal Filho undertook an analysis of some misconceptions of what the process of sustainable development is and what sustainability represents to an institution was performed. The study has allowed the identification of some of the misinterpretations associated with them, which in their turn are usually translated into a negative view of sustainable development. Owing to the complexity of matters related to climate change and the closeness of such a complexity with the subject matter of sustainable development, some analogies are possible. Some of the most common misconceptions related to climate change are: climate change is too abstract an issue; climate change is too broad a topic; climate change is mostly a technical matter where calculations and forecasts are made; there are no trained people to handle the approach of climate change topics in an understandable way; the amount of resources needed to communicate climate change do not justify it; and climate change has too wide a scientific basis. If one carefully examines them, the above outlined misconceptions have quite deep roots. It is thus important to understand them so as to allow misconceptions to be overcome.

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FIRE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEILLANCE OF NIGERIA

No.1 Ali Akilu Way, Inside WATSAN Compound, Opposite Federal Road
Safety Commission by UTC, G.P.O Box 18, Kaduna
Tel: 08036024478, 08022602452, E-mail: firesafetyvol@yahoo.com



Invitation for Bids (IFB)

World Training Institute Project Centre
The Biggest and Largest Centre in the world, Phase I Development at
Gwagwada, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Fire Safety and Environmental Surveillance of Nigeria, is an NGO is embarking on the construction of the FISESUN TRAINING INSTITUTE which is to be located at Gwagwada off KM12.5 Kaduna - Abuja Road, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

SCOPE OF PROJECTS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. | Entrance Gates, Fence with Security Posts | - | Lot 1 |
| 2. | Library | - | Lot 2 |
| 3. | Cafeteria | - | Lot 3 |
| 4. | Buildings | - | Lot 4 |
| | a. | | College of Environmental Studies |
| | b. | | College of Business/Administrative Studies |
| | c. | | College of Fire Safety |
| | d. | | College of Paramilitary Studies |
| | e. | | College of Community Policing |
| | f. | | College of Surveillance |
| | g. | | College of Entrepreneurship Studies |
| | h. | | College of Music |
| | i. | | College of Public Health |
| | j. | | College of Marine Safety/Aviation Safety |
| | k. | | College of Safety Transportation |
| 5. | Administrative Building | - | Lot 5 |
| 6. | External Development | - | Lot 6 |
| | a. | | Landscape |
| | b. | | Roads |
| | c. | | Electricity with Transformers |
| | d. | | Water Tanks and Reservoirs |
| | e. | | Generator Houses |
| | f. | | Water Boreholes/Water Treatment Plant |
| 7. | Staff Accommodation | - | Lot 7 |
| | a. | | 8 No. Blocks (10 Flats)
Senior Staff Quarters (80 Flats) |
| | b. | | 10 No. Blocks of (20 flats)
Senior Staffs Quarters (200 Flats) |
| | c. | | 5 Duplexes Senior Staff Quarters |
| | d. | | 6 Block of 20 flats Staff Quarters (120 Flats) |
| 8. | Day Care School | - | Lot 8 |
| 9. | Primary School Complex | - | Lot 9 |
| 10. | Secondary School Complex | - | Lot 10 |
| 11. | Police Station | - | Lot 11 |

All interested applicants should pay an application fee at any branch of Bank PHB. Bank A/C 042102000722 and collect their application form at Fire Safety Environmental Surveillance of Nigeria, Kaduna.

Phase I Development at Gwagwada, Kaduna State. Phase 1, 2 and 3 Development at Gwagwada, Kaduna. Or NGO Fire Safety and Environmental Surveillance of Nigeria Plot No. 1 Ali Akilu Way Inside WATSAN Compound Opposite Federal Road Safety Command by UTC, G.P.O Box 18 Kaduna, Kaduna State. On payment of a non-refundable application fee of N50,000.00 only.

NOTE:

Registration is renewable after 1 year all prospective contractors must send a copy of each of:

- Certificate of Incorporation/Registration
- VAT Certificate
- Last 3 years tax clearance certificate
- Bank Recommendation
- Company profile

And the submission deadline, the complete pre-qualification documents must be forwarded in sealed envelop marked on the top left hand corner "Confidential" and boldly written. Not later than four (4) weeks from date of this publication by 12:00 noon.

Signed
PROJECT MANAGER
For: Commissioner General



BORNO STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

INVITATION FOR TENDER

The Borno State Government intends to construct a new Orthopedic Hospital, renovate/Rehabilitate health facilities located in different parts of the State and also provide essential medical equipment to the Health facilities.

In pursuant to this, pre-qualification Tenders are hereby invited from reputable and competent building contractors for the construction, renovation/rehabilitation works and also medical equipment-suppliers for the procurement of the essential medical equipment to these Health facilities.

The State Ministry of Health hereby invites eligible bidders with the necessary pre-qualification documents to purchase Bid document for the construction, renovation/rehabilitation works and the procurement of the essential medical equipment detailed below.

S/N	LOT	SCOPE OF WORK	TENDER FEE
1.	Lot 1	Construction of Orthopedic Hospital in Maiduguri	N20,000.00
2.	Lot 2	Construction of a new General Hospital in Biu town.	N20,000.00
3.	Lot 3	Internet & Intercom connectivity and computer networking to USUMH Maiduguri.	N20,000.00
4.	Lot 4	Internet & Intercom connectivity to State Specialist Hospital Maiduguri	N20,000.00
5.	Lot 5	Supply of A/C and Refrigerators to State Specialist Hospital Maiduguri.	N20,000.00
6.	Lot 6	Construction of shopping complex at the perimeter fence of SSH Maiduguri.	N20,000.00
7.	Lot 7	Supply of office/ward furniture to state specialist Hospital Maiduguri	N20,000.00
8.	Lot 8-23	Renovation/Rehabilitation of General Hospital in Magumeri, Gubio, Damasak, Abadam, Kukawa, Gajiram, Mafa, Dikwa, Konduga, Ngoshe, Kirawa, Azare, Marama, Kwaya Kuser, damboa and Benisheikh.	N20,000.00 for each Hospital
9.	Lot 24-31	Renovation of Comprehensive health Centres in Fikahyel, Gunda, Kwajafa, Ashigashiya, Ngulde, Kekenso & Wulgo.	N20,000.00 for each C.H.C
10.	Lot 32	Supply of essential Medical Equipment to the General Hospitals in lots 8-23	N20,000.00 for each Hospital
11.	Lot 33	Supply of Essential Medical Equipment to the 10 No. C.H.C in lots 24-31	N10,000.00 for each C.H.C

PRE-QUALIFICATION

Interested reputable building contractors and Medical Equipment suppliers are hereby requested to submit their pre-qualification documents, which shall include:-

- Company Tax clearance for the past three years
- Evidence of incorporation with Corporate Affairs Commission
- Company profile including names of directors, qualifications, experience in handling these types of projects, company staff and equipment.
- Veritable list of similar projects executed in the past three years.
- Evidence of financial capability to handle such project.
- Current Registration Certificate as a contractor with the Borno State Government.
- Manufacturer's authorization
- Any other relevant information that may be of advantage to your company.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Pre-qualification documents are to be purchased upon Payments of the Prescribed Tender Fee of N20,000.00 from the Department of Planning Res., State Ministry of Health. (HQ) Musa Usman Secretariat, Maiduguri
Returns of pre-qualification and Bid documents are to be made to the Secretary Ministerial Tenders Board (MTB) Ministry of Health (HQ), Musa Usman Secretariat, P.M.B. 1044, Maiduguri, and not later than 3 weeks from the date of this publication/Gazette.

NOTE

Only those with the required pre-qualification documents will be contacted.
Date for official opening of Bid documents will be communicated to Bidders who may choose to attend.

Please note that, only the most evaluated responsive bidder (s) shall be considered.
For further information please contact the undersigned.

SIGNED
ALHAJI KAKA ALKALI
Director health Planning, Res. & Statistics
Ministry of Health (HQ) Maiduguri, Borno State

CITY NEWS



HOTLINES: 0803-3493-462 & 0703-8927-513
email: citynews@dailytrust.com
News about your capital city

Court orders arrest of Ringim's lawyer

By Abubakar Yakubu

A Chief Magistrate, Josephine Obanor, yesterday ordered the arrest of Barrister Thomas Oko, counsel to one Alhaji Atiku Hafiz Ringim, for trying to mislead the court.

The chief magistrate also ordered that the lawyer should only be released to the chairman of the National Bar Association after ascertaining his status.

Although the true identity of the top police officer called Ringim was not made public in court, it was however revealed at the FCT Police Command, where the lawyer was taken to after his arrest in court.

At yesterday's court hearing, Esther Uzoma, counsel to the nominal complainant, Amina, informed the court that her client's apartment at block 2, flat

3, Umme Street, Wuse Zone 1, Abuja, was vandalized, her property removed and the house under renovation, in spite of court orders.

Responding, Ringim's lawyer, Thomas Oko, told the court that there was no vandalism of property or tempering in any way with Amina's belongings and the court ordered for a one hour recess/inspection of the said apartment by officers of the court, who went along with the respondent's lawyer.

After one hour, the court registrar informed the court on oath that the said property at Umme Street is undergoing renovation and the belongings of the complainant were not in the apartment.

After hearing the registrar, the court ordered for a cross-examination between the registrar and

lawyer to Ringim but the latter's counsel said he had no questions, thereby conceding to the evidence given by the registrar.

Chief Magistrate Obanor issued a warrant of arrest against Barrister Thomas Oko for giving false information and after the court session, he was taken to the office of the officer in charge of legal, FCT Police Command to write his statement.

Other persons that wrote statements as witnesses were counsel to the complainant, Barrister Esther Uzoma and Amina, the complainant.

It would be recalled that ten armed policemen, acting on the orders of Ringim, a landlord, broke into Amina's apartment and removed her belongings while she was on vacation in the village.

Amina, who is a teacher lamented to our reporter that



THE entrance to Amina's apartment at Zone 1, Abuja.

since she learnt of what happened at her apartment, she is afraid of her life and now lives with friends.

She said the where about of her property are not known, as the place is presently being renovated.



PIC: ABUBAKAR YAKUBU

ATTORNEY-GENERAL of the Federation Michael Aondoakaa, at the FCT High Court Thursday.

Applicant jailed for stealing Senator's TV

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

AN Abuja magistrate court yesterday sentenced an applicant to six months imprisonment for stealing a television set belonging to Senator Lee Maeba.

Jeremiah John, who resides beside Newton Secondary School, Mpape village, Abuja, committed the offence on January 18, 2010 and was subsequently arrested by the police.

Police prosecutor, Adoche Isenyo, had earlier told the court that on January 18, 2010, the accused, who was sacked by the senator sometimes in 2008, illegally broke into the office of the senator and stole a plasma television set and a UPS backup.

"The accused illegally gained entrance into Room 306 of the Senate building and stole an LCD plasma television set and a UPS back up," he said.

He further disclosed that when the accused was sacked in 2008, he left with one of the room's key without the

knowledge of the senator, adding that the accused committed an offence punishable under Section 287 of the Penal Code Law.

"It was the key he took while he was leaving in 2008 that he used to open the room from where he stole the items. Before then, there were cases of stolen items and money from the room, but nobody could explain who was responsible," the prosecutor stated.

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded guilty, saying he stole the items as a result of poverty that has ravaged his life since he left the employment of the senator.

Based on his plea, the prosecutor asked the court to try him summarily under Section 157 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

In her ruling, Magistrate Rosemary Kanyip, convicted the accused and sentenced him to six months imprisonment or to pay a N4,000 fine, adding that stealing is not the solution to poverty.

Man in court over assault on lady

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

THE police yesterday arraigned a 28-year-old man before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly beating one Victoria Audu of Utako village, Abuja.

The accused, Abdulraman Abdulmalik of No 3, Sudan Street, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja, was reported to have beaten

the complainant on January 21, 2010.

Police prosecutor, Mohammed Mustapha, told the court that on the said date, the accused beat the complainant for refusing to answer him when he called her.

"When she refused to answer the accused person's call, he started beating her and as a result, inflicted injuries on her mouth and neck, thereby

committing an offence punishable under Section 246 of the Penal Code Law," the prosecutor submitted.

He said during police investigations, the accused confessed to the crime.

When the charge was read to the accused, he denied the allegation and requested for bail.

Chief Magistrate Binta Mohammed granted the

accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with two sureties in like sums, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

She also ruled that one of the sureties must be a civil servant of not below Grade Level 09 and that both of them must swear to affidavits to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to March 2 for hearing.

Motorists protest new policy at petrol station

By Kabir Matazu

NEW measures imposed on motorists at African Petroleum (AP) Petrol Station along Aguiyi Ironsi way, Maitama, Abuja, yesterday caused serious commotion between some angry motorists and attendants over the compulsory purchase of injector cleaners before car tanks are filled.

An attendant who refused to disclose his name said it is a new policy enacted by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation not to exceed certain amount in filling car tanks, adding that as an organisation, AP has its own rules.

"NNPC came out with a new rule not to exceed N1,000 fuel per car and it is AP's policy for any motorist that wants to fill his

tank to buy Injector cleaner, if not we will not exceed the stipulated amount ordered by the NNPC," he said.

Mr Yunusa Ya'u, a motorist, who complained bitterly over the new rule wondered what he will do with an injector cleaner.

Another motorist, Hamza Turaki, lamented that whenever there is fuel scarcity motorists usually suffer from unscrupu-

lous rules imposed by filling stations.

"I had a similar experience sometime in Kaduna, as I was forced to buy engine oil before they filled my tank, not minding what brand of oil I use to service my car," he narrated.

Madam Mary, an attendant, who tried to calm motorists, expressed regret for the rude behaviour of the attendant; say-

ing to the best of her knowledge, buying injector cleaner was optional.

Mr Aliyu, an attendant, who acted as the station supervisor, told our reporter that he is aware of the new NNPC rule but cannot ascertain the policy of buying injector cleaner for a full tank of petrol, adding that the NNPC rule has been there for a very long time.

Rockview Hotel honours staff

By Usman A Bello & Lami Sadiq

THE management of Rockview Hotel, Abuja, yesterday gave awards to seven drivers for distinguishing themselves in their duties.

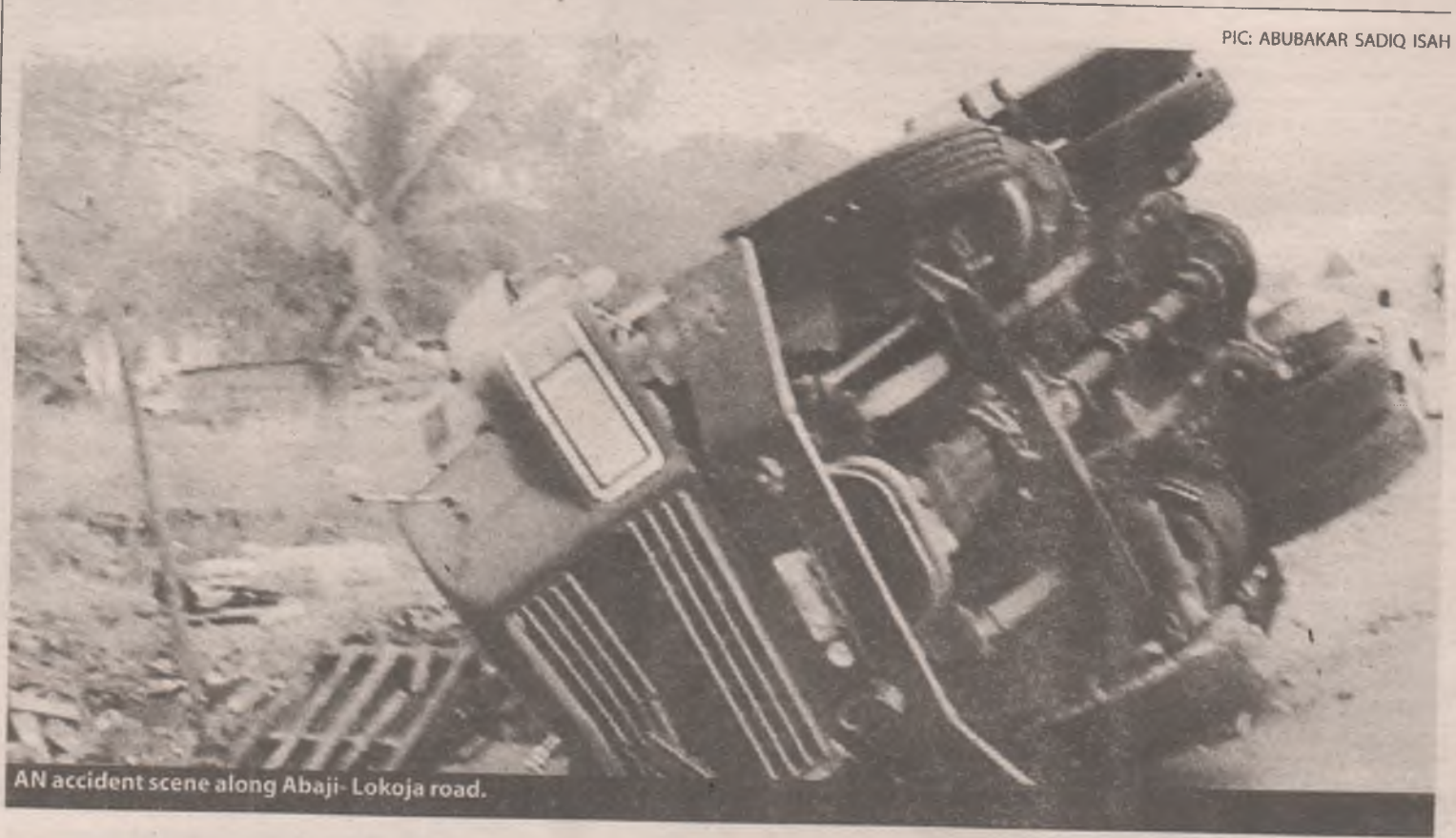
The hotel's Operations Manager, Joseph Obiahu, while making the presentations, said they instituted the awards to encourage drivers to conduct themselves very well and perform their jobs professionally while on the roads.

He said the award will motivate them to do better than what they have done and also encourage other drivers who have not received it to also distinguish themselves, adding that the award has helped the management to achieve the aim of an accident free organisation.

"For a driver to be selected, their behaviour must conform with our standard behaviour and ensure that they work with time allocated to them as well as obey the rules and regulation guiding driving while on the road. We also rely on feedback from the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC)," he said.

Meanwhile, the representative of the FCT road safety Sector commander, Ochi Oga Samuel, commended the organization for the award, saying it will go a long way to encourage sanity on the roads.

He advised the awardees to always comply with safety rules while on the road and suggested that it should be extended to other staff so that they can also benefit from the gesture.



AN accident scene along Abaji- Lokoja road.

PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH

W/Bank commissions power distribution system at Karu

By Sunday Williams & Romoke W. Ahmad

THE World Bank at the weekend commissioned its phase one pilot project of the High Voltage Distribution System (HVDS) at Karu Village, Abuja.

In his speech, the World Bank Country Director, Onno Ruhl, said the Karu project was done under two World Bank projects, namely, the Transmission Development Project and the National Energy Development Project, which he said involves the procurement and installation of transformers and insulated wires.

He said the project has so far covered a large area in Karu, adding that they have spent more than one million dollars in its execution.

The country director affirmed that the World Bank alone cannot solve the power needs of Abuja or Nasarawa and called on the Ministry of Power and the PHCN to roll out such projects in other places.

"This is the way to get more power out of the one Nigeria already has and obviously, we also hope that Nigeria gets more power and we will definitely continue with this so that more communities will be covered," he promised.

Also speaking, World Bank

Senior Energy Specialist, Mr. Wagar Haider, said the World Bank is partnering with the Ministry of Power and PHCN to strengthen the distribution network in selected areas so as to improve the reliability of electricity supplies.

He said the shifting from Low Voltage Distribution System to High Voltage Distribution System (HVSD) has a number of advantages, like improvement in voltage profile, reduced breakdowns and connections to smaller capacity transformers right in front of homes.

He said prior to the implementation of the project in Karu, all

households need stabilizers for major equipment like refrigerators and televisions, adding that incoming voltage is stable and does not need stabilizers.

Also speaking, the Chief of Karu, Emmanuel Kyauta Yewi, thanked the World Bank for the gesture and requested for the provision of three more transformers as an immediate solution to the problem of transformer overloading.

He pleaded with the bank to extend its on-going water project at Karu site to the local village community as well as intervene in the quest for the urban renewal of the area.

Doctor urges concern for the less privileged

By Usman A. Bello

A doctor at the Gwarinpa General Hospital, Dr. E. Iwere, Sunday appealed to wealthy individuals to always show concern to the less privileged in their time of need.

Dr. Iwere made the call when a lawmaker representing AMAC/Bwari federal constituency, Philip Aduda, paid the hospital bills of one Mary Obi, who underwent surgery and Lydia Atta, who sustained severe burns in a fire incident.

He said the kind gesture made it possible for the women to undergo the operations and called on well-to-do citizens to emulate the gesture so that the less privileged in the society can access healthcare delivery, saying this was not the

first time the legislator had paid the hospital bills of patients.

Responding, Aduda said the gesture was part of his service to the residents of the city, adding that when one is in a position; he should help those in needs.

65-yr-old man jailed for traffic obstruction

By AbdulMutallib A. Abubakar & Hussein Yahaya

A 65-year-old man, Adeyelu Michael of Dutsen-Alhaji was on Thursday sentenced to one month imprisonment by an Abuja Area court for causing obstruction on a public highway.

The police prosecutor, Sergeant Amby Ayuba, informed the court that on January 20, 2010 the accused was apprehended along Oka Akoko Street, Garki II, for causing obstruction for other road users.

He said the accused drove a Nissan Sunny car with registration number XFJ61 BWR in a manner that caused obstruction, despite warnings.

The offence, according to the prosecutor is punishable under Section 65(3) of the Road Traffic Act (RTA).

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded guilty and begged the court for leniency.

In his ruling, the presiding judge, Umar Kagarko, sentenced him to one month imprisonment with an option of N2,000 as fine.

In another case, a middle-aged man, Benjamin Amula of Commerce Plaza Garki was also arraigned for criminal breach of trust and cheating.

Police prosecutor, Muhammad Garba, told the court that on January 11, 2010, one Bisilola Abidemi of Area 7 Shopping Centre reported to the police

that he entrusted the sum of N38,800 to the accused, purposely to print 10,000 bunch of 60 leaves exercise books within three days but he converted the money to his personal use without doing the job.

He said the offences are punishable under Sections 312 and 322 of the Penal Code Law.

The accused pleaded not guilty and prayed the court to grant him bail, which was not objected to by the prosecutor.

Judge Umar Kagarko granted him bail in the sum of N100,000 with a reliable surety, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction. The case was adjourned to January 29 for hearing.

Man denies stealing lady's property

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

A middle-aged man, Taye Lamidi, recently in court denied stealing the property of his neighbour, Mrs. Stella Thompson.

Prosecutor Paul Anigbo stated in court that on January 17, 2010, the accused collaborated with one Wale Adetoyi, now at large, to break into the complainant's house to steal property valued at N40,000.

"On January 16, 2010, the accused and one Wale Adetoyi jointly broke into the house of the complainant and stole one LG television set valued at N25,000, DVD player that cost N7,000 and a generating set valued at

N12,000," he stated.

He further told the court that during police investigations, all the stolen items were recovered from the accused, adding that he also confessed to the crime.

When the charge was read to the accused, he denied the allegation and requested for bail, which was not objected by the prosecutor.

In her ruling, Chief Magistrate Josephine Obannor, granted the accused bail in the sum of N50,000 with a reliable surety in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an affidavit to produce him in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to February 16 for hearing.

Sokale residents protest epileptic power supply

By Usman A. Bello

RESIDENTS of Sokale area of Dutsen-Alhaji at the weekend protested in front of the Dutse branch of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) over epileptic power supply in their area.

The residents numbering over 50 stormed the office demanding explanations on why they have

not been having regular electricity, despite the huge money paid to buy cables and poles for steady electricity.

One of the protesters, Boniface Anadi, told *City News* that the protest became necessary because they have not had electricity in the past three weeks, adding that they were served outrageous monthly electricity bills by the PHCN.

"When we complained of not having constant electricity, they told us that the cable supplying us electricity needed to be changed and each compound in the affected area contributed N2,600 to buy cables and poles but the problem still persisted?" he questioned.

Mr Anadi also wondered whether PHCN wants residents of the area to pay the outrageous

electricity bills for what was not consumed. He said when there was no improvement in electricity supply; they contributed another N20,000 to buy cables, adding that after buying the cables, the situation remained the same.

"Two transformers have been installed in our area but two persons claimed to have bought them and are demanding N60,000

before anyone can be connected to the transformers.

Meanwhile, a staff of PHCN was heard explaining to the protesters that they are doing their best to ensure that regular power supply is restored to the area.

The officer who refused to disclose his name asked the reporter to go to the PHCN headquarters for reactions.



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION CORDIALLY INVITES ALL CHAIRMEN, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PARASTATALS OF THE MINISTRY, ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO ITS 2009 MINISTERIAL PRESS BRIEFING SCHEDULED TO HOLD ON THURSDAY 28TH JANUARY, 2010.

THEME: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM, CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION.

VENUE: NATIONAL PRESS CENTRE, RADIO HOUSE, ABUJA.

TIME: 10:00 AM PROMPT

ANNOUNCER: ALHAJI SHEIDU B. OZIGIS, OON, MNI
PERMANENT SECRETARY,
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TOURISM,
CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION.

FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THREE ARMS ZONE
P.M.B. 141 ABUJA

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND INVITATION FOR MEMORANDA

The House Committee on Public Accounts in collaboration with the Committees on Justice and Public Service Matters wish to inform the General Public And All Invited Stakeholders that the Public Hearing on A Bill For An Act To Make Provisions For The Creation Of the National Office of Government Performance, Audit and Accountability And For Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2009 is holding as follows:

Date: Wednesday 27th - Thursday 28th January, 2010
Time: 9.00 a.m prompt each day.
Venue: Conference Hall, (028 Ground Floor)
House of Representatives' New Building

We wish to use this medium to request any of the following Stakeholders who has not submitted a memoranda or contribution as requested, to please come along with such contributions to the Public Hearing.

- The Auditor-General for The Federation
- Accountant-General of the Federation
- Attorney -General of The Federation and Minister for Justice
- Office of the Head of Service of The Federation
- National Planning Commission.
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC)
- Institute of Chartered Accountant of Nigeria (ICAN)
- Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN)
- United States Agency For International Development (USAID)
- The Country Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI)
- The Country Director, World Bank
- Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)
- Nigerian Law Reform Commission
- Nigerian Institute of Legal Studies
- Department of Accounting, University of Abuja.

Memoranda will also be entertained from other interested persons or organizations.

All Memoranda should be submitted in twenty (20) Copies to the Secretariat of the Public Accounts Committee in Hearing Room 4, House of Representatives.

For further enquiries please contact the Secretariat of the Public Accounts Committee on telephone nos. 08033142021, 08056014378

Signed
Hon. Usman Adamu Gaya
For: The Committee Chairmen



UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



VACANCY FOR NATIONAL PROJECT OFFICER

ASSESSMENT OF GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The National Bureau of Statistics, UN-HABITAT and UNDP Country office on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria, is undertaking a project titled "Assessment of Good Urban Governance in Nigeria." The project aims at strengthening national capacity in the assessment of urban governance challenges in Nigeria, as a prime step towards determining programmatic and policy responses to achieving sustainable urbanization and good urban governance.

The project is expected to contribute to the main outcome of progressively making available and accessible timely, relevant and disaggregated data on good urban governance necessary for planning, programme design, monitoring and evaluation of good urban governance in the country.

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the position of the National Project Officer.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Manage the realization of project outputs through activities;
- Provide direction and guidance to project team(s)/responsible party(ies);
- Liaise with the Project Management Committee or its appointed Project Assurance roles through the National Project Co-ordinator to assure the overall direction and integrity of the project;
- Identify and obtain any support and advice required for the management, planning and control of the project;
- Responsible for project day-to-day project administration;
- Liaise with any suppliers and ensure timely and effective delivery of project outputs;

During the running of the project the Project Officer will assist the Project Coordinator to:

- Plan the activities of the project and monitor progress against the initial quality criteria;
- Mobilize goods and services to initiate activities, including drafting of TOR and work specifications;
- Monitor events as determined in the Monitoring & Communication Plan, and update the plan as required;
- Manage requests for the provision of financial resources by UNDP;
- Monitor financial resources and accounting to ensure accuracy and reliability of financial reports;
- Manage and monitor the project risks as initially identified in the Project Brief appraised by the LPAC, submit new risks to the Project Management Committee for consideration and decision on possible actions if required; update the status of these risks by maintaining the Project Risks Log;
- Be responsible for managing issues and requests for change by maintaining an Issues Log;
- Prepare the Project Quarterly Progress Report (progress against planned activities, update on Risks and Issues, expenditures) and submit the report to the Project Management Committee and Project Assurance;
- Prepare the required Project Reports, including the Annual Review Report, and submit them to the Project Management Committee;
- Based on the review, prepare the Annual Work Plan for the following year, as well as Quarterly Plans if required.

At project closure the National Project Officer is required to assist the Project Coordinator to:

- Prepare Final Project Review Reports to be submitted to the Project Management Committee;
- Identify follow-up actions and submit to Project Management Committee for consideration
- Manage the transfer of project deliverables, documents, files, equipment and materials to national beneficiaries and prepare financial reports for signature by UNDP.

Qualification: S/he should possess advanced University Degree in any of the following disciplines, Urban and Regional Planning, Governance and Development Management, Environmental Governance or Environmental Economics or related discipline with a minimum 10 years experience. Progressively responsible work experience of at least 7 years in programme management is a must. Previous working experience in UN or any international organization will be an added advantage.

Duty station: Abuja with travel to the project sites **Duration:** 9 months

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested candidates should forward two (2) copies of their applications with detail Curriculum Vitae, plus photocopies of their certificates and other relevant documents, **WITHIN TWO WEEKS FROM THE DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION.** All applications are to be forwarded under confidential cover in a sealed envelope marked "**GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE PROJECT**" at the upper left hand corner, properly addressed to:

The Statistician-General
National Bureau of Statistics,
Plot 762, Independence Avenue, Central Business District
P.M.B. 127, Garki Abuja.

Signed:
ISIKA OLAREWAJU
National Project Coordinator

Inside Politics

N50bn debt: Kebbi lawmakers disown report on Aliero

From Ismail Adebayo, Birnin Kebbi

LOYALISTS of Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Adamu Aliero in the Kebbi State House of Assembly have disowned the report of the alleged N50 bn debt incurred by the minister while serving as governor, saying it will not receive the blessing of the house.

The group, in a statement signed by their leader Hon. Abubakar Imam Besse said the chairman of the House Committee on Public Accounts should have presented his report to the house of assembly which gave it the assignment instead of submitting it to the governor.

"We fervently wish to disassociate ourselves from this hefty and serious allegation against the person of Senator Aliero because what is required of us at this critical period is how to make quality legislation for the well-being of Kebbi people rather than this mischief to bring the former governor down," the lawmakers said in the statement.

"One wonders whether the state governor represents the Kebbi State House of Assembly where the alleged report ought to have been laid for debate," the statement added.

The legislators further said that the issue being investigated by the state house of assembly was centered on the alleged N35 billion debts which the house has been unable

to substantiate.

They said the records made available to the house in the course of investigation by the state ministry of finance showed that Aliero's administration only left N4.1 billion unpaid vouchers as against N2 billion earlier submitted to Dakingari, then governor-elect, by the transition committee he appointed.

This amount, according to the statement, was an addition to the N30.8 billion budgeted for the execution of some projects yet to be commenced and could not have been considered to be debts. "One therefore wonders how the chairman arrived at N50 billion debts," it added.



FCT Minister Adamu Aliero

Kaduna ANPP crisis deepens

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE crisis rocking the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Kaduna State took a new dimension at the weekend with the two existing factions engaging in a war of words as they used uncomplimentary remarks on each other. One faction of the party is led Malam Kabiru Umaru while the other is led by Hajiya Hafsat Mohammed Baba.

The official commissioning of the parallel secretariat of the Hafsat camp in November last year by the party's presidential flag bearer in 2007, General Muhammadu Buhari compounded the situation.

Secretary of the Malam Kabiru Umaru led faction, Mr. Kennedy Musa Tifato, had while addressing news-

men described the Hafsat's faction as illegal and urged members of the party to disregard them.

"We wish to categorically state that the Hajiya Hafsat Mohammed Baba activities are illegal and are totally in conflict with the ANPP constitution. There is no ANPP caretaker committee in Kaduna," he said. He said the party has since suspended Hajiya Hafsat following her unguarded activities.

Reacting to the allegations levelled against her, Hajiya Hafsat said she remains ANPP's chairman in the state and described the other faction as a sale out.

"They have since been removed as executives of our party and due process was followed in their removal. 2/3 majority of chairmen of the party in local government and wards

unanimously passed vote of no confidence on them. It was after they were dissolved that we were brought in," she said.

According to her, they have mortgaged our party, they are being paid allowance by the state government and they are collecting contracts, they are doing all these at expense of the mass supporters of our party."

She said the local government tour the committee conducted was part of the assignment given to them by General Buhari, disclosing that the General will soon announce his next political direction.

"What we are doing is in consonance with the constitution of the party but the leadership of our party is not helping matter because they have shown interest in the other faction," she said.

Founders' exit put PDP in disarray — Senator

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

THE exit of majority of the founding fathers of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has derailed the ideals of the party leading to its present state of disarray, Senator Bode Olajumoke (PDP, Ondo) has said.

Speaking to newsmen at the weekend on the state of affairs in the ruling party, Senator Olajumoke said the PDP lost focus soon after its founders were forced out in the twilight of the Obasanjo administration. He said such leaders must be encouraged to return because they under-

stand the philosophical foundation of the better.

"The party must encourage the founding fathers that have left to return because they were the ones that had the vision and objectives that the party was to follow in ensuring democracy and development of the country. Most of them have left and the party is now in disarray," he said.

He called on the party's leadership to implement the recommendations of the Alex Ekwueme committee which spelt out ways of bringing back the founding members of the PDP that left due to various grievances during the build-

up to the 2007 general elections.

Senator Olajumoke expressed support for the General Ike Nwachukwu led PDP Elders' Committee saying it tried to unite the party. "I have always supported the idea of a mega party like the PDP, but we cannot afford to lose those that conceived the idea of forming the party," he said.

While commenting on the proposed electoral reforms, Senator Olajumoke called for adoption of recommendations of the Justice Uwais Committee report, saying the recommendations if implemented will improve the electoral system in the country.

Katsina PDP women leader lashes out at Obasanjo

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

AS reactions continue to trail the call for the resignation of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua by his predecessor, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the Women Leader of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Katsina Hajiya Binta Kuraye has described the former president as a mischief-maker.

Former President Obasanjo had while chairing the Annual Trust Dialogue in Abuja last Thursday asked his successor to take the path of honour and resign in view of his health condition.

Reacting to Obasanjo's statement on Radio Nigeria, Kaduna Hausa political programme, Saturday morning, Hajiya Binta asked the former President Obasanjo to stop making inflammatory comments that are capable of raising tension across the country.

"He is not the only leader we have in the country. Other leaders like General Babang-

ida, General Abdulsalami and Gowon, among others, are weighing their words. He is just trying to cause problems for us and we are not going to allow him," she stressed.

She said President Obasanjo facilitated the candidature of President Yar'adua in 2007 in order to cover all the atrocities he committed during his eight years tenure.

"People should stop saying he (Obasanjo) put Yar'adua there; he couldn't have, it is God that gives power and He gave it to Yar'adua. Obasanjo only facilitated it and he did it stating that Yar'adua is the

only one that will cover up his atrocities," she added.

She appealed to Nigerians not to mind all those calling for the resignation of President Yar'adua, saying they are making noise for their own selfish interests and not for the sake of the country.

"President Yar'adua is going to resign when the need arises, but we Nigerians should beware of mischief makers who are out to cause problem for us in the country. We should all rise against them because our country is bigger than anybody," she said.

“People should stop saying he (Obasanjo) put Yar'adua there; he couldn't have, it is God that gives power and He gave it to Yar'adua. Obasanjo only facilitated it and he did it stating that Yar'adua is the only one that will cover up his atrocities.

Inside Politics

'The average person in Niger/Delta is praying for Yar'adua'

Comrade Sunny Ofehe, a journalist and human right activist based in the Netherlands is at the vanguard of the scholarly campaign for lasting solutions in the volatile Niger/Delta Region of Nigeria. He runs the Hope for the Niger/Delta Campaign. In this interview, he speaks on the case against Shell Nigeria which is pending before a Dutch Court as well as the implications of the prolonged absence of **President Umaru Musa Yar'adua** on the amnesty process. Excerpts:

By Ahmad Salkida

A court in The Hague made a pronouncement on the Niger Delta recently. Can you shed more light?

It would be recalled that on 3rd December 2009, the case of four Nigerian farmers championed by Friends of the Earth Netherlands was brought to a court in The Hague. But Shell International argued that the Dutch court does not have the jurisdiction to hear the case and that the case should be heard in a Nigerian court, describing the issues as a 'purely Nigerian matter'. Recently, therefore, the Dutch Court ruled that they are competent to hear the case. So, the case against Shell will go on in the Netherlands. Shell will be able to enter a statement of reply to the claims on February 10, said the court. This is a moral victory for our people in the Niger Delta. The plight of the people in the region can now be heard in an international and reputable court that cannot be swayed by Shell.

Why did you choose the pen instead of AK 47 like some of your cotemporaries in the region?

I am a non violent campaigner who believes that dialogue is the best way to find solutions to problems. The history of conflicts around the world shows that par-

ties still come to the negotiating table after fighting. We have been discussing before the conflict, during the conflict and now and looking back, one will say that we have made a lot of progress. Most of our contemporaries that took up arms have now met us at the dialogue table.

What would you say about the recent amnesty by the Federal Government?

The amnesty is very successful so far, it was a very bold step by the Federal Government. I have been to the Niger Delta before and during the conflict, and what I see now is relative peace. But some of the people involved in the Amnesty process are of questionable character. Therefore some people may want to put a clog in the wheel of progress. But so far, it is going on well, the only major threat to the gains of the amnesty program is the continuous absence of Mr President. We have seen a lot of initiatives by previous leaders but this one was an initiative with popular consensus and the initiator (Yar'adua) made sure that every aspect of the amnesty program was implemented to the later. Unfortunately he fell ill in the process. Today I can assure you that the average person in the Niger Delta is praying for President Yar'adua's quick recovery because they

believe his absence may lead to the resumption of violence in the region if care is not taken.

But in the event of any unfortunate circumstance, the person to succeed him is a son of the Niger Delta...?

We have to be careful how we jump into conclusions. If the person who initiated this process is from the Niger Delta, other regions would read meaning to the process. They will say he is giving emphasis to his area. But so far, we did not see that happening and it is our prayer that the initiator of the current process comes back and continues from where he left it.

What kind of contributions will your organisation offer the current amnesty process?

What we are trying to do is to consolidate the gains of the amnesty in order not to slide back to the last three years. That is why I am in Nigeria. We strongly believe that the government does not have the complete solution to the problems in the region. What is left is for Nigerians in the Diaspora and the international community to see the areas they can come in to partner with government to see that the goals set by the government are achieved in the interest of peace. We are planning a conference which we tagged Niger Delta



COMRADE Sunny Ofehe

peace consolidation conference in The Hague on the 28 to 29 of this month and we want to use the conference as a platform to bring all stake holders together with the European Union and the international community seating there as observers.

You were in the National Assembly, what are you doing with the legislators?

Well, we invited by the chairman adhoc Committee on Niger Delta in the Federal House of representatives, Honourable Abdul Ningi, and we thrashed out a lot

of things with them as they relate to legislation. Based on that, we invited them to the Netherlands where they related with the Dutch government and the Legislators there together with the European Union. According to the Legislators in Nigeria, the trip was very helpful to them and currently they have written a report which I intend to take back to the Dutch. I think our relationship has brought about a lot of progress in our efforts to bring lasting solutions to the problems in the Niger/Delta.

Ibori: CNPP protests discontinuation of UK prosecution

By AbdulMutallib A. Abubakar

CHAIRMAN of the Conference of Nigeria Political Party's (CNPP) Alhaji Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa has said the request by British Conservative MP for Banbury Honorable Tony Baldry demanding Her Majesty's Government to discontinue the ongoing prosecution of the associates of the former Governor of Delta State, Chief James Ibori, for various money laundering offences at the Southwark Crown Court is unacceptable.

Musa said in a statement that CNPP is alerted to the existence of a five-page letter dated September

24, 2009 written by the MP apparently seeking to persuade senior British Cabinet Ministers such as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Hon David Milliband, the Attorney-General, the Rt Hon Baroness Scotland QC, etc on the grounds that the prosecution is damaging to the interests of British government.

"The actions of Hon. Baldry do not conform to the mantra of transparency that British government has been preaching since Gordon Brown assumed office...we cannot see how the trial of people indicted on money laundering charges can be injurious to British national inter-

ests," the statement said.

He also stated that failure to prosecute Ibori and his associates, including his wife, sister and solicitor, affirmed that Britain is now a safe haven for criminals because of some business interests of individuals or corporations.

He therefore advised the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in an open letter that for the interest of his administration to promote good governance at all costs in Nigeria and elsewhere to request Hon Baldry to forthwith withdraw the letter and publicly dissociate himself from these individuals facing trials in British courts.

AC members trade blows in Minna at peace parley

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

MEMBERS of the Action Congress in Niger State threw caution to the wind at the weekend as attempt by Mr. Paul Egbe, national financial secretary of the party, to broker peace among feuding groups ahead of the 2011 elections ended in fisticuffs.

Mr Egbe, who led a five man delegation for the mission in Minna, said he had the premonition that the logjam would spill off into a combat scene.

Daily Trust gathered that the move by the national leadership was to ensure that the party in the state is repositioned to prevent alleged plan by the Mega Party to use AC as a platform for the 2011

elections if they fail to get registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The meeting which did not last up to an hour left most of the party members with injuries as several others left with shredded cloths in the free for all fight that ensued.

Mr. Jonathan Vatsa, state Director of Publicity blamed the development on what he described as lack of sincerity on the part of AC's national leadership at brokering peace.

He said that the delegation had an agenda to impose on members of the party in the state; a development he said led to the crisis.

"The national executive members came with a mindset and in that kind of situation there is no way peace could be brokered," he said.

SPORT

North Africans
nemesis of
Cote d'Ivoire
Page 54



Lucky Eagles outshoot Chipolopolo

By Ismaila Lere

SUPER Eagles yesterday night defeated the Chipolopolo of Zambia 5-4 in a penalty shootout to reach the African Nations Cup semi-finals.

Nigeria had Onyekachi Apam sent off in extra time for a second booking but held on to force the shootout, despite being at the receiving end of Zambia's attacking forays.

Shaibu Amodu's side looked ragged, disjointed and uncoordinated, and were outplayed for much part of the 120 minutes game.

Nigeria started the brighter and a flowing move saw Ayegbeni Yakubu lay off for John Mikel Obi, with the Chelsea's midfielder's right-footed shot demanding a save from Zambia keeper Kennedy Mweene at full stretch.

But while Nigeria looked comfortable on the ball, they failed to live up to their reputation as one of Africa's big hitters and made little impact on Mweene's goal.

And they almost paid the price when Zambia left-back Emmanuel Mbola fired in a low cross which James Chamanga, who had peeled away from his marker, could only hit wide from six-yards.

Chipolopolo emerged from the break with the momentum behind them and continued to create the better chances, with Hichani Himonde seeing his header hacked off the line.



SUPER Eagles forward Osaze Odemwingie takes a shot during the quarter final match against Zambia at the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations in Lubango, Angola, yesterday. Eagles won 5-4 via penalty shootout.

The Eagles did create occasional opportunities despite their general lack of creativity, and Yakubu should have done better when receiving the ball at the back post but could not get it out of his feet.

Zambia should have won it in the last seconds of normal time but Emmanuel Mayuka, unmarked at the back post, could

not keep his header on target.

When the Super Eagles had Onyekachi Apam sent off in extra time for a second bookable offence Zambia still failed to press home their advantage, and Nigeria held on to force the shootout.

Goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama was the hero of the night as he made the vital save and netted the

winning spot-kick after the game had ended in a goalless draw after extra time.

Zambia's Thomas Nyirenda was the only player to miss, with his shot being well saved by Vincent Enyeama.

His team-mates Noah Chivuta, Christopher Katongo, Emmanuel Mayuka and keeper Kennedy Mweene all scored.

But a perfect five from John Obi Mikel, Obafemi Martins, Victor Obinna, Peter Odemwingie and Vincent Enyeama sealed a semi-final with Ghana for Nigeria.

The Eagles will meet Ghana's Black Stars on Thursday in Luanda for a place in Sunday's final, while holders Egypt face Algeria in Benguela.

Eventful game for Hassan as Egypt reach semis

EGYPT captain Ahmed Hassan scored three times, including an own goal, as the holders overcame Cameroon 3-1 after extra-time on Monday to advance to the African Nations Cup semi-finals.

The 34-year-old midfielder, celebrating an African record 170th international appearance, also grabbed the equaliser and a controversial third for Egypt as they kept their

bid for an unprecedented third successive title.

After the game ended 1-1 in 90 minutes, Mohamed Nagui and Hassan netted in extra-time to extend Egypt's record unbeaten run at the Nations Cup to 17 games.

The champions next meet arch-rivals Algeria in Thursday's semi-final in Benguela.

Hassan's 94th-minute free kick, which was partially

blocked by Cameroon goalkeeper Idriss Carlos Kameni and bounced back off the woodwork, was adjudged to have crossed the line even though television replays indicated otherwise.

The goal came three minutes after substitute Nagui had put Egypt 2-1 up in an error-strewn match at the Ombaka Stadium.

Nagui pounced to score after a wayward back pass by experi-

enced full back Geremi.

Hassan's landmark game started badly when he flicked an inswinging corner from Achille Emana into his own net after 25 minutes.

Hassan, though, redeemed himself with a 35-metre free kick that dipped in front of Kameni and bounced into the net 12 minutes later.

The teams battled through a niggly second half and were

restricted to a series of unsuccessful long-range efforts.

Cameroon's hopes took a knock when defender Aurelien Chedjou was sent off for a professional foul with nine minutes left in extra-time.

Chedjou was preferred in the starting line-up to Rigobert Song, whose run of 36 successive Nations Cup finals matches stretching back to 1996 came to an end.

Memorable Moments...

Keita classic not enough

ABDELKADER Keita has hit a few long-range thunderbolts before in the colours of Côte d'Ivoire but never with such accuracy as the last-minute strike that seemed to seal up the match against Algeria for the Elephants. Coming on as a substitute for the impressive Salomon Kalou, Keita ran with it diagonally along the edge of the penalty area until he suddenly unleashed a 30-metre drive to the top left corner that gave Algeria's Faouzi Chaouchi no chance. It seemed a worthy winner for the quarter-final tie, but within minutes Algeria were level again.



KEITA

Nightmare misses

YOUNG Angola striker Manucho missed three perfect chances to turn around Sunday's quarter-final tie against Ghana. He did well to slip his marker and find space at the back post to meet Flavio's 30th-minute cross, but with the rest of the goal at his mercy his header was directed too close to Ghana goalkeeper Richard Kingson. Just before half-time came an even worse miss from close range as Flavio flicked the ball back, and Manucho, albeit in the process of losing his balance, contrived to blast well over the top.

Things fall apart



BOUAZZA

ONCE Algeria had taken the lead for the first time against the Ivorians, with substitute Hameur Bouazza scoring from his first touch of the ball, both sides seemed to lose shape, and the match was full of chances. In the second half of extra time, Algeria had several great opportunities in quick succession to extend their 3-2 advantage.

Disappointment for the "Sea of Red"

ALTHOUGH Angola gave as good as they got and came so close to scoring numerous times against Ghana, the thousands of Angolans leaving November 11 Stadium had nothing but heartbreak written on their faces. It was the same people who only two hours earlier had made Luanda one of the centres of world football for the evening, covering the stadium in a boisterous sea of red and yellow.

Sporting touch

ALTHOUGH he might have been entitled to rant on about missed chances and the superior enterprise of his team, there was a dignity in defeat for Angola coach Manuel Jose. He congratulated Ghana first on their win and for reaching the semi-finals, then the Angolan people for their staging of the tournament. Only then did he ascribe the missed opportunities to a night of "poor luck."



MANUEL Jose



2010 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

North Africans nemesis of Cote d'Ivoire

IT will not be an exaggeration to say that North African teams have become the nemesis of Cote d'Ivoire in the Africa Cup of Nations.

The Ivorians went down to Algeria on Sunday 2-3 in the quarter-finals.

The highly talented Cote d'Ivoire team, parading players from major European leagues, were the favourites for the title at the ongoing tournament in Angola but they again faltered when it mattered most.

Both countries are South Africa-bound but the Elephants spearheaded by Chelsea's Didier Drogba were tipped to take their second continental crown after their 1992 win in Senegal.

The Ivorians have not fared well against North Africans in the biennial championship, if their results are anything to go by.

Sunday's victory of the Algerians was their first over the Ivorians since 1968 when the Elephants beat them 3-0 in the competition hosted by Ethiopia.

Egypt's Pharaohs defeating the Ivorians in the 2006 final in Cairo, beating the West Africans on penalties after 120 minutes of football produced no winners.

Two years later, the Egyptians humiliated the Ivorians, who were loaded to the hilt with their Europe-based stars 4-1 in the semi-finals in Kumasi, Ghana.

The Pharaohs have always had an edge over the Elephants in the competition.

They beat them even when the Ivorians hosted the 1984 edition before their home crowd in Abidjan 2-1 at the group stage.

Egypt again maintained their unbeaten run over Cote d'Ivoire 5-4 on penalties at the quarter-finals in the 1998 edition hosted by Burkina Faso.

With the series of losses to Egypt, one had expected that by now, Cote d'Ivoire would have found an anti-dote for the North African teams.

Former Nigerian international, Kadiri Ikhana, blamed the West Africans for Sunday's defeat,



IVORY Coast's captain Didier Drogba reacts after his team's defeat by Algeria in the quarter finals in Cabinda on Sunday

saying they toyed with the game, especially after going in front for the second time.

Ikhana, the first Nigerian coach to win the CAF Champions League with Enyimba in 2003, said the Ivorians were not serious as they forgot that football could go either way.

"The defeat was their own making," said the former defender.

"You can not play big 'manism' in football because one small team can mess you up," Ikhana added.

Cote d'Ivoire had gone up

2-1 in the 89th minute and must have thought they had the game wrapped up but the irrepressible Algerians drew level just one minute later to take the game into extra time.

Algeria then scored what turned out to be the winning goal in the second minute of extra time.

As the Elephants lick their wounds, one expects that they would have learnt that no game is won or lost until the referee signals the end. This lesson is important as they prepare for the World Cup in South Africa in June.

Hayatou wants to keep AFCON every 2 years

AFRICAN football confederation president Issa Hayatou is against the idea of playing the African Cup of Nations every four years.

The continental competition is currently held every two years and is regularly criticized by Europe's big clubs, which are forced to let their players go in the middle of the season.

In comments released Monday by CAF, Hayatou said "it is totally excluded at present" to move the tournament to a four-year cycle but that the possibility of staging it on odd years was

examined.

Such a move would allow the African Confederation to hold its showcase event on years that don't contain other major tournaments, like the World Cup or the European Championship.

"The decision is actually pending," Hayatou said. "No decision (has been) taken yet. This requires a great reflection on the feasibility, particularly in terms of qualifying for major competitions."

Hayatou added that the tournament was an opportunity for all African countries to develop their

infrastructures. In Angola, where this year's African Cup (CAN) is currently being played, new stadiums were built in Luanda and three other cities.

"We need sports infrastructure in our countries," Hayatou said. "Four stadiums were built in Ghana 2008, another four this year in Angola. These would not have happened without the CAN. The CAN is a development tool not only in the football area."

The next African Cup will be co-hosted by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea in 2012.



KANO 2010 WAUG GAMES

Chaka's hat trick restores BUK's hope

Stories from Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

BAYERO University, Kano (BUK) yesterday rose from slumber to thrash their Beninois opponent, Universite de Abomey, Calavi 4-1 in a Group D match of the 3rd West African University Games (WAUG) holding at BUK. The hosts earlier had not-so-radiant outing with ABU, where the match ended in a goalless draw.

BUK's hero, Haruna Chaka's agility made him to land three goals into his opponents' net. Although BUK's danger man and playmaker, Baballe, was still unlucky to score a goal despite his frantic incursion into the Beninois' danger zone, most of Chaka's goals came through him.

In what was described by soccer commentators as a consolation goal, the centre referee gave the visitors a penalty kick toward the end of the electrifying match. University de Abomey, Calavi, however utilised the chance by whizzing the ball past the goalkeeper.

However, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria also redeemed their draw yesterday as they beat University of Ado Ekiti 1-0.

Kano University of Science and Technology, Wudil (KUT) failed to redeem their 4-0 loss as they gave in to Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, LAU-TECH's onslaught. The match ended 4-3 in favour of LAU-TECH.

Federal University of Technology Adamawa also had impressive outing as they scored the highest goals in the tournament. They beat Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai 5-1.



AERIAL battle between KUST Wudil in green and LAUTECH Ogbomosho at the ongoing WAUG 2010 at the Bayero University, Kano yesterday.

AAU vow to haul hockey gold

The coach of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akumgba male hockey team Mr Lawal Surajuddin Akorode has said that the bumps on the hockey pitch would not stop them from jerking the gold medal in the ongoing West African University Games (WAUG) taking place in BUK. According to him, this is given his team's prowess.

Speaking to our correspondent yesterday Coach Akorode said apart from their robust training, they were also asking for divine guidance.

"We've done everything possible as regards to training. So we are also praying to Almighty Allah for guidance," he said.

According to him, he had a dazzling array of young and talented players that would clear away whatever hindrance on their way to attaining the medal.

He said the standard of the pitch was poor and might hamper some of the players' target.

"The pitch is not ideal for us to play on but our team will do everything possible to beat others despite the bumps. The essence of the whole thing is for us to enjoy the game," he said.

The hockey tutor called on the university to improve on that, saying the level of facilities of BUK could not be compared to Ghanaian universities which hosted the championship previously.

"It is wrong to give our visitors bad impression on our country," he noted.

BUK soccer pitch is bad – Ghana official

PLAYING in the soccer field of Bayero University, Kano (BUK) is like playing in the Sahara desert, the Director of Sports of Kwame Nkrumah University, Ghana, Mr Yaw Adu said yesterday.

Unlike the grassy Main Bowl, BUK's Field 2 soccer pitch was bereft of grass.

In a chat with our correspondent, the leader of the university's delegation said the Field 2 was sandy and his team was not enjoying playing on it.

"We are playing soccer on Sahara desert. We don't enjoy playing it at all," he said.

He also lamented the erratic power supply on the campus, saying the situation was not like in their country where electricity supply was constant.

He said they have heard about

the now defunct National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) in Ghana, saying they understood the problem was not only restricted to BUK but spread across the country.

"Although we have heard about NEPA in Ghana, the LOC assured us that the electricity supply will be ok during our stay. But to our surprise, that was however not to be," he said.

He also expressed hope that given their colourful beginning and their track record in hockey, they will grab the gold back to the Ghanaian soil. "So far we are leading in hockey. And we are the defending champions," he said.

In his reaction, the chairman of the Publicity Sub Committee of the LOC, Alhaji Mustapha Zahraddeen, said the university

gave the visitors the same supply of electricity it gives to the vice chancellor's residence.

"The power situation in BUK is relatively impressive. We give them the same supply with the VC's house," he said.

We are playing soccer on Sahara desert. We don't enjoy playing it at all



LAUTECH Ogbomosho scoring against KUST Wudil yesterday

THE TUESDAY COLUMN

Sanusi Abubakar

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In times like these, a little humour helps

Sometimes I cannot help but think that newscasters ought to start reading the news straight, without the usual pleasantries. Why begin with "Good evening" and then proceed to tell us why there is nothing good about, not just the evening but, the whole day itself?

From Port-au-Prince in Haiti, to the killing fields of Jos and its suburbs, to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and so on, all we hear is death and destruction, everyday. But then, that is the news; and the media are obliged to report it objectively. However, some so-called journalists see "reporting" as speaking out for their kith and kin.

How do we keep from being too depressed? You don't really want to know my own method. Only those who watch TV with me can tell you how irritating I can be. Oftentimes, I run a parallel commentary alongside the anchor, especially when the so-called news is turning to lies, jokes or outright nonsense. Mostly though, I just switch off a la Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Jamaica until his death 1981, and author of *Capitalism and Slavery and From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969*. He led his country for many years, and since Jamaica was running a parliamentary system, he was obliged to sit-in and listen to the opposition's complaints and criticisms. Asked by journalists how he coped with the endless attacks and criticisms his reply was that he never heard them. Because he was hearing-challenged (slightly deaf as we use to say, before these times of political correctness) he switches off his hearing aid whenever a member of the opposition gets up to speak.

But sometimes you can't help laughing at these people who think they can deceive us all of the time. One of the most memorable jokes last year was the one about our Chinese built satellite being parked in space, waiting for repairs to its power system. Of course they knew it was gone, but they thought we were all gullible enough to believe whatever trash they dish out, provided it is said by a big enough official. The joke was on them however, and they had to come clean when they realised we were not swallowing the garbage.

Next, they came with the funny thesis that Nigeria was immune to the global financial meltdown because of some magic one professor performed. That was followed, when it was time for him to go, with a very lavish and passionate campaign by a bunch of self-serving finance "professionals" and tribal warriors threatening the break up, if not the total collapse, of Nigeria if their guy was not retained. He was not, and Nigeria still exists, with a sound, if still distorted, economy. Hardly had these praise-singers and court jesters left the stage (or have they?), and following new attempts to sanitize the banking and finance sectors, that other jokers, faceless but well funded, emerge on the scene. Going under different names, their current humorous campaigns centre on going back to some sort of status quo ante, since the government is to absolve most of the huge financial losses. These banks are private concerns, they argued, and the shareholders should be allowed to introduce any change that may be necessary. Where were the Board of Directors and the Annual General Meetings when these MD/CEOs were messing up, turning these PLCs into one man (or woman) shows? To garner sympathy from bank workers and the general public they now accuse CBN of forcing banks and financial outfits to retrench workers. They conveniently forget that when the banks were recruiting their large armies of "marketers" looking for deposits,

they were mainly concerned with making more and more profits, and now that the dubious and shaky model has collapsed on their head they are bound to "right-size" whether anyone tells them to, or not. Part of the hefty salaries and allowances of the bank workers, as well as other private sector employees, is to take care of the lack of security of service in such organizations.

Not to be outdone, stockbrokers and shareholders' associations, who had unceremoniously closed shop and have relocated to addresses unknown, are now waking up to demand part of the bailout money being pumped into banks. They gambled and lost, and now they think they should be bailed out with public funds. That is truly funny.

The politicians however, remain our best comedians, even though some of the jokes are on us. Take the issue of annual budgets for example. Every year they go through the ritual and we get excited about all the billions that would go into public works and social services, even though we know very well that debt repayment and handouts (petroleum subsidy mostly) account for most of

The politicians however, remain our best comedians, even though some of the jokes are on us. Take the issue of annual budgets for example. Every year they go through the ritual and we get excited about all the billions that would go into public works and social services, even though we know very well that debt repayment and handouts (petroleum subsidy mostly) account for most of it

it. While the fiction persists nobody implements what is in the budget. Then the Nationally Assembled pretends to fight the Executive arm and we lap up the drama with relish, ignoring the crude reality that most of the money was meant to be stolen anyway. All of them have turned the phrase "service" into some kind of joke.

Many of us, after looking at the limitations of Yar'adua team, suggested that the 7 Point agenda was not realistic, and that he should concentrate on power supply alone. Well, even as a friendly suggestion, it was not exactly welcomed. Now, despite the promises and heated

defences, even the modest 6,000 megawatts (MW) has not been achieved. That figure is itself a joke anyway, given that the South African state-owned company, Eskom, has about 36,200 (MW) of net generating capacity, (of which 32,100 (MW) is coal-fired). Over half of our states have coal in abundance, and all we hear is they cannot meet the target because there is shortage of gas to power the turbines. Another heartless joke, is the PDP itself which tells us it will be governing us for at least the next 60 years (we don't apparently have a say) while its' own governor-PDP to the core- is trying to make sure there are no Hausa, or Fulani or indeed any Muslim left in Plateau State in the next 5 or 6 years. And they think there will be much left for them to govern? Even a very sic Yar'adua will do better than this mess they are allowing to consume us in Jos and elsewhere.

But, perhaps we should not worry too much. Though the Minister of Justice and the PDP both insist the President can govern from anywhere, even as they refuse to bother convincing us that he is well enough to lead, it is now said that Yar'adua is due back in a week. Then, maybe the show will truly start. Too many of them think we are all fools. Well, let's laugh a little, and then proceed to show them we understand what needs to be done. To be truly democratic we must be able to understand that diapers and politicians have one thing in common. Both of them should be changed regularly. Along with thieving bank MDs. Yes, watch TV and read the papers; critically and with anger, compassion and, sometimes, a pinch of humour.

SPORTS REPORT



CRISTIANO Ronaldo

Ronaldo slammed in Spanish press

Cristiano Ronaldo was widely criticised yesterday after, his sending off for violent conduct in Sunday's 2-0 win over Malaga again highlighted what some termed his Jekyll and Hyde character.

The Portuguese forward netted a first-half double to put Real Madrid in command at the Bernabeu but his night turned from glory to shame in the 70th minute when he was dismissed for lashing out at Patrick Mtiliga and breaking the Malaga

defender's nose.

It was his second dismissal of the season after his sending off against Almeria in December for kicking out at an opponent.

"Cristiano Ronaldo, hero and villain" (El Pais), "Cristiano Ronaldo, again angel and demon" (La Razon) and "Doctor Cristiano and Mister Ronaldo" (Marca), were some of the headlines in yesterday's Spanish press.

Marca columnist Roberto Palomar said Ronaldo's behaviour had been his "umpteenth act of idiocy this season."



LI NA, China tennis star

Chinese revolution gathers steam

China's sporting revolution has been slow in reaching international tennis. More than two million Chinese play the game for fun but only a handful take it seriously enough to make a mark on the professional game.

At the forefront of her country's batch of leading players is Zheng Jie, who gave the world a glimpse of the changing face of tennis when she made the semi-finals at Wimbledon two years ago.

The diminutive 26-year-old is already through to the quarter-finals in Australia and looking to go further but has been joined this time by Li Na after she defeated Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki 6-4 6-3.

