



We are on the GO to building an enduring financial institution.

Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.
Totally Devoted to You.

STAR FEATURE

Hajj 2005: How it went



Pages 20 & 21

*This space
is for sale*

NASS urges AU to intervene in Togo

The House of Representatives, yesterday resolved to charge the African Union (AU), to give Mr Faure Gnassingbe Eyadema, the son of the late president of the Republic of Togo, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, time within which to step down from power or be forcefully removed should he fail to comply.

While condemning the manner in which power was deceptively and unconstitutionally transferred to Mr Eyadema in violation of the constitution of Togo follo-

By Isa Sanusi, Habeeb I. Pindiga & Zainab Alimi, Political Reporters

wing his father's sudden death, the House said it was conscious of the position of the international community on constitutional development and its abhorrence of military governments under any guise.

It therefore advised the federal government and the international community not to recognise the new government in Togo and to impose immediately, uncon-

ditional economic and diplomatic sanctions against that country.

The House also urged President Olusegun Obasanjo to vigorously champion the institutionalisation of constitutional values in Togo, adding that late President Eyadema during his time, maintained very close and cordial relations with Nigeria.

The House is to formally protest through the Togolese Embassy and the ECOWAS

Parliament, its disappointment with the Togolese Parliament for "collaborating with the country's military to subvert the constitution of the Republic of Togo."

Noting that late President Eyadema who ruled his country for 38 years was one of the founding fathers of the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS), the House commended the swift reaction of the international community namely the AU, ECOWAS, the European

Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the French government in condemning the subversion of the constitution by the unconstitutional transfer of power.

Moving the motion on the unconstitutional transfer of power in Togo, Hon J. Halims Agoda called on Mr Faure Eyadema to "take the path of honour and abide by the provisions of his country's constitution in matters of transfer of power."

Also yesterday, the Sen-

ate adopted a resolution urging the African Union (AU), to employ stern measures to restore constitutionality in Togo where the son of late President Gnassingbe Eyadema, Faure, has taken over power.

Faure was sworn-in earlier in the week, following a hurried constitutional amendment by the Togolese parliament to legalise an

Contd. on Pg 2

Confab: Reps file fresh suit against FG

Fifty-Seven members of the House of Representatives who sued the federal government over the national conference, yesterday filed another suit asking the court to restrain President Olusegun Obasanjo or the finance minister from appropriating or applying any portion of the nation's revenue for the national conference.

In a motion on notice filed by their counsel, Mr Yakubu Maikyau, the plaintiffs are seeking an interlocutory injunction to restrain the president or any of his ministers and agents from using government funds to fund the national political reform conference pending the

By Kemi Ogedengbe, Judicial Editor

hearing of the substantive suit.

Listed as defendants in the suit are the president, National Assembly, the president of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Clerk of the National Assembly and the Attorney General of the federation.

In the suit, the plaintiffs are seeking an interlocutory injunction restraining or preventing the conference as constituted by President Obasanjo.

They also want the court to stop President Obasanjo

Contd. on Pg 2

SOME CONFAB DELEGATES

Akwa-Ibom State

Mr. Etim Inyang
Mrs. Helen Esuene
Dr. Asikpo Essien
Dr. Ekeng Anam-Ndu
Senator Akaninyene Ukpana
Senator Emmanuel Essien
Ibok-Essien

Dr. Kabir Isyaku

Benue State

Gen. Victor Malu (rtd)
Gen. Geoffrey Ejigah (rtd)
Steven Okor
Fred Orti
George Korgba
Jack Gyado

Borno State

Alhaji Muhammadu Goni
Alhaji Baba Ahmed Jidda
Professor Nuru Alkali
Alhaji Mohammed Alibe
Alhaji Ibrahim Damcida
Alhaji Lawal Buba

Anambra State

Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife
Mr. Zik Obi
Senator Mike Ajegbo
Mr. Gabriel Akweze
Chief Obi Ogene

Academic Community

Professor Peter Okebukola
Professor Nimi Briggs
Prof. Cletus Nwazuruike
Dr. Nuru Yakubu

Civil Society

Professor Audu Idris
Malam Shehu Sani
Mr Idris Miliki Abdul

Contd. on Pg 2



Chairman/Chief Executive, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Alhaji Bello Laftagi (left), Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Akinlolu Olujimi (middle) and chairman, Senate Committee on Drugs and Financial Crimes, Senator Lawal Shuaibu, during the international drug enforcement conference, held in Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

BANKS CATEGORISATION BILL

CBN says no going back on N25bn capital base

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) yesterday indicated that it will not shift the bank pre-capitalisation deadline in spite of the recent passage of the "Bank Categorisation Bill" by the senate.

Speaking to financial journalists after the Board of Directors Association of Nigeria First 2005 Quarterly Forum held at Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, CBN director, banking supervision, Mr Ignatius Imala, who represented the CBN deputy governor (sever-

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor, Lagos

ance), Mr Tunde Lemo, said that the apex bank was

pressing ahead with consolidation and that the deadline is still December 2005.

Earlier during the event,

chairman, Senate committee on banking, insurance and other financial institutions, Mr Ambuno Zik Sunday, had

Contd. on Pg 2

Tsunami: Controversial baby undergoes DNA tests in Sri Lanka

The infant dubbed "Baby 81" after being found in the debris of Asia's tsunami and the couple desperately trying to claim him underwent DNA

By Elkanah Chawai, Reporter with Agency Report (Foreign Desk)

tests yesterday that could resolve a case that has come to symbolise families torn apart by the disaster.

Nine women initially claimed the 3-month-old boy after he was found caked in mud amid corpses left by the Dec. 26 tsunami, but only couple, Murugupillai

C

News

earlier announcement to this effect by the military.

But the Senate yesterday condemned the development as a circumvention of the constitution and urged for immediate steps by the AU to reverse the decision.

Other resolutions adopted by the Senate include urging President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the chairman of the union, to lead other African leaders to take action against Togo and to summon an emergency meeting to decide the modalities of addressing the issue.

NASS *Contd. from Pg 1*

Moving a motion of urgent national importance on the Togolese debacle, Senator David Brigidi described it as "a shameful act and a terrible precedent in Africa. It is a precedent that needs to be solved. It's a precedent that the African Union and the entire Africans should not accept" and urged the Senate to condemn the action.

Some senators, while contributing to the debate, sought military action and

economic sanctions against the Faure-led administration.

Senators Ibrahim Mantu, Jonathan Zwingina, Umar Kibiya, Bassey Ewa-Henshaw, Ibikunle Amosun, Nuhu Aliyu, Patrick Osakwe, Ike Ekweremadu, Saidu Dansadau and Yusha'u Anka, condemned the events in Togo as the legalisation of unconstitutionality.

Zwingina said there was need for urgent action to prevent anti-democratic forces in other African nations from emulating Togo. "The danger in this is that with complacency, the *de facto* will begin to look like the *de jure*," he said.

Mantu and Ewa-Henshaw called for sanctions against the administration in Togo while the deputy president of the Senate described the events as a devastating, shocking *coup d'etat* that must not be condoned.

But Ken Nnamani and Musiliu Obanikoro, urged for caution in condemning the Togolese parliament, suggesting that what it did might have been in order.

Senator Umar Tsauri also cautioned against the use of force, saying that dialogue was the best option.

Following various contributions in favour of the motion, Zwingina cited Order 72 and asked that the Senate take a decision.

In adopting the motion, the Senate also urged the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) parliament to cut all ties with the Togolese parliament until constitutionality was restored in the country.

Reps propose N229bn increase in 2005 budget

By Hammeed M. Bello,
Senior Political Reporter

The House of Representatives is considering raising the 2005 budget by N229 billion following recommendations of the report of its committee on appropriations which was submitted during yesterday's plenary session.

President Obasanjo had in December, 2004 presented the 2005 budget to the joint session of the National Assembly, in the sum of N1,617,731,737,472.00 trillion and the House of Representatives felt the need to review the budget to reallocate funds so as to address priority areas.

The appropriations committee assigned to review the budget in its report yesterday which is yet to be adopted by the House, proposed an increase of the budget from N1,617 trillion to N1,846,912,755,433.00 trillion, accounting for an increase of about N229 billion.

The report also increased allocation for statutory transfers from N76,441,821,000.00 billion earlier submitted by the president to N81,028,000,000.00 billion, accounting for about N5 billion increase.

Similarly, the allocation for recurrent (Non-Debt), was raised from N635,917,244,472.00 billion as proposed by the president to N744,187,747,948.00 showing an increase of about N109 billion.

The report however reduced the allocation of N361,045,000,000.00 billion

for debt servicing to N355,723,000,000.00 billion which indicated a decrease of about N6 billion.

The balance of N665,974,007,484.00 billion would be left in the budget as reviewed by the comm-

ittee, against the balance of N544,318,672,000,000.00 billion in the proposal presented by the president. The amount is to be used for contributions to the development fund for capital expenditure of the government of the federation for the year ending on the 31st of December, 2005.

Dangote builds Africa's biggest cement factory

From Ahmed Tahir Ajabe,
Correspondent (Lokoja)

The chairman of Dangote Group of Companies, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, has said that when completed, the cement production industry at Obajana will be the biggest cement factory in Africa.

Alhaji Aliko made this known yesterday while conducting President Olusegun Obasanjo and other dignitaries on an inspection tour of the factory located in Obajana, Lokoja local government area of Kogi State.

The Dangote group helmsman said the factory would cost the group about \$800 million and would on completion by November this year, produce about five million tons of cement annually using state of the art technology.

He said that the group has also made significant progress at the Benue Cement Company. "We have already started clunker produ-

ction and by next week, cement produced from BCC would be available to consumers in Abuja and other neighbouring markets."

He said that by the end of this year, the production capacity would reach the planned target of 2.7 million metric tons per annum.

In his speech, President Obasanjo reaffirmed federal government's commitment to provide an enabling environment for private sector participation in industrial and economic development of the country.

He said the privatisation programme of the administration was in line with the federal government's commitment to encourage a private sector driven economy to reduce corruption and to ensure efficiency and optimum output by such companies

SOME CONFAB DELEGATES

Chief Mike Ozekhome
Barrister Mike Nwocha
Mrs Bisi Ogunleye

Delta State
Mr. Gamaliel Onosode
Prof. Itse Sagay
Prof. Omafume Onogwe
Andrew Moemokhe
Rear Admiral Onah
E.K. Clark

Gombe State
Senator Uba Ahmed
Alhaji Magaji Mu'azu
Professor Idris Mohammed
Alhaji Abubakar Aliyu Deba
Alhaji Abubakar Muazu Hassan
Mr. Nuhu Poloma

Jigawa State
H.R.H. Alhaji Najib Hussain
Alhaji Sulaiman Bappa
Engr. Habu Gumel
Alhaji Aminu Ringim
Alhaji Tijjani Inuwa Dutse
Hajiya Fatima Mai Borno

Kano State
Alhaji Magaji Danbatta
Professor Auwalu Yadudu
Alhaji Sule Yahaya Hamma
Alhaji Isaku Umar Tofa
Dr. Haruna Salihi
Alhaji Musa Tanko Waziri

Kaduna State
Alhaji Umar Dikko
Dr. Chris Abashiyah
In'afaru Makarti
Emmanuel Toro (SAN)
Prof. Ango Abdullahi
Abdullahi Jibrin

Katsina State
Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie
Alhaji Saidu Barda
Alhaji Garba Ja Abdulkadir
Alhaji Kabir Saidu
Barrister Ibrahim Shema
Alhaji Tukur Mani

Kebbi State
Col. Bello Kaniel (rtd)
Alh. Isah Mohammed
Abdullahi Na'amo
Garba Mohammed Dan Diga
Abdullahi Ahman Zuru
Daidu Mohammed B/Yauri

Kogi State
Alh. Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN)
Col. Ahmadu Ali (rtd)
Gen. David Jemibewon (rtd)
Engr. G.T.N. Ajakpo
Engr. Ahmed Onogo
Joseph Suleiman

Kwara State
Prof. Albert Ogunshola
Alhaji Mahmud Ibrahim
Engr. Kola Shitta
Alhaji Ayinla Folorunsho
Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Baraje
Alhaji Saidu Isa

Lagos State
Alhaji Femi Okunnu
Alhaji Sikiru Shitta-Bey
Olomofunmi Basorunji
Ahmed Onipede
Tawa Williams
242496, & B. Adebawale

NLC
Adams Oshiomhole
Sylvester Ejirofor
Peters Adeyemi
Emmanuel Ugboaja
Abdulkadir Salami
Salihu Lukman

Niger
Prof. Shehu Bida
Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu Kuta
Alhaji Abubakar Magaji
Alhaji Umar Kawu
Alhaji Isyaku Jikantoro
Gen. Garba Duba (rtd)

Nasarawa
Grp Cpt. Usman Jibrin (rtd)
Mr. Dogara Igube
James Kpason
Yakubu Kworra
Mr. Tanimu Adabson
Alhaji Zakari Yakubu

NCF
Senator Ike Nwachukwu
Hon. Joseph Boko

NPAN
Nduka Obaigbena

Nigerian Guild of Editors
Mal Halilu Baba Dantiye

Ondo State
Admiral Akin Aduwo (rtd)
Dr. Femi Adekunye
Dr. Olajaiyi Oni
Dr. Adewunmi Ibitoye
Chief Oluwale Oke
Dr. Tayo Dairo

Osun State
Chief Ebenezer Babatope
Justice Bola Babalakin
Professor John Ayoade
Chief Olu Alabi
Mr. Dosu Oladipo
Dr. Wale Oladipo

Plateau State
Mr. Danjuma Maina
Dr. Alexander Kebang
Malam Adamu Adio
Senator John Washpam
Chief Solomon Lar
Alhaji Mohammed Sambo

Rivers State
Senator Tari Sekibo
Sampson Agbaru
Chief Adeodi Ayegbiri
Mr. Barimus Wifa (SAN)
Dr. Silas Ebeyo

Sokoto State
Ambassador Hamza Ahmadu
Alhaji Ahmad Moh'd Acida
Barrister Suleiman Usman
Dr. Zayyanu Umar
Alh. Abubakar Shehu Tambuwal
Bala Hassan Bodinga

Taraba State
Tanko Bobbo Anadami
Luka Zanyu
Ibrahim Abubakar
Emmanuel Bavoa
Yakubu Agbaizi
Johnny Atiku

Yobe State
Alhaji Adamu Fika
General Alwali Kazir (rtd)
Alhaji Sidi Yakubu Karasuwa
Gujibama Abubakar
Col. Mohammed Abdu (rtd)
Alhaji Aji Baitu Gapchi

Confab *Contd. from Pg 1*

from doing anything or taking any steps to give effect to or address any of the reforms specified in the 1st defendant's letter of January 18, 2005, pending the hearing of the case.

The plaintiffs are seeking an order to stop the National Assembly from appropriating the sum of N931,721,615.28 for the conference.

They also requested an interlocutory injunction to restrain the NASS from appropriating any sum for the purpose of the purported national political reform conference pending the deter-

defended the Senate's recent moves on the capitalisation issue, saying that the effort was to give small banks the opportunity to grow.

He said that the Bill which was recently passed is not an effort to appropriate CBN functions, but an effort to remove the burden of N25 billion capitalisation for small (N5 billion) and medium sized banks (N10 billion).

Imala, however hinted that the CBN is willing to help banks having problems in the consolidation, saying that CBN is ever ready to discuss palliatives in other to support the system.

In a speech on behalf of Mr Lemo, Imala had owned up to the fact that the mergers and acquisition options has a lot of challenges namely information technology

ination of the substantive suit.

The plaintiffs asked the court for an order to stop President Obasanjo from recruiting members, inaugurating or funding them pending the hearing of the suit.

Meanwhile, the court also granted an application for substituted service on President Obasanjo through the Attorney General of the Federation and by delivering that of the president of the Senate and Speaker to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

They are to return to court on February 22, 2005 for mention.

CBN *Contd. from Pg 1*

strategies, culture, divergent visions etc, but said that banks can overcome these challenges.

He stressed that imputations to the fact that the time frame for the exercise is not true and the CBN has facts and figures to show that the effort is bound for a positive destination.

BADN president, Alhaji Aliu Suleman (SAN), in his contributions, said the issue of the consolidation exercise is one that is relevant in today's Nigeria and that its discussion will only help better appreciation of developments in the financial sector.

He stated that the forum will enable its members to better understand the dyn-

inside.

Still, a judge ordered the baby kept in a hospital until his parentage could be proven genetically, and it could be several days before the test results reach the court.

The Jeyarajahs, who lost their home and family records in the tsunami, have spent seven weeks trying to claim the boy.

The baby arrived Wednesday morning at the laboratory in the capital, Colombo, under police escort following a bumpy nine-hour journey in an ambulance from the eastern town of Kalmunai. The clamor of photographers awoke him and the infant cried as a nurse carried him

amics of recent developments to enable them and others in their future efforts.

It should be recalled that from the onset, most directors and owners of banks have been against moves to increase the capital base of banks to N25 billion.

Although some of the bankers have come to embrace the move by the CBN governor, Professor Charles Soludo, quite a good number of them still believe that leaving the status quo is preferable.

Nevertheless, a lot of professional bodies and institutions namely ICAN, NLC, MAN, NACCIMA etc have come to back the reforms as the way through which the economy could be strengthened and the real sector boosted.

The couple, who say their son's name is Abilass, arrived minutes later.

"When they saw the infant, they started crying," said Mohammed Nazir, a court registrar who accompanied the baby. "I reminded them that they should remain calm and allow the procedure ordered by the court to be completed."

Inside the clinic, medics drew blood from all three and Jenita Jeyarajah was allowed to hold the boy on her lap for a few minutes, Nazir said.

"I am happy, I am happy," Murugupillai Jeyarajah shouted.

Maya B. Gunasekera, chief executive of the Gene-tech Molecular Diagnostics laboratory, told *The Associated Press* the DNA test results would take at least two days. They must be sent by registered mail to the judge, which could take an additional two to three days.

Judge M.P. Mohaideen ordered the DNA test during a hearing Feb. 2 and scheduled April 20 to review the results, a delay that seemed like an eternity to the couple, who later barged into the hospital caring for the child to try to reach him.

Two hospital employees claimed they were injured in the melee and the Jeyarajahs were briefly detained. A day later, Mohaideen suggested the results could be announced sooner.

Gunasekera said the company's tests can determine parentage with 99.9 percent certainty.

News



Minister of Aviation, Isa Yuguda (r), Speaker House of Reps, Hon. Aminu Bello Masari (m) and Chairman House Committee on Aviation, Hon. Martins Oke during the 1st summit on Aviation Safety and Security, held in Abuja ...yesterday

Technical integration dev. 'll facilitate cooperation in Africa -DG

The acting director-general of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa, Dr. Sule Bassi, has said that the development of technical integration and corporation between African countries will facilitate better cooperation and development while mitigating controversies and conflicts in the continent.

He made the statement yesterday during a courtesy call on the Editor-In-Chief of Media Trust in Abuja.

By Elkanah Chawai, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

He explained that the directorate of technical cooperation was established by the government to focus on issues of technical cooperation, exchange of high level manpower in science and technology.

"Over the years in Africa, the continent has concentrated more on political cooperation. It is the one that looks relatively easy on cooperation but it is

the one that is very problematic. It takes a long time and too much talking. But with technical cooperation, the realms of confusion and conflict is very small," he said.

The DG emphasized technical manpower, which he said is the most important in technical cooperation in Africa, adding that African experts in the diaspora need to be given the opportunity to contribute to the technical development of Africa.

"About 32 million African experts are outside Africa, 17 million are Nigerians which is even larger than a population of some countries. We have to find a way of attracting them," he stated. "Another 250,000 Nigerian medical consultants are abroad. Human capacity building is very important. We have human capacity if only we could cooperate and liberate Africa," he added.

He disclosed further that the quality of African experts that leave the continent compared to expatriates that enter the continent is expediently higher than the expatriates.

He called on Africans living in the diaspora to contribute to the technical development of Africa, adding that revenue generated from human resources will not be frittered away if the resources and harnessed and mobilized for Africa development.

Senate c'ttee set to repair velodrome

The Senate has mandated its committee on sports to within two weeks, investigate

Abuja records first rain

By Hassan Idris Senior Reporter (Agriculture)

The Federal Capital Territory yesterday evening recorded its first rain fall this year.

The rain fell in some areas of Nyanya, Garki, Maitama, Wuse including some satellite towns of the capital city.

The rainfall confirmed the forecast of researchers who earlier predicted that it may shower in Abuja, yesterday.

Daily trust gathered from the Weather news Inc. published by the Open World limited that the temperature in Abuja on Wednesday was 31 degree F in the afternoon and the weather came low to about 25 degree 77 degree F before the rainfall.

The source said that today, isolated showers are expected even as the forecast is ranging from 31 degree 88 degree F at high peak, adding that the lowest temperature is 26 degree 79 F degree and throughout the week the weather will not be more than 34 degree 93 degree high and 27 degree 81 degree low therefore, more rainfall is expected.

By Isa Sanusi, Political Reporter

the state of the destroyed velodrome at the Abuja national stadium as well as the nature of the contract and the arrangements for the repair of the structure.

This came following a motion moved by Senator Musliu Obanikoro in which he asked the senate to investigate the standard of the construction of the velodrome to avoid what he described as waste of the nation's wealth.

"One may validly support the position that the destruction of the velodrome was an act of nature since it was adduled solely to natural causes. Some fundamental questions need to be answered. Was the velodrome certified to be of standard before it was put to use?"

Asked the senate to ascertain who will be responsible for the repairs to be carried out on the velodrome and to investigate the extent and quality of the work done.

Although the chairman of the senate committee on sports, Senator Kanti Bello, told the senate that his committee has submitted a report on the issue, the senate still insists on a fresh investigation to be conducted to find out the position of the velodrome and its repairs.

Nigeria launches communications satellite next year

The federal executive council yesterday ratified the approval by president Olusegun Obasanjo for the launch of the country's communications satellite in 2006.

The communication satellite, Nigeria SAT II is coming on the heels of Nigeria SAT I, a remote sensing satellite which was launched more than one year ago.

Briefing State House correspondents after yesterday's FEC meeting which was presided over by vice president Atiku Abubakar, science and technology minister, Professor Turner Isoun, said the project will gulp about \$200 million (about N40 billion), with heavy private sector participation both locally and internationally.

He explained that government had decided to venture into investment in this area because of the highly successful Nigeria SAT I

By Reuben Yunana, Senior Reporter, State House

He said "our efforts in launching Nigeria SAT I gave us the confidence and motivation to go into communication satellite. We

have been working on this for over a year and we have been able to bring in all the details. The work by the consultants and the country given to the appropriate company to build, fabricate, and launch the satellite in 2006."

Muslims celebrate new Islamic calendar

Thousands of muslim faithfuls in Kano state yesterday converged at the indoor hall of the Sani Abacha sports complex to celebrate the beginning of the new Islamic calendar, 1426 AH.

The state governor, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, had earlier declared Wednesday, 1st Muharram, 1426 AH as public holiday, so that the muslim community could witness the celebrations.

The event commenced with the recitation of several verses from the Holy Qur'an, prayers for the development of Islam and continued

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Correspondent (Kano)

peaceful co-existence among various ethnic groups delivered by Islamic scholars.

The occasion was also attended by top government officials, traditional rulers, pupils and students of Islamiyyah as well as secondary schools, who were holding small flags bearing various Qur'anic verses.

In his speech, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, admonished muslims to consider the new year as a challenge for improving on their faith in Almighty God.

He emphasised that Muslims should recall the offences committed in the last year, seek God's forgiveness and vow not to return to the same situation again.

The royal father advised muslims not to boycott Zakat payment for the poor and needy, warning however, that Almighty God has reserved serious punishment for defaulters.

Alhaji Bayero also cautioned muslims against acts capable of jeopardising the cordial relationship between them and their christian counterparts, saying no nation can attain rapid socio-economic development under a violent atmosphere.

Also speaking, the commissioner at the state Shari'a commission, the organisers of the celebrations, Ustaz Umar Sani Fagge, gave a lengthy narration of the history of the Islamic calendar.

He stated that the calendar started when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was ordered by Almighty God to migrate to Medina from Mecca (the present Saudi Arabia), when infidels threatened to kill him should he continue preaching.

Petrol station fire causes panic in Maiduguri

A petrol tanker offloading fuel at Agip petrol station along Baga road in Maiduguri has caught fire, sending residents around the area into panic.

The fire generated a huge smoke which billowed around a large portion of the Baga road area.

Daily Trust reports that the fire started around 4.00 pm on Monday as the tanker was discharging its content at the petrol station.

Eye witnesses told our correspondent that the fire started from an underground storage facility into which the tanker was offloading its fuel. "Apparently it was caused by heat which could have ignited the fire as the petrol was being offloaded," one eyewitness said.

Daily Trust also learnt that the tanker driver gallantly saved the situation from worsening by driving the vehicle to an open space inside the petrol station as the fire was gathering

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (Maiduguri)

momentum, thus preventing the fire from spreading to other parts of the petrol station or to nearby buildings.

The fire naturally drew the attention of people around the Baga road area who gathered fear-stricken to watch as it raged with venom.

Men of the Borno state fire service immediately rushed to the scene after being alerted of the incident, and although they came in good time to try to control the fire, its sheer size and ferocity made it so difficult for them at the initial stage.

Residents around the area were scared of the possibility of the fire spilling over to their houses but providence prevented that, as the firefighters battled to ensure that the fire remained confined to the underground tank.

The firefighters finally brought down the inferno after battling it for over two hours. There was no casualty.

Benue sources more funds from external bodies

The Benue state government plans to source funds for the execution of capital projects, the state's commissioner for information, Mr. John Uzer made this known in Makurdi while briefing newsmen of the desire of the administration to execute projects to ease the people's sufferings. He said however that Benue State is cash strapped to be able to implement its desires.

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

He however said the way out would be for the state government to look outside for funds for the execution of its projects and expressed disappointment that several financial institutions particularly the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have been unwilling

to lend it (state government) funds.

He said rather, the institutions, prefer to give loans to community based organizations (CBO) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), when, according to his claims, government works through reputable people with international connections to enable her have access to available funds.



Sultan Abubakar Maccido

News

National Confab... National Confab... National Confab...

Kaduna to organise mini-conference – Toro

One of the delegates to the national conference on political reforms from Kaduna state, Mr. Emmanuel Toro (SAN), has disclosed that a mini-conference will be organised in the state to get different views on what will be the state's agenda at the conference.

Mr. Toro who is from the zone three senatorial district in southern Kaduna, told *Daily Trust* yesterday that a liaison office and a clearing house to facilitate the cross fertilization of ideas between

Kwara agenda remains secret

From AbdulRazak Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

Kwara State agenda on the planned national political reform conference is shrouded in secrecy as stakeholders are yet to meet and articulates the position of the state.

Reports reaching *Daily Trust* indicated that a meeting of stakeholders scheduled in consultation with traditional rulers has been fixed for the weekend where the kingmaker of Kwara politics is expected to play a prominent role in the agenda to be fashioned for the conference.

However feelers showed that fundamental issues such as electoral reforms, restructuring, constitutional reforms among others would feature prominently at the stakeholders meeting.

According to sources, the state's nominees to the confab would defend strongly their retention in the Northern geo-political zone and support the re-introduction of the parliamentary system of government.

Similarly, the issues of state police and immunity would be seriously deliberated considering the turbulent political period the state went through between 2001 and 2003 during the regime of Muhammad Lawal.

It was argued that had state police system been put in place, the state would have recorded the worst disaster in the political history of the state as the chief executive would have manipulated the police to his own advantage.

Also on the agenda to be discussed is the issue of resource control with the view that the present system was not in line with the principles of equity and justice hence the need for review.

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

the people and the delegates from the state will also be established.

He said the components of the conference which touches all facets of our existence as a country "includes the fundamental issue of whether to continue with the presidential system of government or to adopt other hybrid, available options or evolve a system.

"And looking at the whole scope of the exercise which includes civil society reforms what worries me is whether they can do all these meaningfully within the period of three months," he said.

Mr. Toro who had participated in the constitutional reviews of 1987-1988 and the Constituent Assembly, said each of the exercise took between six and eight months and wondered whether it was to be a rubber stamp of what the government might have decided to do.

"I hope quite frankly that government has not decided on anything and they just want the conference to be a rubber stamp. That is not the essence of the exercise.

He denied that the conference was a usurpation of the National Assembly's functions because the conference does not have legislative powers. He said their recommendations will be tabled before the National Assembly or turned over to the people in a referendum.

The Kaduna based legal practitioner said he does not feel the essence was to manipulate the conference especially given the calibre of people going to the conference.

"The moment I discover I am being used, it will be bye-bye to the conference," Mr. Toro declared.

Former gov leads

Nasarawa representatives

A former military governor of Kaduna state, Group Capt. Usman Jibrin (rtd), is to lead Nasarawa state representatives to the forthcoming national political reform conference.

The press release signed by the secretary to the state government, Mr Philip Dada yesterday in Lafia.

According to Dada, the nominations have been approved by the state governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu.

Others include Mr. Dogara Igube, James Kpason, Yakubu Kworra and Mr Tanimu Adabson, all former commissioners in the



The Head of Service, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed (middle) listening to the minister of integration in Africa, Alhaji Lawan Gana Guba and the minister of state works, Alhaji Saleh Shehu (right) during the FEC meeting held at the State House Abuja...recently. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Plateau delegate advocates a united Nigeria

A member of the state's delegation to the national political reform conference, Senator John Wash Pam has harped on the need for the indivisibility of the corporate existence of Nigeria.

Senator Pam who was speaking with our correspondent in Jos yesterday, said though the state's delegates were yet to meet with governor Joshua Dariye on the position they would present at the conference, "one thing I am sure of is the need to ensure the indivisibility of the Nigerian nation."

He noted that for most of Nigeria's history, the middle belt provided combatant soldiers to keep the country one, stressing "we don't want our efforts to go to nothing."

According to him, they are against sectarianism, stating that there was need for delegates to advance and defend the cause of one nation.

He was of the view that the national conference would not usurp the responsibility of the National Assembly as being touted in some quarters.

Said Senator Pam "when people were talking about

sovereign national conference, I was against it because it is the work of the National Assembly, but now that it is a political reform conference, I am in support."

He noted that it was necessary for Nigerians to dialogue as many across the country have been canvassing for it, concluding that "it is better to jaw-jaw than to war-war."

Don decries low number of women

Executive director, International Centre for Gender and Social Research (INTERGENDER), Professor Dennis Ityavyan, has expressed dismay over gender bias against women in the list of delegates across the nation to the national political

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

reform conference.

Speaking at a seminar organised by INTERGENDER for opinion leaders in Jos yesterday, Professor Ityavyan stressed that the national conference should not be

something for men only.

So far, only two women across the country have been nominated. There should be penchment for the involvement of women in national issues," the INTERGENDER director noted.

He however observed that though the method for choosing people to the conference is not very encouraging, it is good to hold dialogue because there are benefits talking about issues that bother people.

He disclosed that INTERGENDER had through various for a, organised towards peaceful co-existence among Muslims and Christians in Plateau State, realised the benefit of dialogue.

In an address at a seminar titled: "Bridging the indigene and settler divide challenges of peace building in Nigeria, Plateau State," non. Yakubu Datti noted that tolerance has taken the front burner in national discourse, community INTER-GENDER for efforts towards this direction.

He urged members of the society to ensure their religious, or ethnic differences are not sources of hatred for one another, but work towards harmonious relationships as they are destined to live together.

Opposition to confab baseless – Shehu Sani

One of the representatives of the civil society to the forthcoming national conference on political reforms, Comrade Shehu Sani, has described as baseless, mounting opposition to the convening of the conference, noting that the need for the conference arose from the failure of the existing political structures to address the nation's socio-political problems.

By Isa Sanusi, Political Reporter

do it is to be in the conference," he said.

Comrade Shehu Sani expressed disappointment with the crowding of the conference with what he described as "old political horses" whom he added would always circulate archaic ideas and were key players in past regimes that brought the nation to its

chat with *Daily Trust* yesterday, added that the civil society will canvass to the restructuring of the nation's political equation as well as revolutionise the way the nation is governed.

"If you are opposed to the conference or its modalities, I think the best way to do it is to do it within the conference. If you have the ambition to scuttle the conference, the best way to

"Our first and major challenge is to challenge the old political horses that have been nominated by their governors. We will not tolerate their outdated ideas which have never worked," he further said.

He added that for the conference to succeed, it has to address the nation's fundamental political problems adding that the rule of law and justice must be ensured.

The **ACB** Vision



"To create opportunities for indigenes, and not just foreigners, to invest and reap richly from the bountiful blessings of our fatherland."

-Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe
Founder, ACB International Bank PLC.

**Absolutely committed to the great vision
for the Nation**

ACB | **ACB International Bank PLC**
...stronger than ever FRN-4003

Idang Alibi on Thursday

idangabili@yahoo.com

Hidden agenda and conspiracy theorists

Once again in the life of our country, the political atmosphere is thick with the suspicion that the leader of the country has a hidden agenda. Most of those who claim to know are willing to swear that President Olusegun Obasanjo has a hidden agenda in finally agreeing to allow Nigerians to attempt to provide answer to what has come to be known as the national question.

"This man was almost inflexibly opposed to any form of national conference to discuss the destiny of Nigeria; why has he 'suddenly' agreed that a national dialogue be held? Is that not proof enough that he has a hidden agenda?" So asked some pessimistic Nigerians.

In fact, to some of my fellow compatriots, the fact that Obasanjo has agreed that a conference be held makes the whole idea not so appealing any more. Such is the deep suspicion in the land.

But there is nothing new in this. Many of us will recall that for almost all the life of the Ibrahim Babangida administration, some chose to read a hidden agenda in every of his political moves. IBB lives with that burden until he stepped aside in 1993.

I am very amused and sad at the same time about all this. It is either that we always have untrustworthy leaders or we are ourselves a deeply suspicious people.

For instance, in our *Trust* newspapers' editorial board consisting of about 15 members, I can count about four who are great conspiracy theorists. For reason of *esprit de corps*, I will not mention their names. But suffice it to say that these members never accept anything at face value. They read meanings into any and everything. I am convinced that if these great colleagues of mine had not gone to school, they would have become great *Babalawos* or diviners in their villages!

I agree that the work of journalism or public commentary requires its practitioners to have a healthy dose of skepticism. But in Nigeria, we carry skepticism or pessimism to the extreme.

This nation of great stargazers, diviners, prophets and pundits never given anyone, especially our

doubt. They never see any good in anyone else. Is it true that our leaders are infinitely bad, incapable of any iota of good?

Sometimes I genuinely wonder to myself that if we have such great mind-readers, who can read miles away the hidden agenda of our leaders, are we not blessed? Should we not be happy that we can rely on such men and women to evolve strategies that can be adopted to neutralize the deadly hidden agenda that our leaders are always said to have to undo us?

In the case of Obasanjo and IBB before him, their hidden agenda is said to be a grand design by them to "perpetuate themselves in office." If we have the good fortune of having in our midst, men and women who have detected this design, why can't we be mobilized to prevent the perpetuation from taking place?

Some Nigerians have called for a boycott of the proposed Obasanjo conference because they say the event will provide him the opportunity to effect this hidden agenda. Methinks that now that we have been availed of this secret, all delegates should go to the conference with the eyes wide open to prevent this sinister plot. After all, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Like Babangida's open secret ballot, Obasanjo's plan, if ever there was one, has become an open hidden agenda. To the editor of this paper, Ishaq Modibbo Kawu, Obasanjo's hidden agenda is to impose a tribal, or more appropriate, a Yoruba hegemony over the entire country.

To some other Nigerians, especially those in the north, the hidden agenda of the National Dialogue, is to favour the south through the instrument of resource control.

The minorities of the South South are deeply suspicious that Obasanjo, a military man, who naturally favours a very strong centre, may use the majority ethnic groups to thwart their desire for derivation, resource control and devolution of powers to the federating units (a.k.a. True Federalism).

While I fabulously admire conspiracy theorists, who use their gift of insight or divination to

hidden plots of our leaders, the only fault I seem to see in them is that they appear to lack patience which some of us have in abundance. If a man has a hidden agenda and I know it, I will wait patiently for him to unfold it then release my own stratagems to punctuate his moves. But no, our discoverers of hidden agenda are very presumptive. They begin to raise alarm years before the plans are unfolded. Whether their alarm is intended to forwarn the unwary or to discourage the hopeful, I cannot quite understand.

Politics, by nature, is an open conspiracy. No sensible leader can make a significant political move without some form of agenda, whether open, hidden or open-hidden.

All of us are agreed that there is need to talk about Nigeria because there are so many things that are not quite right with her. I think that if Obasanjo or anybody else has any kind of agenda - whether private, personal, public, ethnic, regional, religious or ideological about Nigeria - such a person should be encouraged to bring it to the proposed National Political Reforms Conference.

To call for a boycott of such a potentially significant national gathering because of suspicion that one man has a hidden agenda, will be defeatist. If your opponent is cunning and you know it, use cunning to defeat him.

The cry of marginalization, injustice and unfairness by virtually every ethnic or regional group in the country suggests that almost everybody is unhappy with the present arrangement or the state of affairs in the country.

Whatever may be our personal misgivings with regards to our suspicion of Obasanjo's intentions, the truth of the matter is that the confab has become a *fait accompli*. The delegates are eagerly waiting to be asked to come to Abuja to begin the dialogue.

The more sensible thing to do in the circumstance is for pundits to try to set agenda for the conference, to neutralize whatever agenda someone, some groups else are said to have and to want to impose on the rest of us.

If I were a delegate to this conference, my main agenda will be to fight for devolution of powers to the federating units. The central government is too strong and too, too wasteful. This fact contributes in large measure

Opinion

The irony of global justice

By M.K. Iyasu

Some may think this piece was inspired by Tunde Asaju's "The poverty of global justice" that appeared on Tuesday's column of 1st February, but not at all. It was an interesting reading, although one can easily detect his indignation to the "global justice", a normative order said to operate at the global level to the contemporary reality of a globalised state system of distinctly western origins. It deeply reflects inadequacies of law, especially on issues of war and peace that have for long been characterized as disappointing endeavors. International law as a legal system is both confusing in

decades is for the subjectivity of the international legal order to grow more evident and troublesome. For one thing, the decolonization process has made the diversity among states more manifest as participants in the world system clash on the basis of opposed interests and ideals. We have in this century the growth of legal restraint on the use of force. This growth of law however, has neither bent state practice to its will, nor established means by which to deal with flagrant violations. For example, after years of effort! a definition of aggression was finally

that seem challenging from theoretical and practical law-making perspectives. There is an enormous potential to the extent that domestic courts conceive of their identity as shaped, in part at least, by their functions as agents of the international legal order rather than as judicial branches of a particular national government. Such roles are likely to be unevenly enacted from country to country and from issue-area to issue-area for some time to come. For example, United States courts are prepared to pronounce upon the law-at-stake more easily on behalf of property rights than human rights. However, in a recent American case,

"In part, such a reassessment is needed to discover whether the balance between flexibility and stability is adequate in the present world order and if not, how it might be improved in a variety of procedural and substantive settings. The progressive prospects for international law require more than complaints and critique. It depends on a flow of law-making efforts."

its character and controversial in its effects. It is confusing because the explanation of its validity under varying circumstances is in many respects a subjective matter.

For example, if you are convinced that the United Nations General Assembly majority is mostly on the side of justice, you are therefore inclined to endow such resolutions with legal effect. On the contrary, someone who believes in the validity and viability of the state system or is of the opinion that the UN General Assembly majority is "irresponsible" is likely to dismiss the law-making claim of such resolution with scorn.

Therefore, whether we endow General Assembly resolutions with law making potential reflects an underlying disposition as to whether "law" is an expression of natural rights and duties, emergent customary practices or remains tied to the consent of governments. This underlying disposition can be rationalized in a number of coherent ways incorporating, presumably such unacknowledged biases.

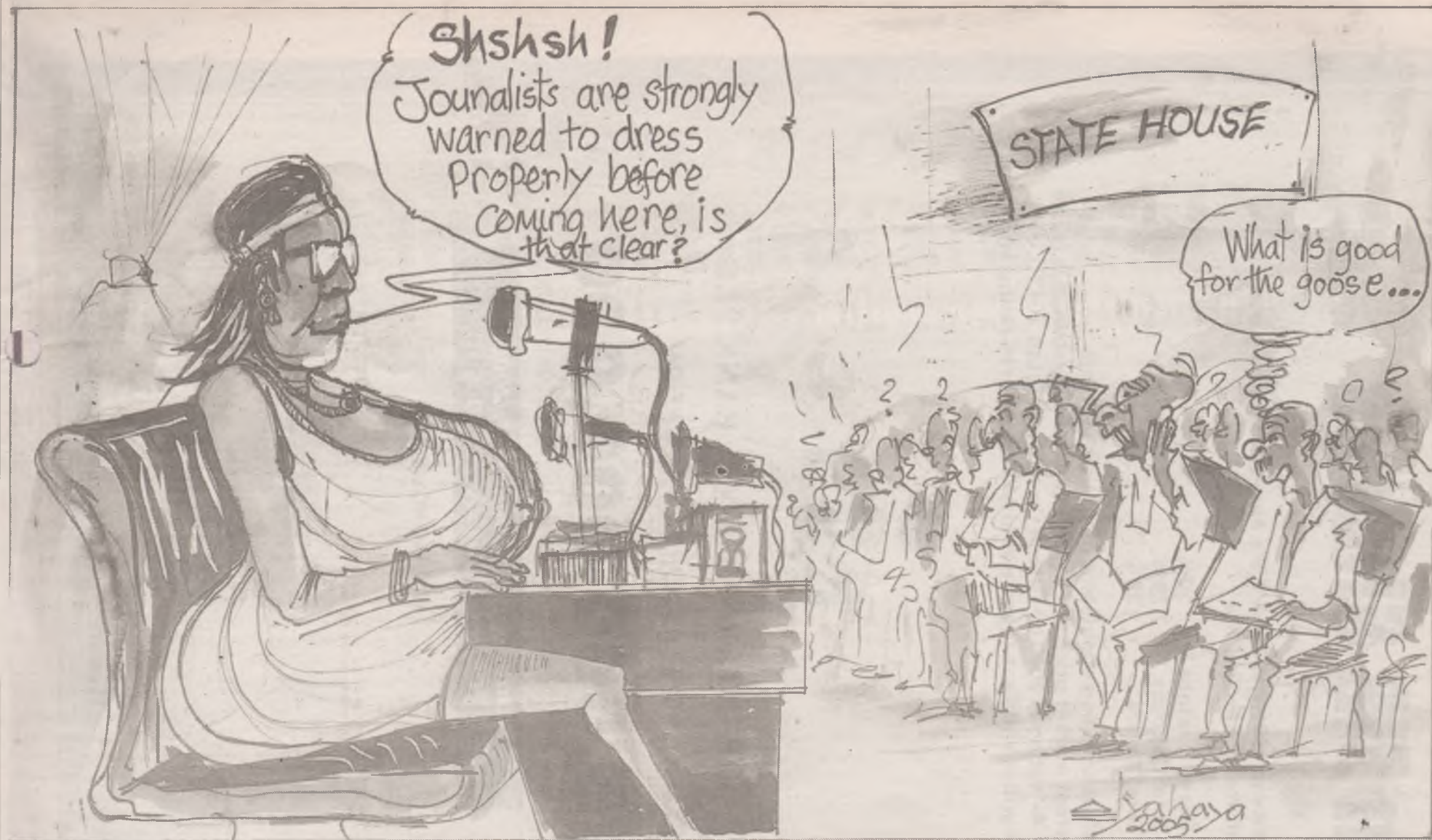
endorsed in 1974 by all governments as an authoritative guideline to the UN Charter, and yet, as was quite predictable, it is virtually ignored in the formation of state policy. Governments do not even take trouble to make out a case, that given the use of force, it is compatible with the agreed renunciation of aggression.

Our overall frustration points to something lacking in the international law to force compliance. This had to do with the perceived one-sidedness of international law. For example, why should it be so comparatively easy to extradite those who commit 'crimes' of resistance (called Terrorists) and so difficult to extradite or even assess the accountability of those who commit political crimes (crime against state)? This question suggests that response must acknowledge that international law achieves far greater cooperation to protect the state against its enemies than to apprehend those power wielders who abuse state power. What is evident is the connection between law and power.

Let us, for the sake argument, consider remedies open to prisoners of war kept

FILARTIGA Versus PENARIALA, 630 BF, 2nd 876, a domestic court held that an international legal rule prohibiting torture could be invoked in a tort action against foreign government officials who acted in a foreign country. That is, a domestic court "created" an international law criterion for the protection of human rights. It will be important to discover whether this salutary initiative will be sustained in the American judicial order and extended to other contexts.

Given the persistence of international turmoil, it becomes crucial to reconsider law-making potential. In part, such a reassessment is needed to discover whether the balance between flexibility and stability is adequate in the present world order and if not, how it might be improved in a variety of procedural and substantive settings. The progressive prospects for international law require more than complaints and critique. It depends on a flow of law-making efforts. It is my hope this article will encourage awareness of the actual and potential role for law in relation to reform-oriented leadership of state actors.



YOUR LETTERS

Kano's confab nominees: Cautioning Gov. Shekarau

Permit me a space to offer some suggestions and pieces of advice on the

National Dialogue to our listening and God-fearing Mal. Ibrahim Shekarau.

I am worried about the calibre of people or team to represent the interest of Kano

people and to the large extent the North. The perception of most Nigerians is that the Federal Government has its hidden agenda and, that agenda is main to appease few selfish individuals and a section of the country.

attempt to seek favours for some unqualified people who will go there only to warm chairs and at the end append their signatures.

May Allah continue to guide us and give out true leaders the courage and wisdom to continue the struggle despite the obstacles constantly placed.

We need to stand out as vanguard of democracy, continue with struggle to redeem the people against present home-grown exploiters.

Hassan Abdullahi, No. 12, Aikawa Quarters, Dala Local Govt. P O Box 13236, Kano state.

Re: PDP - Inevitable meltdown beckons

Having read the above article written by one A.B. Ahmed in the Wednesday, February 2, 2005 edition of *Daily Trust*, I wish to react as follows: Democracy, as being practiced in present day Nigeria, leaves nothing to be applauded by any well-meaning Nigerian.

sounded out the 'voice of reason' within its rank and file who hither-to gave the party some measure of credibility, these marksmen dug in to unleash terror and inflict hardship of unprecedented magnitude on its people.

of reason and genuine sense of patriotism left in the country. In this regard, I must thank the writer, A.B. Ahmed, for his courage in hitting the nail right on its head.

Since there is suspicion as to the real motives of the conference, there is urgent need for Kano state and the entire north to ensure that honest and serious minded people to represent our collective interest. We need people who will not be bought over, people who understand the complexity of Nigerian policies.

Anambra crisis calls for prayers

Kindly allow me a space in your widely read newspaper to call on prayers by well-meaning Nigerians for a sustained Dr. Ngige led government in Anambra state. This has become inevitable because, the evil machination of human being will be reduced to nothing-ness with prayers.

tension and anxiety knowing fully well that he too may be swallowed by any state of instability.

From the inception of this regime, it was obvious that a group of practically "unpatriotic" men within the fold of the People Democratic Party (PDP), who were positioning to lay siege on Nigeria and its unsuspecting citizens.

Prior to my reading this timely article, I had braced myself for the longest mourning in of one Nigerian I have lately come to admire and respect for his forthright, consistent and objective criticisms of this regime (Wada Nas, may his soul rest in perfect peace).

PDP would go down in political history as a party that is after selfish interest. Worse still, the government it sprouted is obsessed with the same passion. The same goes for some of the party structures from the national to the state, down to the local level.

People who touched a little of yesterday, today and probably can predict tomorrow with their people in mind. People who can talk sensibly for the good and betterment of Kano people, the north and the country, not chair warmers as in the past.

God works through people to reject the sinister motives of Igbo renegades and political vampires whose treacherous constituency knows no bound.

May we make it clear, that Igbo students, are not in support of selection process that took place in Anambra but we support Ngige's principle, as he has become the personification of a turning point towards a genuine electoral process in Nigeria.

Having obtained the so-called mandate through the window, and eventually

But after going through the contents of the article, my hopes were rekindled. At least, there are still some men

No doubt, we have a pathetic situation on hand. The situation is not helped by the rapid mental drift of many Nigerians who have blindly bought into the so-called government reforms agenda being marketed by selected members of the party and its government foot-soldiers. If I may ask, who is reforming what and at who's expense?

We need people who are fearless, with credible credentials and moral courage to articulate our views, vision and stand on all issues likely to be raised.

The sponsored state of emergency campaigns have failed because God is at work, the ranting and prank of the enemies have failed because we are always on our knees praying for Anambra.

We also extol the leadership virtues of Chief Ifeanyi Anya-led Igbo welfare Union Kano, for their students welfare oriented policies and join other Nigerians to pray for the repose of the soul of Alhaji Wada Nas who saw reason to support the campaign for Igbo Presidency.

Confab: In defence of Zamfara

I have read the letters by one Kabiru Yahaya Faru and Tukur Sarkin Burmi, all in the letters page of *Daily Trust* edition of February 8th and February 9th, 2005.

policy-a product of new generation politicians.

The PDP as a political party today has virtually turned itself into the Judge, the jury, the plaintiff and complainant all rolled into one. It should, I suggest, consider changing its name to "The People VoodooCRAFTic Party", PVP.

We are fortunate to have more than enough of such men and women of timber and caliber regardless of political affiliations. People like Dr. Junaid S. Muhammad, Hajiya Naja, Mal. Sunusi Lamido Sunusi, and Professor Yuguda to mention just few. We must avoid the mistake of sending delegates who will just go there to become *rakumi da akala*. I am sure some people will

It is unfortunate that a political actor will single-handedly create unnecessary

Maxwell Ezenagu, Confederation of Igbo Students, No.5/6, Samek road, werri, Imo state.

In trying to air their views, they ended up exposing their judgement weakness. First, governor Ahmed Sani has successfully overcome the bad culture of recycling old hands. All the people nominated by Zamfara are fresh blood. It is also clear that since the *Yerima Bakura* took over in 1999, all the people in government are fresh blood. Of course he mixed with a few old men. This explains why many Nigerians are celebrating Sharia as state

It is sad that Faru and Tukur are supporters of the old method of filling every where with old men, who will go to the National Conference, take coffee and sleep off.

The truth is that the party has evolved into a scourge that is voraciously eating the 'sane' populace to extinction. This must be checked by all who wish the country well. 2007? We are waiting.

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

Dr. Bello Muhammad Mutawalle, National Assembly, Abuja

Engr. Obinna Kelechi, Top Medical Road, Minna.

Invest in your future, invest in EIB Shares



Between 1999 end 2004, EIB's average annual growth in key performance indices are:

- Gross Earnings 30%
 - Total Deposits 35%
 - Total Assets 30%
- Professional and competent management team
 - Current market price at The Nigerian Stock Exchange is N2.26
 - An 'A-' rating in 2003 by Global Credit Rating Ltd. (GCR), a Securities and Exchange Commission registered rating agency.



EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC

OFFERS FOR SUBSCRIPTION

5,500,000,000

ordinary shares of 50 kobo each at N1.80k per share

Offer opens: January 31, 2005

Closes: February 28, 2005

ISSUING HOUSES



Website: www.eibintlbank.com

Opinion

Its leadership, stupid!

By Abdulmumin Y. Ajia

The lead title of this article was for a longtime "shifting arguments; making the case for Nigeria" but after reading Kabiru Yusuf's. "It's the economy, stupid!" and Aliyu's "north in search of its identity", I concluded that the twin problems of economic under-achievement and ethnic insecurity are direct results of inept leadership. Hence, yours truly will try to examine the two issues raised by these intellectuals through the paradigm of leadership.

Without an honest and purposeful leadership, we as a people, Yoruba, Hausa, Ibo and others cannot attain our potentials. Buoyant economic activities would not take place if the conditions for its sustainability are not met. The world's fortune 500 companies would not set up shop in Nigeria if they know too well that neither their lives nor their properties would be safe. The conditions that stimulate economic growth are found in state of the art social infrastructure namely excellent communication system, steady, reliable means of energy, good road network, efficient security apparatus that are proactive in protecting lives and property, excellent first response systems like fire departments, emergency medical services etc.

All of the above will only come about through a leadership that is selfless, highly motivated and purposeful and this would be the foundation for a

prosperous Nigeria, at peace with itself and its neighbors. This type of leadership will strive strenuously to lay the ground work for a prosperous Nigeria first before asking other nations or foreign firms to be partners in it.

If Nigeria is seen to be free of corruption, has good infrastructure and with her pool of skilled and semi-skilled workers, fortune 500 companies will come knocking at our door step. The only thing that makes sense to these companies is their bottom line and whether this bottom line can be met within a safe environment. If we can provide such an environment, we stand to benefit from the thousands of jobs that will eventually be created and then the subsequent multiplier effect it will have on the economy.

In tackling the monster of ethnic insecurity, good leadership would not play one ethnic group against the other, it would rekindle the spirit of nationalism among its people and make them proud of their citizenship. Because this leadership would involve its citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity and religion, citizens would ultimately feel a sense of belonging and the issue of who is in power will eventually become less important. If the average citizen can apply for mortgage to buy his first home, apply

for credit to buy his first car and generally live a middle class kind of existence, there will be less inclination to feel insecure.

While there is no such thing as a perfect society, purposeful leadership can deliver on a number of fronts. It can lay the foundation for economic growth using the wholistic approach. How can we make a rational discourse for Nigeria without taking a holistic approach to the myriad of problems plaguing this nation of enormous potentials? In the same vein, how do we comprehend the apparent inefficiency of Obasanjo, the hypocrisy of the "elites" and the depth of decay of the Nigerian society?

The issue at hand is not in want of potential but a dearth of pragmatic leadership. Here, the notorious V.S Naipaul readily comes to mind, "the troubles plaguing the third world is largely self inflicted and depicts a lack of vision and direction" emphasis mine. Thus, imperialism has been replaced with authoritarianism, despotism and petty bourgeoisie.

The foundation and structure of the 1999 constitution that gave birth to the present administration is both faulty and acutely devoid of essential nation-building elements. Today such inefficiencies that it did not address readily comes to mind, the question of grass

root government, the constitutional role of deputy governors, the vexing issue of indigeneship versus residency and the undemocratic notion of rotational leadership. Five years into the life of this administration, such inefficiencies and disparities have not been corrected or assuaged.

Rather, the gulf of inequities has greatly increased, the national and state houses of legislature have not really made any landmark legislation to address the dire issues troubling the nation either.

It is particularly interesting to note that between the south and north of the divide, one has being protectionist and the other acutely severe in its criticisms. It reminds one of the high military despotism of the 1990's and how between the divide, one was in strong opposition and the other in muted silence.

While each side of the debate would readily tout the supremacy of its ideas, to a keen observer, the two are not really dissimilar. To put it more succinctly, neither the north nor the south are making the argument for Nigeria, they are both scrambling for what they considered to be secure, their ethnicity, religious affiliation and geographical location. In this vein, both are equally culpable of the same offense. Obasanjo's present style of

leadership that rewards mediocrity, promotes nepotism and favors religious bigotry has made nonsense of the earlier Yoruba assertion that the Hausa/Fulani are a corrupt lot, nepotic and a religious bigot. The only thing it does is validate people like me that given the opportunity, all major ethnic groups are not necessarily dissimilar in the "Nigerian family". All have been at one time or the other anti nationalistic and it is not exclusive to any one group, as some would want us to believe.

In making the argument for Nigeria, the points that ought to be considered should be nationalistic, the question should always be such that its end is for the common good, we need bold and pragmatic leadership such as espoused by Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore. Of course this leadership would implement the wishes of the majority but it must also protect the rights of the minority, our infants, the weak and the elderly.

The Nigerian constitution should always undergo periodic amendments whenever it is in conflict with the common good. It needs to take care of such issues as local council administration without any ambiguity, a bold approach to the question of indigene versus settlers should be positively laid to rest, if this is a Federal republic.

Then residency should triumph over indigeneship, everyone should be treated equally if the basis for this democratic experimentation must be preserved. It is both ironic and laughable that citizens of the same country do not enjoy the same rights as their compatriots if they chose to reside in states other than that of their forebears!

Different governmental departments and agencies needs surgical cleansing and our attitude to national resources needs a radical change from resource exploitation which benefits a few amongst us, to initiatives which will benefit the majority and will lift the nation from the abyss of one way consumerism to the height of valued production and individual accumulation of legitimate wealth.

The true wealth of a nation, history has shown, lies not on what natural resources it has but on the quality of its people, the nations of Europe, America, Singapore, china and Japan to mention but a few can attest to this.

A genuine look at the nation's problems, a dispassionate assessment of its inherent weaknesses and a movement towards the decentralization of the workings of government in Nigeria will go a long way in addressing the national question. Let the case for Nigeria begin.

Abdulmumin Yinka Ajia, writes from Indianapolis, USA and can be reached at yinkaajia@yahoo.com

America's successful failure in Iraq

Continued from yesterday

America invaded Iraq without a conclusive evidence of the presence of WMD, possibly believing that such a proof would easily be found when the whole country came under its control. Now over a full year after the invasion, and despite the best efforts of its inspectors, no WMD have been unearthed, laying to rest America's case against Iraq vis-a-vis WMD. Even die-hard supporters of President Bush are now having to retrace their step on this issue. As to the other reason for the invasion - the extension of the war on international terrorism - the idea had always been rather preposterous.

Saddam, like many a full blooded dictator, harboured a deep distrust for terrorists, freedom fighters or Islamic activists - whatever you choose to call them - and kept them at arms length or more often, in one of his many prisons.

These men and women tend after all to be fiercely independent souls with deep seated hatred for injustice and its perpetrators and are often too willing to oppose both by any means: that is how they acquired their notoriety in the first place. It is true that Ghaddafi used to hobnob with such characters in the past, but then the Libyan leader has always been a maverick who

By Engr. S. U. Abdullahi

perhaps Ghaddafi could afford the luxury of playing Russian roulette with sundry extremists because he rules over a lightly populated and homogeneous country with a fairly contented citizenry living under a welfare system, quite unlike in Saddam's Iraq with its much more numerous and less affluent population composed of a portent mix of restive religious and ethnic nationalities. Or it may be just Ghaddafi's puerile showmanship, which led him to enjoy playing with fire until another, showman, Ronald (Hollywood) Reagan, bombed some sense into him and forced him to grow up fast.

Saddam, at any rate, took his rule seriously from the very beginning and defended it with uttermost ruthlessness. Armed with one of the most sophisticated and brutal security apparatus in the Middle East, if not the world, he promptly and systematically stamped out any hint of dissent to his regime from any quarters. Religious sentiments were never ever a consideration in his campaign of suppression, except in as much as they helped him to consolidate his rule, as when exploiting the Sunni-Shi'ite divide within his country. Little wonder that, unlike in many

there had never flourished an Islamic revivalist movement within Iraq. And although the Ayatullahs in neighbouring Iran held considerable spiritual and political influence in the domestic affairs of their country even during the time the Shah - himself by no means a good Samaritan - and eventually toppled him, their colleagues in Iraq knew better than to rub their own ruler the wrong way; for Saddam Hussein killed more Ayatullahs and other Mullahs than Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi ever did.

The Ba'thist police state Saddam ran with iron hand was therefore no haven for al-Qaeda or any other militant Islamic organisation. Indeed were Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda's founder and leader, to have had his way he would have since loved to have toppled the regimes of Saddam and other autocratic leaders in the Middle East: for he considers all of them traitors to the cause of Islam, principally for their cosy collaboration with America. Furthermore, Saddam, whose survival instinct was legendary, knew better than to collaborate with militants to attack the U.S., conscious of the fact that the superpower had been breathing down his neck for over a decade, armed with all kinds of lethal weapons, just looking for the slightest excuse to pounce on him. The man

may have been quite literally a bloody tyrant but he certainly was no bloody fool.

Now consider America's third reason for the invasion: to topple the dictator Saddam and enthrone democratic rule. Well, of course the reality on the ground is that Saddam has now been deposed. As the U.S. military juggernaut is in its current bellicose mood, it should now proceed to topple President Mubarak, the Egyptian strongman; President Bashir of Syria; King Hassan of Morocco; King Abdullah of Jordan; or King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. For we have to admit that the Middle East is infested with all sorts of despotic regimes: military, ideological and Royal. And authoritarianism is not exclusive to that region either.

Cuba, America's neighbour, is not exactly a vibrant democracy; Bush should now conclude the Bay of Pigs invasion which his predecessors had botched 43 years ago. And Mr. Kim of North Korea does not even hide any of the bad attributes America pretends to loathe: his regime is undoubtedly autocratic, and he proudly admits to possessing WMD. Why not invade his country - or China for that matter, since the Asian giant is no western-style democracy and is bristling with WMD. In short, why stop at Iraq?

precedent of regime change is a dangerous preposition if taken to its logical conclusion. And the democratic alternative it dangles is not good value for money, if the current chaos in "liberated" Iraq and the general conduct of America's finest men and women around the country - especially the horrific pictures and stories filtering out of Baghdad's Abu Ghayb prison - is the price nations have to pay for it. American officials like to admit that the abhorrent mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners is the act of a few aberrant low level soldiers in the U.S. military. But most Muslims will rather believe the report of Amnesty International and the Red Cross, which agree that prisoner abuses in Iraq are far more widespread than U.S. officials claim, and are tolerated, perhaps encouraged, at a very senior level.

Indeed what is happening in Iraq now is the average Muslim's worst nightmares come true. Most believers have always considered American culture, whatever its other merits, to be decidedly lecherous; and nothing destroys the Muslim Ummah as quickly as wanton licentiousness.

And there is no question but that the theme of the Abu Ghayb prison abuses is pure debauchery. Iraqi's could therefore be forgiven for the

belief that the Americans are out to strike at the heart of their Islamic culture.

Of the several photographs and video clips so far released, over 90% feature a nude scene and/or a simulation of sexual activity.

Americans should now sit back to reassess the position the action of their government has landed them in. They invaded Iraq to search and destroy WMD and as yet have found none. They extended the war on terrorism to an Iraq free of such events; now terrorism has extended a welcome hand to them in Iraq, and Bin Laden has acquired a new recruiting and staging ground.

President Bush badly wanted to depose Saddam; he has successfully achieved that. However, it is one thing getting rid of Saddam, and quite another to successfully replace his rule with a western-style democratic government.

For the sake of its long suffering citizens we pray for a stable, just, upright and prosperous country to emerge out of the chaos in occupied Iraq even though the fumbling exploits of the U.S. do not inspire much confidence in such outcome. Still, it is not too late to hope that after the current mess the future may hold much better prospects.

Concluded

Trust International

Togo president promises elections

Togo's new leader Faure Gnassingbe, in his first address to the nation, has promised "free and transparent" general elections "as soon as possible".

Mr Faure was installed as president on Monday after the constitution was hastily amended to allow him to take over and remain in office until 2008.

The African Union has described the transfer of power as a military coup and said it is considering imposing sanctions on Togo unless it restores "constitutional legality".

"We want consensual discussions aimed at revising the electoral code to focus on the organisation of free and transparent general elections as soon as possible, reflecting the real will of the people as was the mission of the father of our nation," Mr Faure said on national television and radio.

It is not clear from his comments whether presidential elections will be considered before 2008.

MPs passed a constitutional amendment the day after Eyadema's death on Saturday which allowed Mr Faure to serve out his father's term as president - until June 2008.

After European Union (EU) negotiations last year, the late president promised to hold legislative elections early in 2005.

"Concrete measures will be taken in the near future - the 22 engagements reached 14 April 2004 in Brussels are the fundamental guidelines for our conduct," Mr Faure said.

"We have ordered the

release of all common law prisoners and granted amnesty to all political exiled leaders to enable them to join the effort of national reconstruction if they so wish," Gnassingbe said in a 10-minute address.

A Togolese opposition leader who lives in Paris, Gilchrist Olympio, is among the most vocal critics of Togo's new government. Olympio's father, Sylvanus Olympio, was the country's first post-independence president, serving for three years before being killed in a 1963 coup that Eyadema helped orchestrate.



Mwai Kibaki, Kenyan President

US stops Kenya anti-corruption aid

The US has announced it is suspending funding for Kenya's anti-corruption efforts following the resignation of the country's top anti-graft official.

John Githongo, who stepped down while on a visit to the UK, is thought no longer to believe in President Mwai Kibaki's commitment to the cause.

US ambassador, William Bellamy said the amount to be withheld for 2005 and 2006 was about 200m shillings (\$2.5m).

Diplomats and the media have expressed sadness at Mr Githongo's departure.

Mr Bellamy said John Githongo's departure was "a severe setback", while the UK envoy Sir Edward Clay said he left a large hole.

President Kibaki was elected in 2002 on a pledge to clean up Kenya.

He appointed Mr Githongo, a former head of the Kenyan branch of

watchdog Transparency International, just a month after his inauguration, to oversee his fight against corruption.

But last week, Sir Edward said that "massive looting" was continuing under Mr Kibaki.

Although Mr Githongo has not spoken publicly about his reasons for resigning, he is understood to have lost faith in the president's personal commitment to ending graft.

Mr Bellamy announced the US government was to suspend all it funding to Kenyan anti-corruption efforts for the next two years on Tuesday.

"We are eager to work with Kenya to improve governance, and we are in a position to be generous in this regard," he said.

"But we cannot be helpful when that government isn't serious or, worse, that government is the source of the problem."

Mr Bellamy had earlier told Kenya's Daily Nation newspaper that the US authorities were concerned that Mr Githongo's resignation followed "new, more extensive information on possible corrupt practises within the government of Kenya".

He urged the authorities to act quickly to ensure corrupt officials "have not won the day".

Togo ruler offers amnesty, talks

In his first address to the nation, Togo's army-installed, parliament-endorsed new president offered amnesty and talks with the West African nation's exiled opposition.

Faure Gnassingbe's speech on state TV and radio Wednesday came as a partial strike against his days-old rule entered a second day in the capital and as West

African leaders prepared to hold an emergency summit Wednesday in Niger to discuss the country's fate.

The 53-nation African Union has threatened to slap sanctions on Togo after the army declared Gnassingbe president Saturday hours after the death of his father, Gnassingbe Eyadema, Africa's longest reigning

Zimbabwe party leader berates Tutu

A top government official in Zimbabwe ruling party has denounced South African Nobel peace laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu on Tuesday, saying his criticisms of the government played into the hands of white racists.

Zimbabwe's leaders have been widely accused of rigging elections and using violence against the opposition. Tutu, who was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, said on Sunday that Zimbabwe made a mockery of African democracy and alienated Western donors.

Didymus Mutasa, the ruling party's No. 5 official, called Tutu "an embittered little man who lost his soul to false gods" in the West, such as President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the state newspaper, the Herald, said Tuesday.

"If he were to put his clerical mind on this and pray to the real God ... he would know that the democracy we have in Zimbabwe is second to none as it was secured through precious blood" in the bush war that brought black rule in 1980, Mutasa said.

Mutasa, the secretary for administration, said Western countries vilified Zimbabwe because of its "anti-imperialist" stand and accused African critics of attacking Zimbabwe "for racist reasons in defense of white racists."

President Robert Mugabe's government says it has boosted trade and aid ties with China, Iran and

Malaysia. Last year, the heavily indebted national airline, Air Zimbabwe, launched a money-losing weekly flight to Beijing.

Most Western investment has dried up and all but humanitarian aid has been halted to protest violations of human rights during five years of political and economic turmoil since Mugabe allowed the often violent seizure of thousands of white-owned farms.

Since then, at least 200 people have been killed and tens of thousands have been hounded from their homes and jobs. Disruptions in the agriculture-based economy plunged the country into its worst economic crisis since independence with record unemployment and inflation and acute shortages of currency, gasoline, medical supplies and other imports.

... Jails S/ African spies

Three prominent Zimbabweans, including two ruling party officials, have been given long jail sentences, after being convicted of spying for South Africa.

A diplomat, a senior Zanu-PF official and a banker have begun terms of between five and six years.

They have denied the charges and their lawyers said they will appeal.

Neighbouring South Africa has a considerable influence on Zimbabwe. Critics of President Robert Mugabe want it to put more pressure on him.

South Africa has not commented on the reported arrest of one of its intelligence agents in Zimbabwe, who was allegedly running the spy ring.

Flamboyant businessman and Zanu-PF MP Philip Chiyangwa is alleged to be the ringleader.

Another Zanu-PF official is currently on trial in Harare, while the sixth alleged spy, a Zimbabwean diplomat based in Switzerland, escaped while being transferred on his way to Harare.

Strict reporting restrictions have been imposed on the case but state prosecutor Morgen Nemadire told reporters they had committed "morally reprehensible" offences.

Zimbabwe's ambassador-designate to Mozambique, Godfrey Dzvairo, was sentenced to an effective six years in prison while Itai Marchi, Zanu-PF party's director for external affairs, and former banker Tendai Matambanadzo each got five years.

In the run-up to 31 March parliamentary elections; Zanu-PF has also been deeply split as rival factions jockey to be in prime position to succeed Mr Mugabe, who has said he will not stand for

Sudan rejects calls for international trials on Darfur

Sudan again rejected calls to hold any trials over the bloodshed in Darfur outside the country, as the world community looks to shore up a peace deal after Sudan's long civil war.

First Vice President Ali Osman Taha and rebel movement leader John Garang briefed the UN Security Council on last month's accord, which ended decades of north-south conflict and raised hopes of a comprehensive national peace.

But UN envoy Jan Pronk said there was a stalemate in the separate conflict between the government and other rebels in the western Darfur area, where an international commission said gross human rights violations have occurred.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for those responsible to be brought before the International Criminal Court,

wants to see a dedicated war crimes tribunal for Sudan set up in Tanzania.

Taha reiterated the Khartoum government's opposition to both options, saying Sudan's courts could handle the matter.

"There are no grounds to warrant taking suspects outside the country," he told reporters. "It will push things to degenerate rather than to help people reconcile."

Garang, head of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that launched civil war against the government in 1983, said the international community's main focus should first be to stop the ongoing Darfur bloodshed.

"Impunity cannot be let go but I want to focus on the immediate problem. The immediate problem is to achieve peace in Darfur," he said. "We have a political

Moroccans claim Guantanamo abuse

Fresh accusations of torture at the US prison camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba have emerged during the trial of five detainees transferred to Morocco.

The five men, all Moroccans, appeared in court in the capital Rabat on Monday after being handed over by the US in August last year.

The trial was later adjourned until the end of the month.

This is the first trial of former Guantanamo Bay prisoners to be held in an Arab country.

The five defendants claim that on numerous occasions while in detention at Guantanamo Bay, they were stripped naked and handcuffed before having dogs set upon them.

Each time the defendants brought up instances of

torture during their two-year detention at Guantanamo, they were silenced by the Moroccan judge.

"This court is not concerned with what happened elsewhere," he said.

All five defendants plead not guilty to having links with al-Qaeda and Osama Bin

Trust International

Israel to remove roadblocks in West Bank

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday that Israel has agreed to remove major roadblocks as part of its withdrawal from five West Bank towns in coming weeks the most tangible improvement in the lives of Palestinians as a result of a truce agreed to at a breakthrough summit.

Following Tuesday's Mideast summit at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheik, Israeli and Palestinian officials returned home and were working to hammer out the details of a cease-fire, trying to restore trust in the post-Yasser Arafat era after four years of bloodshed.

Yesterday, a senior Israeli military official confirmed that several roadblocks would be removed as part of the handover of security to the Palestinians.

Israeli army checkpoints ring all West Bank towns, with soldiers checking documents of all those entering and leaving, whether in cars or on

foot. Long lines often form at these checkpoints, severely disrupting the lives of Palestinians. During more than four years of fighting, troops often sealed off towns entirely.

In the coming three weeks, Israel is to hand over security control in the towns of Jericho, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Bethlehem and Ramallah. The timetable was agreed to at Abbas' meeting Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Returning to his West Bank office yesterday, Abbas said: "The Israelis will withdraw from the cities and the adjacent areas and they will leave checkpoints, and Palestinian security forces will replace them at these checkpoints."

A senior Israeli official said yesterday that a second summit between Ariel Sharon and Abbas could take place within a week at the Israeli prime minister's ranch.

Raanan Gissin, an

adviser to Sharon, said there will be a series of meetings between officials in the next few days to finalize the details. The meeting, he said could take place as early as "in the coming days or a week."

Sharon invited Abbas to meet him at his Sycamore Ranch in southern Israel during Tuesday's summit.

Gissin also said Sharon has invited Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to meet him in Jerusalem.

Mubarak did not immediately answer, but the sides will discuss the possibility of a summit in Jerusalem in the

coming weeks, Gissin said.

In the first reported violation of the truce, Palestinians opened fire on a car near a West Bank Jewish settlement after nightfall Tuesday and fired and threw firebombs at an army force that came to investigate, the Israeli military said. No one was hurt. The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, affiliated with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, claimed responsibility.

"What we agreed upon today is simply the beginning of the process of bridging the gap," Abbas said.

In a well-orchestrated appearance following a series of private discussions, the two leaders read statements in their native languages, pledging an end to the violence. Sharon said Israel's military would halt its raids, and Abbas said Palestinian militants would stop attacking Israelis.

It was reminiscent of a summit in neighboring Jordan in 2003, when a similar truce was declared. It collapsed after less than two months in bloody suicide bombings and Israeli reprisal raids.

Israel-Palestine ceasefire temporal - Iran

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi predicted that the Middle East ceasefire will not last and blamed Israel and the United States.

Kharazi in talks with his Japanese counterpart Nobutaka Machimura played down the significance of the truce announced between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (and Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas, a Japanese official said yesterday.

"As long as America supports Israel, I do not believe the current ceasefire will last," Kharazi told Machimura, according to the Japanese foreign ministry official.

Iran after its 1979 Islamic revolution became a vociferous opponent of Israel. Israel says Tehran gives financial and operational support to hardline Palestinian movements such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and parts of Fatah.

King Fahd reshuffles Saudi cabinet

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has sacked his education and social affairs ministers in a cabinet reshuffle that also saw the pilgrimage and cultural ministers swapping portfolios.

A royal decree on Tuesday dismissed Education Minister Muhammad Ahmad al-Rashid and replaced him with Abd Allah bin Salih al-Ubaid, chairman of Saudi Arabia's human rights watchdog.

Also fired was Social Affairs Minister Ali bin Ibrahim Namla, who was replaced with Abd al-Muhsin bin Abd al-Aziz al-Akkas, a former boss of the London-based Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

Culture and Information Minister Fuad Abd al-Sallam Muhammad Farsi and Pilgrimage Minister Iyad bin Amin Madani swapped portfolios.



(L-R) Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas, Jordanian King Abdullah II, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, pose for a picture before their summit meeting in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh...recently.

Vote recount delays Iraqi election results

IrAQI officials said yesterday that the announcement of final results from landmark national elections will be delayed because the election commission must recount votes from about 300 ballot boxes.

Final results from the Jan. 30 election were to be announced on today. But spokesman Farid Ayar said the deadline would slip due to the need for a recount.

"We don't know when this will finish," he said. "This will lead to a little postponement in announcing the results."

Ayar would not say where the 300 ballot boxes had come from.

No new partial results have been released since Monday for the voting for the 275-member National Assembly, 18 provincial councils and a regional parliament for the Kurdish self-governing region in the north.

Partial results released Monday showed a coalition of Kurdish parties in second place raising the possibility that Shiites and Kurds might share power and even open the way for a Kurdish president. Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani already has announced his candidacy for president.

The ticket of interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite, is in third place among the 111 candidate lists. A Shiite-dominated ticket endorsed by Iraq (news - web sites)'s most influential Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, led with about half the votes, followed by the coalition of Kurdish parties.

If that reflects the final lineup it appears unlikely that Allawi, a secular Shiite who favors strong ties to the United States and a tough stand against the insurgents, could emerge as a compromise choice for prime minister when the new assembly convenes by early March.

Palestinian groups disown ceasefire

Hamas and Islamic Jihad have said they are not bound by the ceasefire agreed between Palestinian and Israeli leaders at a summit in Egypt on Tuesday.

The two activist groups were at the forefront of attacks on Israel during the Palestinian uprising, but have been observing an unofficial truce.

The ceasefire is designed

to end four years of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Israel is expected to free hundreds of Palestinian prisoners shortly, and hand over control of some West Bank towns.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday that Israel had agreed to remove major roadblocks as part of its withdrawal from the five towns in the coming weeks.

The gathering will occur during a conference promoting steps to Palestinian statehood, set up by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Hamas representative Osama Hamdan said in Lebanon that the ceasefire declarations were "not binding" on Hamas members.

"We agreed with [Mahmoud Abbas] that any truce that should take place must be according to the result of an inter-Palestinian dialogue," he told the Associated Press news agency.

"The resistance is not committed to what has been agreed at the summit... since the Palestinian conditions were not achieved.

"We consider that there is no truce and there is no deal to stop the resistance."

An Islamic Jihad spokesman, Mohammed al-Hindi, said the summit had brought "nothing new".

However, Palestinian

...Journalist killed in attacks

In Basra, Abdul Hussein al-Basri, the correspondent of Al-Hurra TV station, and his son were both killed yesterday in the city's Maqal area, 340 miles southeast of Baghdad, said Nazim al-Moussawi, a spokesman for the local government administration.

Launched in February 2004 Al-Hurra, or The Free, was tailored for Arab audiences to compete with other regional stations like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. Some Muslim clerics have denounced the TV station as propaganda.

President Bush said it was created to "cut through the hateful propaganda that fills the airwaves in the Muslim world."

Al-Basri was also a member of the political office of the Islamic Dawa Party, an

influential Shiite movement, and the editor of a local newspaper in Basra, Iraq's second largest city. He also served as the head of the press office at Basra City Council, al-Moussawi said.

Journalists have come under fire repeatedly in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion. The Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists reported in January that Iraq was the deadliest place in the world for journalists last year with 49 deaths.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military on yesterday announced the deaths of two more American soldiers.

A military statement said one U.S. soldier died of a gunshot wound at a logistical support area in Balad, north of Baghdad. The soldier, from 1st Corps Support Command, suffered a gunshot wound on

Tuesday and was pronounced dead at the scene. Camp Anaconda in Balad, is 50 miles north of Baghdad.

The second soldier, assigned to Task Force Freedom, was shot and killed on Sunday while on patrol in Mosul, the U.S. command said. No further details were released on either soldier pending notification of kin.

In Baghdad, gunfire rattled the area around notorious Haifa street and thick smoke could be seen rising from the area. There was no report from U.S. or Iraqi officials.

Giuliana Sgrena, a reporter for communist daily Il Manifesto, was abducted Friday by a group of gunmen outside Baghdad University. Conflicting claims have appeared on Islamic militant Web sites: One said she had been killed, while another said she would soon be released.

fly aero

**to ACCRA
LOME
& MALABO**

For your tickets visit aero offices and agents
or call: +234 (01) 7749723, 7751165,
7902858 or 0803 310 3385

For airfreight to Malabo call: 0803 706 6370

Aero Sales Office: Room 2058, M. M. Airport, Lagos
Hilton Hotel Abuja: Tel 09 4134710, 0802 322 1258
Accra: +233 21 681978/9, 777414
Lome: +228 226 0373
Malabo: +240 90592

Trust International

Car bomb rocks Madrid

A car bomb exploded near Madrid's main convention centre yesterday, injuring 43 people, hours before Spanish and Mexican leaders were due there and after a warning from the Basque separatist group ETA.

The worst blast in the Spanish capital since last year's March 11 train bombings came before King Juan Carlos and Mexican President Vicente Fox were to open an art fair at the complex on the outskirts of the city.

Forty-three people were hurt, none seriously, including 24 taken to hospital, an emergency official told *Reuters*. Six police officers were among the injured.

The explosion, which coincided with a major police operation against ETA, seemed to erase any hope the group might declare a truce before Basque regional elections in April and could dent Madrid's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

"The terrorist band ETA is weakened. It has no political future, but it still has operational strength," Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso told a news conference.

The Interior Ministry said 200 police officers had taken part in a nationwide operation overnight which had smashed ETA's recruitment structure. Fourteen people were arrested.

Basque newspaper *Gara* received a warning from ETA yesterday morning announcing that a car bomb would explode soon afterwards near the convention center, police said.

The car used in the attack had been stolen in Guadalajara, a nearby town, Alonso said.

"I would like to say to the terrorists of ETA and those who support them that there is no place for them in politics or civil society, bombs lead only to prison," Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said during a visit to Warsaw.

Nepal to offer talks with Maoists

The new royalist government in Nepal is to offer unconditional peace talks with the country's Maoists rebels, state media have reported.

The rebels have previously turned down several calls to resume peace talks that were abandoned in late 2003.

Nepal's King Gyanendra sacked the former government last week, saying it failed to tackle the Maoist uprising.

Separately, international phone lines were restored on Monday although it was not known for how long.

A government statement said it would appoint a team of negotiators for talks with the Maoists.

The blast smashed windows and damaged 18 parked cars.

Police made office workers stay inside for almost three hours until they were given the all-clear to come out.

Yesterday's bomb was outside a conference centre and a short distance from the IFEMA convention centre where King Juan Carlos and Fox were due to open a contemporary art fair in the evening. Organizers said the fair would go ahead.

Basque premier Juan Jose Ibarretxe, a moderate nationalist, announced regional elections last week after the Spanish parliament overwhelmingly rejected his plan for Basque "free association" with Spain.

Batasuna, banned in 2003 as the political wing of ETA, cannot take part in the polls unless it condemns ETA violence.



Vladimir Putin, Russian President

Chechen rebels call for talks with Russia

Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov, in a rare interview with a Russian newspaper published on Monday, urged Russian authorities to start peace talks.

A government official in Moscow quickly condemned the *Kommersant* daily for "publishing an interview with a bandit".

Maskhadov's offer of peace talks follows his order last week of a ceasefire by his forces in what he called a gesture of good will aimed at ending the decade-old conflict in the North Caucasus province.

There has been no official reaction from the Kremlin to the ceasefire offer, but leaders of Chechnya's pro-Moscow government rejected it, calling it a cynical ploy to stall for time while Maskhadov's forces regroup.

"I hope for a reasonable reaction," Maskhadov told *Kommersant*, just days after Moscow criticised the British government for not blocking the airing on local television of an interview with another Chechen rebel leader, Shamil Basayev.

Kommersant is owned by Boris Berezovsky, whom the government of President Vladimir Putin wants to bring back to Russia from his exile in Britain to face trial on a variety of charges.

A spokesman for a government agency in charge of the media said the paper could be officially warned for the publication-three warnings are enough for the authorities to shut it.

But he told *Reuters* the penalty would be hard to impose, because it has to be proven in court that the

interview was spreading "terrorist ideas".

"As far as the moral side of the publication is concerned," spokesman Anatoly Batashov said, "publishing an interview with a bandit gives him moral support no matter what he says."

Maskhadov said he had already appointed a team, headed by Umar Khambiyev whom he described as his "chief representative abroad", to hold peace talks.

"If our Kremlin opponents demonstrate a sober approach, we will finish the war at the negotiating table," he said. "If not, the blood will flow for a long time."

UK unveils new immigration plan

A new points system that aims to ensure migrants wanting to work in the UK have the right skills is at the heart of the government's new immigration strategy.

Home Secretary Charles Clarke told MPs migrants were vital for the UK economy and society but it needed controls.

The plans include fines for employers using illegal workers. There are also moves to prevent asylum abuse.

The Tories said Labour is offering "half steps" and the Lib Dems say the plans may not produce an efficient system.

The five-year plan comes as immigration looks increasingly likely to play a contentious role in campaigning for the election - widely predicted for May.

Tony Blair told *BBC News* there was real public concern and it was in Britain's interests to allow in only

Russian troops and local police suffer daily losses in rebel attacks in Chechnya.

In the past two years, hundreds of people have also died in bomb blasts outside the province blamed by Russia on Basayev. More than 300 people, half of them children, died last year in a school in the southern town of Beslan in a siege by attackers demanding independence for Chechnya.

Russia has rejected any talks with Maskhadov in part because he was formally charged with being behind attacks on civilian targets - something he denies - and also because it doubts how much real control he has over rebel forces.

Odd World

Man cuts off fatherhood

A Welsh rugby fan cut off his own testicles to celebrate Wales beating England at rugby, the *Daily Mirror* reported Tuesday.

Geoff Huish, 26, was so convinced England would win Saturday's match he told fellow drinkers at a social club, "If Wales win I'll cut my balls off," the paper said.

Friends at the club in Caerphilly, south Wales, thought he was joking.

But after the game Huish went home, severed his testicles with a knife, and walked 200 yards back to the bar with the testicles to show the shocked drinkers what he had done.

Huish was taken to hospital where he remained in serious condition, the paper said.

Wales's 11-9 victory over England at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff was their first home win over England in 12 years.

Helicopter in Pizza delivery

A British army pilot has been disciplined by senior officers for using a tank-busting helicopter to deliver a pizza to his girlfriend.

The pilot, based with Britain's 659 Army Air Corps squadron in Suffolk, eastern England, was on a map-reading training drill when he dropped off the pizza to his girlfriend who was taking part in an exercise 30 miles away.

The 25-year-old lieutenant had picked up the takeaway before setting out on the sortie in his Lynx helicopter, the *Sun* newspaper reported on Tuesday. He was reprimanded but did not have his pilot's license taken away, the paper added.

"The opportunity to add a light-hearted element to the planned sortie was taken but with no detriment to the sortie objective," a UK defence ministry spokeswoman told *Reuters*.

"The chain of command does not condone these actions and have disciplined the individuals concerned."

Bill sets fine for low-riding trousers

Virginians who wear their trousers so low their underwear shows may want to think about investing in a stronger belt.

The state's House of Delegates passed a bill Tuesday authorizing a \$50 fine for anyone who displays his or her underpants in a "lewd or indecent manner."

Del. Lionell Spruill Sr., a Democrat who opposed the bill, had pleaded with his colleagues to remember their own youthful fashion follies.

During an extended monologue Monday, he talked about how they dressed or wore their hair in their teens. On Tuesday, he said the measure was an unconstitutional attack on young blacks that would force parents to take off work to accompany their children to court just for making a fashion statement.

"This is a foolish bill, Mr. Speaker, because it will hurt so many," Spruill said before the measure was approved 60-34. It now goes to the state Senate.

The bill's sponsor, Del. Algie T. Howell, has said constituents were offended by the exposed underwear. He did not speak on the floor Tuesday.

Spruill and Howell, also a Democrat, are both black.

Couple auction naming rights for unborn child

An Australian couple was attempting to sell the "naming, advertising and promotional" rights to their unborn daughter for 750,000 US dollars via an Internet auction site.

In an advertisement on eBay Australia under the item title "Truman Baby", the unnamed couple from the Western Australian capital Perth invites bids on the right to name their baby girl, due on March 1.

"Offers are invited for your opportunity to be part of HISTORY in the making," states the ad, which features a picture of a pregnant woman's stomach with the words "Reality Bites! Your Brand Here" written across it.

"We are taking bids on the naming, advertising and promotional rights to my unborn BABY GIRL!!", the ad states.

"For a period of FIVE YEARS from the date of birth, we are offering the exclusive naming rights (first name only) to my unborn baby due March 1, 2005."

"Your company can have the exclusive rights to name my baby and use for all appearances, advertising, promotion and marketing (for) a period of five years."

"This is a unique and historical opportunity to promote your business, company or brand for a period of 5 years," it says.

The child's 38-year-old mother, described as having "blue eyes, blond hair", said she would accompany her daughter "on all performances" as a condition of the deal.

The advertisement was listed on eBay on February 2 and the auction, which had attracted no bids as of yesterday morning, was due to end later in the day.

The sellers promised the name put forward by the winning bidder, and approved by the parents, would appear on the birth certificate. Derogatory or abusive suggestions would be immediately rejected, they said.

"The sooner you bid the more advertising value you will receive through way of press releases, documentary, current affair and news articles through print, radio and television," they said.

The Grand Offer From the Grand Masters



FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC.
RC 46713

Offer for subscription

of

4,000,000,000

ORDINARY SHARES OF 50 KOBO EACH

AT

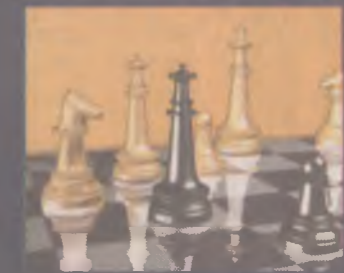
₦4.00 PER SHARE

Payable in full on Application

Application opens **9th February 2005** | Application closes **9th March 2005**

Application forms are available at all FCMB locations, CSL Stockbrokers locations, all Banks and Stockbrokers nationwide.
Application forms also available online at www.firstcitygroup.com

THE GRAND OFFER



FROM THE GRANDMASTERS

Joint Issuing Houses: **FCMB CAPITAL MARKETS LIMITED**
RC 446561

Stanbic Bank

Stanbic Bank Nigeria Limited
RC 58034

Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00

Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja	8.00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30p.m.

Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.
	12:45 p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20 a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:45 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Energy

Independent power project on course - Gov Adamu

The Nasarawa state government said its Independent Power Project (IPP), designed to boost electricity supply in the state, is on course and would be completed on schedule.

Governor Abdullahi Adamu said this after a tour of the project site in the Farin Ruwa development area, home of the famous Farin Ruwa Waterfalls, a tourist attraction.

According to a statement by the governor's special

assistant on media, Victoria N. Ikeano, Dr. Adamu who was accompanied on the inspection by members of the state's executive council was conducted round by management of the Chinese engineering firm handling the multi-billion naira hydroelectric project for which three billion naira is earmarked this fiscal year.

The statement claimed that it is the single largest industrial project being undertaken by the state

government, and the first of its kind in the country, adding that contract for the project which is expected to be completed in 2007, was signed in February 2004 and currently, about 30 per cent of the job is completed.

The statement said further that governor Adamu's visit to the project site was indicative of his

administration's commitment to it in view erratic electricity supply to Nasarawa state. Although electricity supply to the state and in particular, Lafia, the capital, has improved since governor Adamu assumed office in 1999, it still leaves much to be desired.

Apart from being epileptic, the current is often low and can hardly power an air conditioner.

When fully operational,

the Farin Ruwa hydroelectric power plant is expected to boost socio-economic activities in the state which is being hampered by inadequate electricity supply.

The Nasarawa State government, the statement added, is also improving facilities around the Farin Ruwa Waterfalls as well as constructing a modern golf course there as part of its plans to boost the tourism sector.

Chevron Texaco awards Brass LNG project

In a bid to meet the 2009 completion target of the Brass Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project, oil giant, Chevron Texaco Nigeria Limited has announced the award of the contract for the Front End Engineering and Design (FEED) of the liquefied natural gas plant.

The contract was recently awarded to Bechtel, a US construction firm based in San Francisco, California.

Speaking at the award ceremony which took place in Houston, Texas, USA, managing director of Brass LNG Limited said a Nigerian firm - National Engineering and Technical Company Limited (NETCO) will also partake in the execution of the FEED project.

According to the company's general manager, Gas marketing and commercialisation, the Brass LNG project tops Chevron Texaco flare reduction and gas commercialisation efforts saying it is consistent with the federal government's aspirations to generate as much revenue from gas and oil.

He further disclosed that the project, when completed,

will ensure the development of local enterprises in Nigeria and create additional youth employment opportunities in the Niger Delta region.

Chevron Texaco holds 17 per cent interest in Brass LNG. Other shareholders are the NNPC (49 per cent), Conoco Phillips (17 per cent) and Eni-Agip (17 per cent).

Meanwhile the company has restated its community relations in all its operating environments.

Chevron Texaco's general managers, government and public affairs, Engineer Femi Odumabo who stated this during the weekend at a media interactive forum explained that the gesture is an integral part of his company's corporate responsibility and a way of identifying with the needs of the people.

He disclosed that at no time would the company always work assiduously to ensure that its host environments are properly taken care of.

The manager therefore charged the media to partner with the company in the quest, and also ensure balanced reportage of Chevron Texaco's activities.

No fewer than 264,000 litres of premium motor spirit (PMS) popularly called petrol valued at N12,672,000:00 with duty paid value of N16,473,600.00, has been intercepted by the western marine command of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS).

Briefing newsmen recently in Lagos, customs area commander (CAC) Western Marine command, Samuel Kolo Yisa said that the oil was being smuggled inside a barge before it was intercepted on the 25th January, 2005 at Ilagbasa off the 3rd mainland bridge in

Customs seize smuggled petrol

By Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

Lagos. The barge used by the smugglers to convey the fuel was anchored while a flying boat hovered around it before officers of the western marine command moved in.

The CAC explained that after four hours, no body showed up and the barge with the content was towed to the Western Marine Command Ibafo by Henry E. Duke the only sea going vessel in the kitty of the NCS.



Deputy senate president, Senator Ibrahim Mantu (left), presenting the certificate of fellowship of the Nigerian Society of Engineers to Engr. Funsho Kupolokun, group managing director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), with him is Mrs Kupolokun.

Shell partners Bayelsa on community dev.

Two months after Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) partnered Rivers state government for sustainable community development programme, the company has again spread same to Bayelsa, another state in the Niger Delta region.

The company's managing director, Basil Omiyi who dropped this hint while on a courtesy visit to the state governor, Diepriye Alamiyesigha said the programme was the outcome of a fundamental rework of the entire GAMUT of interface between SPDC and its host communities such that there would be synergy between both parties.

The managing director explained that sustainable community development

By Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

programme does not mean that his company is keeping its communities at bay.

"Rather, it involves the company playing up its crusading role and attracting the attention of national and international organisations to the developmental needs of the Niger Delta. And we will succeed with the support of major stakeholders such as Bayelsa State."

Responding, the Bayelsa State governor commended Basil's appointment as a sign of confidence in the managerial competence of Nigerians in the oil and gas industry.

He promised to take personal interest in ensuring fruitful tenure of the managing

director while also expressing his support for operations of oil companies in the Niger Delta.

In his words: "we expert that the oil companies will help us to develop and they should not relent in meeting this legitimate aspiration since they work and live with us."

Meanwhile, the company's helmsman, Basil Omiyi, has signed the first SPDC quality management policy, committing it to implementation and improvement of quality management systems in the operation of its production facilities nationwide.

The company explained in a statement that this literally means that SPDC will execute process that meet the overall purpose of maximised hydrocarbon deferment, with priority attention given to continuously improving HSE practices.

The statement read thus: "SPDC shall apply quality management principles to all its production critical processes, the ultimate objective being to ensure compliance with documented processes and procedures to achieve repeatable business results, optimise unit cost of production by seeking continuous improvement in operational efficiencies, pursue competitive advantage through improved technology and deliver product of a quality appropriate to

The offence, according to comptroller Samuel Kolo Yisa, contravened sections 164 and 166 of the customs and excise management Act CEMA Cap 84 of 1990.

As at the time of filling in this report, Daily Trust gathered that officials of the NNPC had already visited the NCS western marine command to commend their efforts saying that hoodlums have been vandalising their pipelines.

It would be recalled that towards the end of last year,

the command were killed by smugglers who, while resisting arrest, blew up a ship used for smuggling crude-oil.

Conducting newsmen round the seized barge and its content, the CAC said that immediately the barge was arrested, the NCS HQ Abuja was contacted through the radio adding that the command was awaiting further directives from Abuja.

He said that the content of the barge would load eight trucks of PMS since each truck can only carry about 33,000

Business Trust

Finance

SEC seeks partnership with BON

The Kano zonal office of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has sort the support and cooperation of the Bank of the North Limited, towards a strong tie for the general overhaul of its activities in the state.

The state SEC zonal director, Alhaji Lawal Sani, who made the call while on a familiarisation visit to the bank's headquarters in Kano, observed that the measure becomes imperative in view of BON's position in the economic of development of the country.

According to the SEC director, the commission is the apex regulatory body for the Nigerian capital market, stressing however that the patronage of the bank to its activities will in no small amount actualise the set goals.

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru
Correspondent (Kano)

Alhaji Sani pointed out that BON has an important role to play for the promotion of capital market, through capital trade (CTP), which is a small exchange comprising small and medium size companies coming together and put their resources for onward investment.

He maintained that the visit was part of the commission's strategies unveiled to enlighten financial institutions, private organisation and business community on the importance of their participation in the capital market.

The zonal director expressed disgust over the low participation of the business community in the state in the capital market attributing the problem to communication

gap and insufficient enlightenment and sensitization campaigns.

AlhajSani called on the community and key financial institutions who are yet to

register with the SEC to promptly do so due its negative implications to their

transactions.

Responding, the executive director of finance and administration of BON who represented the managing director, Alhaji Mustapha Bello, noted that SEC had been a good friend of the bank as far as capital market is concerned.

He emphasized that the bank which is the largest financial institution in Kano, considered the visit as a pioneer step unmasked for improved cordial relationship.

The executive director pledge that BON and its management staff will continue to support and promote the activities of SEC, just as he canvassed for addition zonal offices in the North, arguing that this will facilitate speedy and sufficient performance of the commission.



The winner of both tertiary institutions and secondary schools Gbuyiro Moyosore Motiyfoluwa and with Nwokolo Chinonyelu Kenechukwu pose with Senator Deshi Danjuma and the director-general Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) Dr. Ndi Okereke Onyuike during the fifth annual National Essay Competition organised by NSE in Abuja...recently
Pix: JoeOroye

...Shareholders want support for Al-faki

The vice chairman, Ibadan zone shareholders association, Chief Aderemi Oyepeju, has called on all operators of the Nigerian capital market to join hands with the new director general of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Mallam Musa Al-faki, to take the market to greater heights.

Chief Aderemi Oyepeju, in a press statement said, the appointment of Al-faki to head the regulation body of the Nigerian capital market is a right direction and could be described as putting a round peg in a round hole.

He said Al-faki is a thorough-bred stock broker with several years of experience whose contributions to the development of the nation's capital market cannot be overemphasized and could be testified to by

operators of the market.

His contributions and his other qualities might have endeared him to the decision market in their move to promote a more efficient and vibrant capital market. Oyepeju, said, though, SEC, since it's inception in 1976, has embarked on wide ranging reform that made the Nigerian capital market compare favorably with others in the world he was convinced that Al-faki's tenure would bring development to into the market in Nigeria and thus further improve its rating amongst others internationally.

Al-faki, he said, would bring a great deal of expertise into play towards bringing out the best of SEC and the capital market for the good of the general public.

Nigeria urged to improve security to attract investments

By Anas A. Galadima,
Reporter (Business)

Nigeria has been urged to improve on its security rating from a medium risk to a low risk country, in order to effectively attract more Foreign Direct Investments (DFI's), into the country.

Mr. Nel Marai a representative of a security company, ERA Associates of South Africa, made this known at the opening ceremony of the ongoing International Security and Safety fair in Abuja which is being organised by the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and a security company, Intersecurity System Limited (ISSL).

According to him, if Nigeria could improve its security rating, it would attract more investment not only in the oil sector but other sectors of the economy as well.

He said that for Nigeria's security industry to make an important contribution to the economy, Nigeria must "apply global standards and seek more international

partners".

According to him, regional Security is also a very important issue that potential investors consider before they invest in a country.

He gave an example of how insecurity and conflicts in Sudan has affected the inflow of foreign investment to

Uganda even though the internal security situation in Uganda is considered quite safe.

The executive secretary of the NIPC, Engr. Mustapha Bello, who also spoke at the occasion, said the commission is dedicated to wooing foreign investment both in the security sector as well as other sectors, in order to

boost the economy.

He said the NIPC has developed strategies aimed at wooing rich Nigerians in the diaspora to invest in the economy.

He further disclosed the commission's intention to create a broad based international investor council to bring global economic power-houses close to Nigeria.

Chartered Bank to collect revenue for NEPA

Chartered Bank has been appointed as a revenue collecting Bank for the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) in Lagos Island. The bank's head office branch and Martins Street branch have been selected to engage in the collection.

According to a statement by Mr. Joseph Ode the bank's manager, external relations, the new NEPA mandate brings to 10 the number of allocation for which the bank collects revenue for NEPA. The NEPA locations where the bank already had a mandate are Ikeja; Warri,

Abuja, Uyo, Ile-Ife, Ilorin, Calabar, Abeokuta, Ibadan and Makurdi.

According to the statement, "the granting of the mandate confirms NEPA's confidence in Chartered Bank which started revenue collection from inception in 1988, beginning with NITEL account."

Today, Chartered Bank collects various revenues for the federal government, state governments, local governments and their various agencies.

According to the statement, the bank has developed and taken revenue

collection business and service into the electronic age with a perfect on-line real time information technology network to which all branches are linked. These make the processing of transactions faster and prompt.

Presently the bank is said to be engaged in revenue collections in all its 50 branches located nationwide.

Chartered Bank was incorporated as a commercial bank in October 1988, commenced business on December 5 of the same year and became a public limited liability company on May 13, 1998.

A

NOB 406

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

FRONT BRAKE PADS
#10,500.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT

B

NOB 406

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

REAR EXHAUST
#28,400.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT

C

NOB 306

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

FRONT BRAKE PADS
#7,700.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT

D

NOB 306

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

REAR EXHAUST
#15,700.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT

E

NOB 306

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

FRONT BRAKE PADS
#8,100.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT

F

NOB 306

ENJOY FIXED PRICES FROM ANY PEUGEOT DEALER NATIONWIDE

REAR EXHAUST
#15,900.00 ONLY
(Labour Inclusive)

PEUGEOT



FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PREQUALIFICATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES ON TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL APPRAISALS OF THE SUBMISSIONS OF INVESTORS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PORT HARCOURT INTL. AIRPORT B.O.T PROJECT AT PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria hereby invites tender from interested registered engineering and financial consultants for the technical and financial appraisal of the submission of investors on the development of Port Harcourt International Airport project at Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on a B.O.T (Build, Operate and Transfer) basis.

The appraisals include extensive analysis of the submissions of the various investors to determine their technical and financial competence and a general appraisal of the project as a whole.


Interested consultants should submit the following:

- Evidence of registration with FAAN in at least Category E.
- Company profile and evidence of experience on similar projects
- Evidence of company income tax payment in the last three (3) years.
- Evidence of current registration with the requisite professional bodies.

All tenders must be in sealed envelopes and marked at the right bottom corner, indicating interest in the specific consultancy service you may wish to offer namely Technical or Financial, not later than two (2) weeks from the date of this publication.

Signed:
Management

COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
Your bridge to Canadian & American Universities
STUDY IN CANADA



Canada's Largest Boarding High School with Pre-U

JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER ENROLLMENT

• Canadian High School & Pre-University studies
 • Students, parents and educators are welcome
 Bring along all school reports, transcripts and certificates for evaluation

INFORMATION SESSION and ADMISSION INTERVIEWS
ABUJA

LE MERIDIEN HOTEL

Seminar: **Sunday February 13, 2005**
Starts 2:00pm
Ends 4:00pm

Interviews: **Monday & Tuesday**
February 14 & 15, 2005
ALL DAY

* Interviews for Domestic attendees only
 * Parents must accompany students to both functions

100% University Placement for our Pre-U graduates since 1994
66% admitted into top 12 Canadian Universities

Columbia International College is the largest private boarding university-preparatory school for international students in Canada.

Total Care Education System Delivers Success	Fast Track to University	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on discipline and leadership training and high academic standards • 1500 students from 52 countries • Separate Boys' and Girls' Residences with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 24 hour computer controlled security - Evening tutorial by teachers in residences • Comfortable, safe and modern residences • Cafeterias and Residences open 365 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in January and enter University in September of same year (17 month program) • Enroll in January and enter University in January of following year (12 month program) • Graduates with 'C' levels or equivalent can apply • Final year High School students apply with current reports. Need not wait for final results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Academic intakes January, March, June, August & October • High School Students from Grade 7 and above may apply • Pre-University High School graduates or equivalent can apply • Age 21 years and below

email inquiries, interview booking: Nigeria@cic-TotalCare.com
 Columbia International College, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
 Tel: 1-905-572-7883 Ext. 2801 • Fax: 1-905-572-9332

on line application
www.cic-TotalCare.com

130mm W x 170mm H 05AccraFebSemV2.ai

FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
P.M.B. 1041, ZARIA



TENDER NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR REHABILITATION OF SCIENCE COMPLEX; SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL

Tenders are hereby invited from reputable contractors for the rehabilitation of science complex, school of Arts and Social Sciences Complex and furnishing of 4 No. Laboratories at the Federal College of Education, Zaria

2. Interested reputable companies are to collect further details on the bids from the Estate and Works Department of the College on payment of a non-refundable fee of N20,000.00 for rehabilitation of Science Complex, N10,000.00 of rehabilitation of School of Arts And Social Sciences and N5,000.00 for the furnishing of No. 4 Laboratories.
3. All bidders are requested to submit the following documents along with their quotation
 - i) Evidence of previous experience in similar jobs and
 - ii) Evidence of Registration with Corporate Affairs Commission
 - iii) Tender payment receipt
 - iv) Current Tax Clearance Certificate
 - v) Value Added Tax (VAT) Certificate
 - vi) Company profile
 - vii) Evidence of previous experience in similar jobs and
 - viii) Bank reference from a reputable Bank.
4. All tenders are to be sealed and marked **"REHABILITATION OF SCIENCE COMPLEX; REHABILITATION OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES COMPLEX; AND FURNISHING OF NO. 4 LABORATORIES"** as the case may be at the left corner of the envelope. This should be submitted and dropped in the Federal College of Education Tenders Box located at the Office of the Registrar latest by 12: noon on 21st February, 2005 and addressed to:

The Registrar General,
Federal College of Education,
P.M.B. 1041,
Zaria.
5. All companies involved in the bids are invited to the opening of the tender slated for the same closing day (21st February, 2005) at 2:00pm

Signed
J.S. DANJUMA
REGISTRAR

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
CUTIX PLC	2	1.36	7,500	10,200.00
JULI PLC	1	0.52	2,055	1,068.60
Sector Totals	3		9,555	11,268.60
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	9	16.20	43,444	701,119.86
Sector Totals	24		95,944	1,320,879.80
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	26	2.00	565,008	1,109,686.67
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	3	7.22	11,500	83,030.00
Sector Totals	29		576,508	1,192,716.67
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	13	3.42	165,641	566,492.22
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	39	6.63	219,587	1,455,861.81
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	1	3.41	50,000	170,500.00
CHARTERED BANK PLC	7	3.90	107,122	417,775.80
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	1	0.73	100	73.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	3,484	7,873.84
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	555	23.86	1,781,129	42,580,528.06
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	33	4.40	527,345	730,386.75
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	253	11.57	1,710,954	19,723,308.02
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	11	0.81	1,340,000	1,085,400.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	44	0.61	6,678,029	3,882,851.10
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	1.41	2,200	3,102.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	4	7.81	4,740	37,019.40
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	5	0.69	62,000	42,780.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	3	1.15	36,500	41,975.00
NAL BANK PLC.	3	2.80	2,262	6,333.60
OCEANIC BANK PLC	9	6.30	134,100	844,830.00
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	23	1.48	492,257	726,084.91
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC.	12	7.41	305,710	2,265,311.10
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	82	10.00	5,037,128	50,371,280.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	392	20.24	884,829	17,893,489.78
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	11	0.81	270,000	218,700.00
WEMA BANK PLC.	14	3.93	88,491	347,769.63
ZENITH BANK PLC	249	13.54	2,292,321	30,684,658.71
Sector Totals	1,746		22,195,929	174,104,384.73
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	169	101.50	419,798	42,808,443.58
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	513	37.77	1,905,682	71,128,385.08
Sector Totals	682		2,325,480	113,936,828.66
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	78	23.00	482,582	11,223,642.50
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	3	4.50	31,775	142,987.50
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	8	6.85	64,500	456,225.00
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	30	11.00	292,996	3,241,816.96
Sector Totals	119		871,853	15,064,671.96
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	29	4.94	180,130	888,725.38
CAP PLC.	5	6.98	4,866	33,695.40
D. N. MEYER PLC.	10	5.35	55,196	295,063.01
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	10	4.20	71,659	300,967.80
Sector Totals	54		311,851	1,518,451.59
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	1.30	1,999	2,598.70
Sector Totals	1		1,999	2,598.70
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	13	1.00	168,770	169,978.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	17	5.00	26,243	130,360.36
CHELLARAMS PLC.	1	1.71	670	1,145.70
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	186	16.53	1,136,274	18,724,838.50
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	83	13.80	519,627	7,200,013.99
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC.	65	14.17	771,516	10,932,381.72
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	10	1.10	191,439	196,223.19
Sector Totals	375		2,814,539	37,354,941.46
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	2	0.94	5,000	4,700.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	14	14.00	104,247	1,488,457.40
Sector Totals	16		109,247	1,493,157.40
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	2	0.94	24,983	23,484.02
Sector Totals	2		24,983	23,484.02
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	30	24.00	38,617	921,682.70
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	159	57.05	284,916	16,243,389.17
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	14	16.61	107,031	1,777,784.91
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	77	53.34	103,064	5,339,498.39
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	97	147.41	158,026	23,326,204.92
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	2	15.78	15,000	236,700.00
Sector Totals	379		706,654	47,845,260.09
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC.	3	0.83	20,168	16,739.44
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	12	3.20	104,396	336,167.20
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	4	5.46	12,000	62,920.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	1.13	200	226.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	18	3.85	245,550	947,373.50
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG PLC	38	8.80	270,806	2,390,391.70
Sector Totals	76		653,120	3,753,817.84
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	6	0.98	105,000	101,450.20
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	7	2.82	33,424	94,888.08
NIG. YEAST & ALCOHOLIC MANU. PLC.	1	2.40	75	180.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	62	3.35	598,758	2,037,558.77
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	2	1.90	801	1,521.90
Sector Totals	78		738,058	2,235,598.95
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	1	0.60	3,200	1,920.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	8	2.16	274,018	591,011.48
BAICO INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.01	7,500	7,575.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	10	1.53	644,943	986,614.50
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	8	1.15	38,733	44,524.20
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.26	4,500	5,670.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	11	1.90	349,793	662,806.70
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	1,000	930.00
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC.	0	0.86	0	0.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	4	3.12	53,118	166,251.04
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	3	1.97	14,200	27,974.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	7	3.71	15,259	56,159.82
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	1	1.38	25,000	34,500.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	14	1.15	162,000	184,365.00
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	13	2.51	281,406	722,194.06
Sector Totals	83		1,874,670	3,492,495.80
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	3	1.62	70,000	112,000.00
NIGERIAN ENERGY SECTOR FUND	1	889.00	100	88,900.00
Sector Totals	4		70,100	200,900.00
PACKAGING				
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	2	1.15	1,000	1,150.00
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	1	1.46	466	680.36
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	4	4.70	13,100	61,570.00
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	12	0.92	238,702	212,049.84
VAN LEER CONTAINERS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	2.25	444	999.00
Sector Totals	20		253,712	276,449.20
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	6	0.81	200,100	159,081.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	141	63.95	280,946	18,058,083.34
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	1	2.04	38,000	77,520.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	47	182.35	55,099	10,090,953.46
CONOIL PLC.	97	121.50	123,623	15,092,494.59
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	33	164.00	12,592	2,034,135.65
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	42	177.00	114,813	20,680,911.50
OANDO PLC.	202	90.00	224,324	20,183,393.79
Sector Totals	569		1,049,497	86,376,573.33
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	1	1.73	20,000	34,600.00
Sector Totals	1		20,000	34,600.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	31	8.90	134,669	1,204,173.05
Sector Totals	31		134,669	1,204,173.05
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	3	2.66	5,599	14,893.34
Sector Totals	3		5,599	14,893.34

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
UACN	771,516.00	10,932,381.72	65
UBN	884,829.00	17,893,489.78	372
LEVBROS	1,136,274.00	18,724,838.50	186
GUARANTY	1,710,954.00	19,723,308.02	11
FIRSTBANK	1,781,129.00	42,580,528.06	555
NB	1,905,682.00	71,128,385.08	513
ZENITHBANK	2,292,321.00	30,684,658.71	249
UBA	5,037,128.00	50,371,280.00	82
IMB	6,678,029.00	3,882,851.10	44

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
NBC	50.80	53.34	+2.54
NB	35.98	37.77	+1.79
CADBURY	55.93	57.05	+1.12
NNFM	15.03	15.78	+0.75
GUARANTY	11.02	11.57	+0.55
GUINNESS	100.99	101.50	+0.51
PRESKO	11.50	11.90	+0.40
MAY&BAKER	5.20	5.46	+0.26
UBN	19.98	20.24	+0.26
OKOMUOIL	16.06	16.20	+0.14

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	179.85	177.00	-2.85
NOLCHEM	123.60	121.50	-2.10
AP	65.00	63.95	-1.05
ASHAKACEM	23.35	23.00	-0.35
BCC	4.73	4.50	-0.23
CCNN	7.05	6.85	-0.20
JBERGER	14.20	14.00	-0.20
VITAFOAM	3.50	3.35	-0.15
PFIZER	3.99	3.85	-0.14
WAPIC	2.64	2.51	-0.13

EU urged to support proposal to cancel Nigeria's debts

Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has urged European nations to support the proposal of British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown to cancel Nigeria's debts, among others.

Okonjo-Iweala made the call during a recent visit to London where she went to report on the federal government's efforts toward fighting corruption and poverty reduction programmes.

The ministry said in a statement today that Nigeria was owing N32 billion dollars with more than 80 per cent of it owed to members of the Paris Club of sovereign creditors.

According to the statement, signed by the Special Assistant to the Minister, Mr Paul Nwabuike, 1.7 billion dollars is spent annually to service the debt.

The country receives only 2 dollars per capita compared to an average of 28 dollars per capita for other Sub-Saharan African countries.

Meanwhile, the minister was said to have taken time off to attend an anti-debt rally at Trafalgar Square tagged "Make Poverty History" which attracted about 10,000 campaigners.

On her impression about the rally, Okonjo-Iweala was quoted as saying that "being present at such an historic event, hearing President Nelson Mandela speak was a great privilege and honour.

"I was very impressed with the youthful and committed nature of the crowd that attended. These people have come out on a wet grey London day to show their anger at the injustice of world poverty and assert that they want things to change.

"Let us get rid of cynicism, and let us meet the challenge of making poverty history," she said.

Mandela was also quoted as saying that "overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice.

"In this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free," he stressed.

Nigerian, US companies sign MOU

Eight Nigerian companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Lagos on Tuesday to provide internship opportunities for Nigerians studying in the US.

Felicitation

on your 30th Anniversary on the Throne
(February 8, 1975 – February 8, 2005)

The Management and Staff of
British American Tobacco Nigeria
felicitates with His Royal Highness,
Alhaji (Dr.) Shehu Idris CFR,
on the occasion of the 30th anniversary
of his enthronment as the Emir of Zazzau

We wish His Royal Highness more
fruitful years of good health and service
to humanity and the nation

ALLAH YA JA ZAMANIN SARKI

Signed
Board & Management



BRITISH AMERICAN
TOBACCO
NIGERIA

PRINTERS OF REPUTE IN NIGERIA

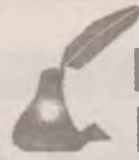
The printing industry in Nigeria has been providing monumental printing designs that projects the creativity of the industry thereby justifying its efforts in bringing out colourful and beautiful prints for the use of their various class of clients. Indeed, the last four decades has witnessed their astronomical development at improving the nation's economy.

In spite of their impacts and contributions to the economic development of the country, due to lack of adequate publicity, the activities of most printers are not known to majority of Nigerians.

Giving the appreciable efforts of the players in the industry both public and private, suppliers of printing machines and equipment, accessories, etc, and in spite of the harsh economic environment under which they operate, there is the need to appraise the contributions of the industry, X-raying its challenges as well as publicise their achievements and activities.

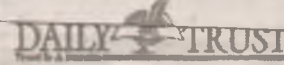
Media Trust Limited, the publishers of *Daily* and *Weekly Trust* Newspapers plans to feature some of the reputable and outstanding printing companies, manufacturers and suppliers of printing machines and accessories in a special project package. The date of publication is Monday, February 14, 2005.

For participation and further enquiries, please contact the Special Projects Department on any of the following nos: 08037038663, 08042145839, 08023762061, 08028494170 or 09-6720346, 5235787 extensions 124 or 117.

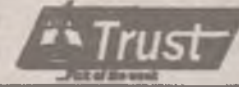


MEDIA TRUST LIMITED

SUBSCRIPTION FORM



Duration	Cover Price	Discount	Subscription	Amount Saved
1 year	=N=20,800.00	25%	=N=15,600.00	=N=5,200.00
6 Months	=N=10,400.00	20%	=N=8,320.00	=N=2,080.00
3 Months	=N=5,200.00	15%	=N=4,420.00	=N=780.00



Duration	Cover Price	Discount	Subscription	Amount Saved
1 year	=N=5,200.00	25%	=N=3,900.00	=N=1,300.00
6 Months	=N=2,600.00	20%	=N=2,080.00	=N=520.00
3 Months	=N=1,300.00	15%	=N=1,105.00	=N=195.00

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name of Subscriber:

Company Name:

Delivery Address (Not Box No):

Telephone(s):

Start Date: Expiry Date:

Paper subscribe for: *Daily Trust* *Weekly Trust*

Tick (1 year) (6 Months) (3 Months)

Please send the form to any of the following Media Trust Ltd Office

ABUJA
No. 22 Laska Street,
Off Bissau Street,
Wuse Zone 6,
P.O.Box 6873, Abuja
PORT HARCOURT
24 Ikwerem Road,
Cavalry House,
Mile 1 Doolu

LAGOS
NAN Freeman
National Arts Theatre Complex,
Iganmu, Lagos.
JOS
Former British American Building,
Jos, Plateau State.

KADUNA
No. 6 Sullebama Close,
Off Katsina Road,
Ungwaro Sanki GRA,
P.O. Box 6573.

KANO
Abdullahi Mu'Adun House,
Murtala Mohammed Way
Fagge C,
Fagge, Kano

ENQUIRIES:
The Marketing Manager 09-6705982, 09-6712301, 0803786792, 09-5235787 (ext. 115)
Musa Abubaji Muhammad: 09-6705982, 08033176656, 09-5235787 (ext. 116)

Donor-Funded Management Positions



The Federal Government of Nigeria has embarked on a new initiative to markedly improve service delivery across government departments. This programme is underpinned by a full Government commitment expressed in a social contract SERVICOM (*Service Compact With All Nigerians*) launched in July 2004. A SERVICOM office in the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, headed by a Senior Special Assistant to the President as Coordinator, is responsible for implementing the service delivery programme.

It is envisaged that the Unit will have two inter-related roles:

- **Promoting Culture Change:** Assisting Ministries and departments to prepare and update service charters, monitor performance and become increasingly responsive to public demand; setting up systems to manage charters, develop complaints policies and procedures for the FGN at all levels and raising awareness.
- **Demonstration of Impact:** Working with selected departments to implement service delivery improvement pilots, demonstrating what can be achieved to improve front line service delivery, and drawing out lessons on underlying structural reforms that are necessary to make these changes sustainable.

DFID has agreed a programme of support to SERVICOM and this includes the provision of technical assistance and essential personnel. Accordingly applications are invited for the two following positions, which will be funded by DFID:

CEO SERVICOM Unit

This post will report to a Coordinator in the Presidency and be responsible for overall leadership, strategic management and financial control of the Unit. The CEO will manage an operations team to steer all the offices of the Unit to facilitate change in the way that the public sector does business. This will include:

1. Developing operational strategies to further the SERVICOM Initiative, in partnership with line ministries.
2. Managing the strategic links between the Unit and external parties.
3. Managing the human resources component of the Unit, including the mobilisation of international experts (with the help of a full-time technical consultant).

Service Delivery Initiative Abuja, Nigeria



This position requires a manager with demonstrable management skills at executive and at operational levels, and with direct or contracted public sector experience, good interpersonal skills and experience of customer-focused public service delivery improvement.

Public Awareness Manager

This post will report to the CEO and will be responsible for raising awareness about the SERVICOM initiative, monitoring public opinion on the initiative, and managing the communications process between the Unit, line ministries and service users. This will include:

1. Liaising with government departments for updates on SERVICOM activities.
2. Acting as a spokesperson for SERVICOM, publicising its activities and supervising the content of its website.
3. Setting up appropriate mechanisms for eliciting feedback from service users, and disseminating key messages to the Unit, line ministries and other stakeholders.

This position requires a professional with experience of managing the communication of government or corporate policies, preferably in a Nigerian or West African context. Also critical is a strong grounding in market research, good interpersonal, media skills and a good understanding of the use of research surveys to improve policy and operational practice.

Terms of Appointment

These posts are *international posts* and annual remuneration will be set to reflect this. The candidates will be based in Abuja, but will travel briefly to other parts of the country as required. Each post is for a 2-year fixed contract term, and is subject to a probationary period of 4 months.

Application

Interested candidates should submit a letter of application setting out what skills & experience they would bring to SERVICOM, their reasons for applying & a comprehensive CV together with details of contact addresses, & telephone numbers all in electronic form to grid@gridconsulting.net The 'subject' line of the email must contain as a reference, the title of the position being applied for.

Applications must be received by **24th February 2005**. Interviews will take place in Abuja in March 2005. Further information about the SERVICOM initiative can be obtained from its website: www.servicenigeria.com



Hajj 2005: How

When Prophet Ibrahim (AS) completed building holy Kaabah, Allah commanded him to call people to perform pilgrimage to it (Hajj). Prophet Ibrahim pleaded, "Oh Allah how shall my voice reach all of those people?" Allah told him that his duty is to call and it was up to Him to make it reach the people. Thus it goes and every year muslims from all over the world respond to this call by embarking on this journey of faith. The blessings of this spiritual journey are reinforced by the wide belief that performing Hajj is not determined by having the means only, it is a call by Allah to his chosen servants. This year, according to official figures, a number of 2.56 million faithful from all over the world performed the Hajj that was adjudged one of the well organised in the history of the ritual. For every muslim performing Hajj is a life long dream that when fulfilled remains in ones memory forever. The legendary American civil rights activist, Malcolm X, later known as Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, wrote of his Hajj experience decades ago this way: "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practised by people of all colours and races here in this ancient Holy land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all other prophets and the holy scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colour."

In the past it was just like bidding farewell to life on earth. Our ancestors trekked all the way to Makkah confronting difficulties posed by harsh weather in the desert, sickness, starvation and wild animals. Along the way some died while others were consumed by the journey and never returned home. But modernity

by ISA SANUSI
(Political Reporter)

has largely simplified the process and now it takes only four hours to be there a journey that hitherto took several months or even a whole year. For Nigerian pilgrim the journey may not be entirely different from what it used to be in the past. This year's Hajj started with late preparation and so much uncertainty. In the beginning states that contracted IRS airline to airlift their pilgrims were stranded at various Hajj camps and airports when aircrafts chartered by the airline were disqualified.

Then the wheather problem. The Saudi authorities had to extend the deadline of airlift for Nigeria by two days.

This year Nigeria projected the airlift of 60,000 pilgrims and a total pilgrims passport of that number was supplied. Along the line came the story that pilgrims passport had finished and only God and those responsible know why and how. Infact, this year's Hajj for Nigerian pilgrims was not much different from what it used to be in the past.

JEDDAH

On Monday, 17th January, we left Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport, Abuja and arrived King Abdul Aziz Airport, Jeddah aboard a Kabo Air plane at 11:15 pm Saudi time, four hours to the closure of the Hajj wing of the airport. We remained for over three hours in the plane as unboarding officials were attending to other pilgrims. We were shoved into a small room where we were queued up for immigration screening which took two hours. Later our passports were seized followed by the information that because we



The Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina

were using a standard green passport we had to pay royalty amounting to 300 US Dollars per pilgrim. They said we had to pay that amount for not using the usual pilgrims passport. We in that situation, risked beginning and ending our journey at the tent-like airport. Some it difficult to understand what was happening and sought solace in taking a nap on the bare floor of the airport. The following morning we had our passports back after paying the royalty and from there the journey to Makkah began.

MAKKAH

We took Ihram from our hotel rooms in Jeddah and took the 45 minutes journey to

Makkah. There is an excitement in entering the holy city. As I set my foot into Kaabah I was overwhelmed by the feeling of joy and guilt. There is enthusiasm in coming quite closer to one of Allah's signs on earth. There is fulfilment in standing right in front of the Holy Place the direction of which one has been facing during his five daily prayers all through life. Performing Tawaf is never easy but very joyful. That evening the crowd was heavy and the atmosphere thick. One in this situation has nothing to but to go on and on. Which ever way one looks one sees devotion and unity of purpose in the worship of

Allah. So many elderly people were helped through while tears rolled down the cheeks of so many others. After making the seven round we moved for Sa'yi next to Kaabah. Safah and Marwa have been described by Allah in the Holy Qur'an as among his signs. Thousands of years ago a woman and her infant son were left there. She put her faith in Allah. Allah took care of her. She ran back and forth between the two hills. Allah gave them the water Zamzam which quenched their thirst and will continue quenching the thirst of the whole Ummah to the end of time.

MINA

Mina is a small town east of Makkah otherwise known as the tent city. We spent three nights there stoning satan. Jamrah had always been crowded and has in recent times become a scene of tragedy. This 'stoning of the satan' was easier because of the expansion of the stoning targets into three pillars of thick wall that provides larger target. Large flat screen Televisions were fixed at strategic points educating pilgrims on how to conduct themselves to avoid unnecessary rush that leads to stampede. This time also tents were improved or changed with fire proof ones and sufficient presence of fire wokers and many other volunteers willing to assist pilgrims. Nigerians were located almost five kilometres away from the Jamrah. Sokoto state had a wonderful outing with the provision of continuous information broadcast to its pilgrims. Officials communicated with pilgrims in the comfort of their tents. Bauchi, Taraba and Lagos

states made befitting arrangements for their pilgrims in Mina. However all around tents occupied by Nigerians one sadly noticed extraordinary heap of garbage and dirty traders selling in unhygienic manner things that ranged from kolanut to "tuwo da miyar kuka". Almost all Nigerians were identified with their heavy loads. On the way to stoning the satan Nigerian beggars constituted nuisance to everybody, exhibiting various forms of physical deformity to get your sympathy and your money. Some of the beggars were infact not disabled, they just feigned disability to make money.

ARAFAT

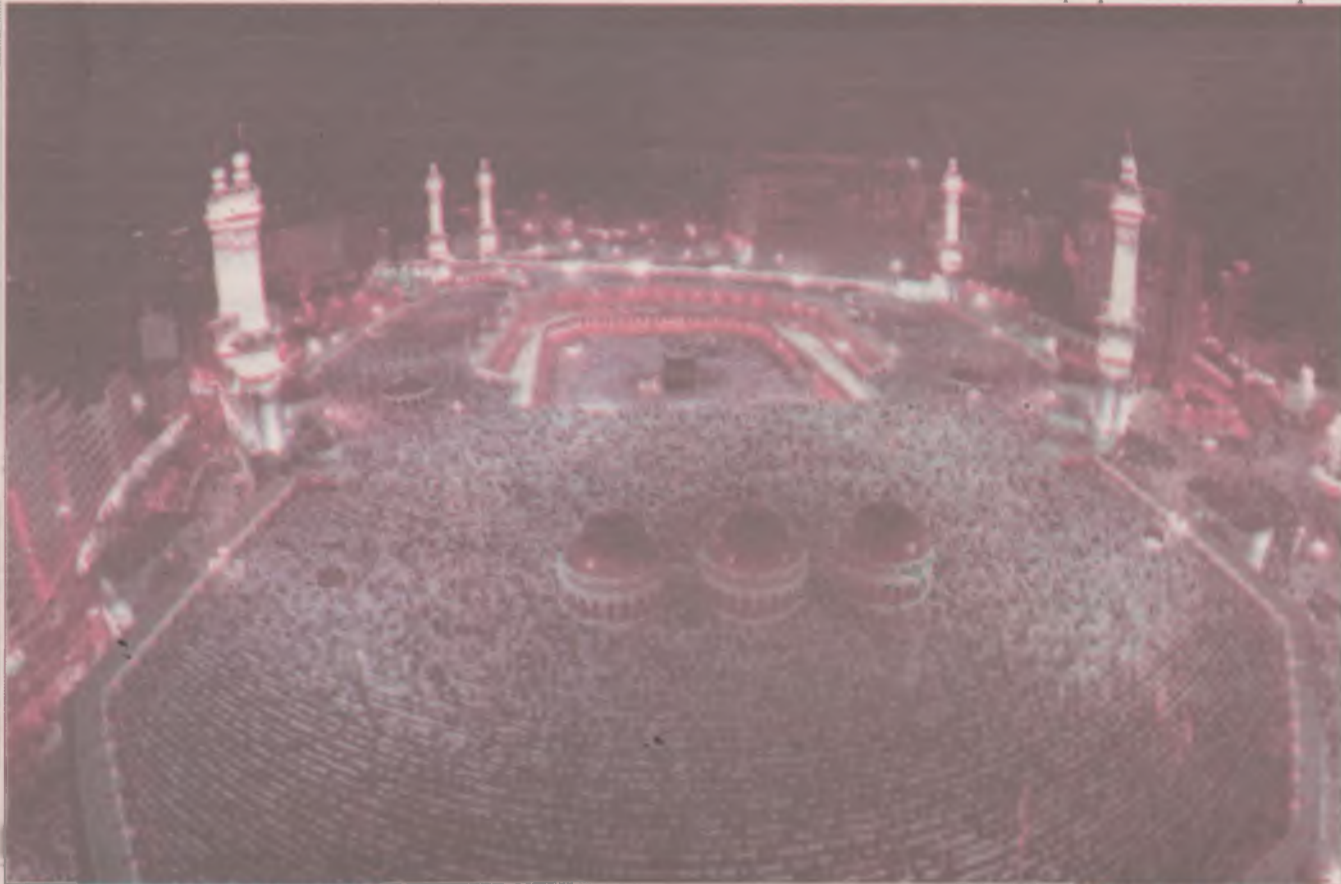
At Arafat we prayed Zuhr and Asr together and spent the rest of the day in prayers. The sight of people on top of the mount where Prophet Muhammad (SAW) delivered his last sermon reminds one of the imminent day coming when all will give account of their acts before God. The way in and out of Arafat was not an easy one because of the heavy traffic. So many pilgrims stood on the Arafat in the direction of Kaabah praying hard indeed.

MUZDALIFAH

When we reached Muzdalifah it was already time for Isha prayer, We said our prayer on the rock and spent the night in an open space. The night at Muzdalifah is one of the biggest lessons of humility in Islam. It was cold and no one seemed is bothered.

MADINAH

On Sunday we visited the holy city of Madinah and prayed in the Holy Prophets grand mosque. We prayed be-



Pilgrimes worshipping in Ka'aba, muslims holiest site.

it went

grave and those of his companions. The journey from Jeddah to Madinah took us over five hours. One will on the way not cease to be impressed by the good condition of the road and the barricades on both sides to prevent any distraction to travellers who, it seems, always overspend but not recklessly. Madinah is not as noisy as Makkah and the people there are hospitable and friendly. It was a day after the heavy rain that we arrived Madinah. Suburbs of the city were submerged while streams were still running.

PASSPORT RACKETEERING

If there is any word far more effective than unseriousness one can deploy in describing our nation. Infact the Nigerian is a sorry sight at every point of the pilgrimage. Despite the large population and stake of Muslims in the country we are yet to have a hitch free Hajj. Preparations are always late and hasty. Sadly enough, Hajj in Nigeria has over the years been run by the adhoc body called National Hajj Committee which was this time around inaugurated three months to the beginning of Hajj operations. The Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs is an expression of inefficiency. Every nation send to Saudi Hajj authority the list of its intending pilgrims three months to the beginning of airlift, Nigeria was the only country that could not do so.

This year a total of 60,000 pilgrims was projected and same number of pilgrims passports was ordered. But before the number is met pilgrims passports was said to have finished. The Amirul Hajj, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, who discovered this, lamented at a meeting with states Hajj officials in Jeddah that some people were so crude as to try making money from a spiritual activity. He said "I want to express my displeasure on malpractices involving travelling documents. This is a religious assignment and we are all muslims. We are privileged to serve our fellow muslims and turn this thing into a means of making money. I am so disturbed and depressed. Passports were hoarded. We produced 60,000 passports we don't have upto that number of pilgrims why should we run out of passports before we even reach the target. Definitely something is wrong somewhere. You deny some people the opportunity to perform one of the fundamental pillars of Islam because you want to make money out of it. Im not happy really." In some cases the passport had to be improvised to enable so many pilgrims perform the Hajj.

Investigations indicated that the racket extended to visa

who was an intending pilgrim only to be told two days to departure that she did not get visa. She was devastated. At Jeddah passport bearing her visa was intercepted from another woman helped by those making brisk business from such rackets.

FACILITIES FOR NIGERIAN PILGRIMS

The medical facilities for Nigerian pilgrims helped in attending to pilgrims various medical needs. Every state had a medical team. A report of the Health Committee presented by the chairman Professor Nur Alkali shows that eight Nigerians died during this years Hajj. At the Jeddah airport on our way back home one will but only be stunned at the carelessness with which Nigerians were treated. Every nation had its flag flying at locations secured for its pilgrims. Consulates of all nations had stands at the airport with the exception of Nigeria.

There is no doubt that Nigeria needs an effective body to be manned by sincere Nigerians devoted to making Hajj hitch free for Nigeria and if the government continues to be reluctant to do so the Muslim ummah has to take up the challenge.

THE HEAVY RAIN

On Saturday, while pilgrims were hurrying out of Minna, stormy wind heralding rain started blowing. At around 4:30 the heavy rain started. It was said to be the heaviest in the last twenty years. Streets of Jiddah were flooded and because they have no drainage system it was hectic crossing the roads or driving around. Saudi Arabia is unlike Nigeria where every little rainfall attracts weeks of power outage.

NIGERIANS IN SAUDI ARABIA

I met so many Nigerians that have been living in Jiddah and Makkah. Some were born there. But I never met any Nigerian interested in coming back to his country. One Abdallah told me that even though they are treated like slaves in Saudi Arabia he never contemplated coming back to Nigeria. He said "For the six years I have been living in this country a can of Coca Cola is sold at one Saudi Riyal. Is that possible in Nigeria?" he queried and I just kept listening to him. Not only Nigerians the citizens of so many countries especially India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Yemen and so many others do the taxi driving, sweeping the streets and all kinds of trade. One thing clear is that everything works in Saudi Arabia and the basic human needs are easily accessible to all. Their uniformed men are young, hardworking and not corrupt. They respect their laws and protect them.



At the Nigeria Hajj Annex Jeddah Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Abubakar Tanko (left) Amirul Hajj, Senator Ibrahim Mantu and Nigeria's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Senator Ibrahim Kazaure in Jeddah.

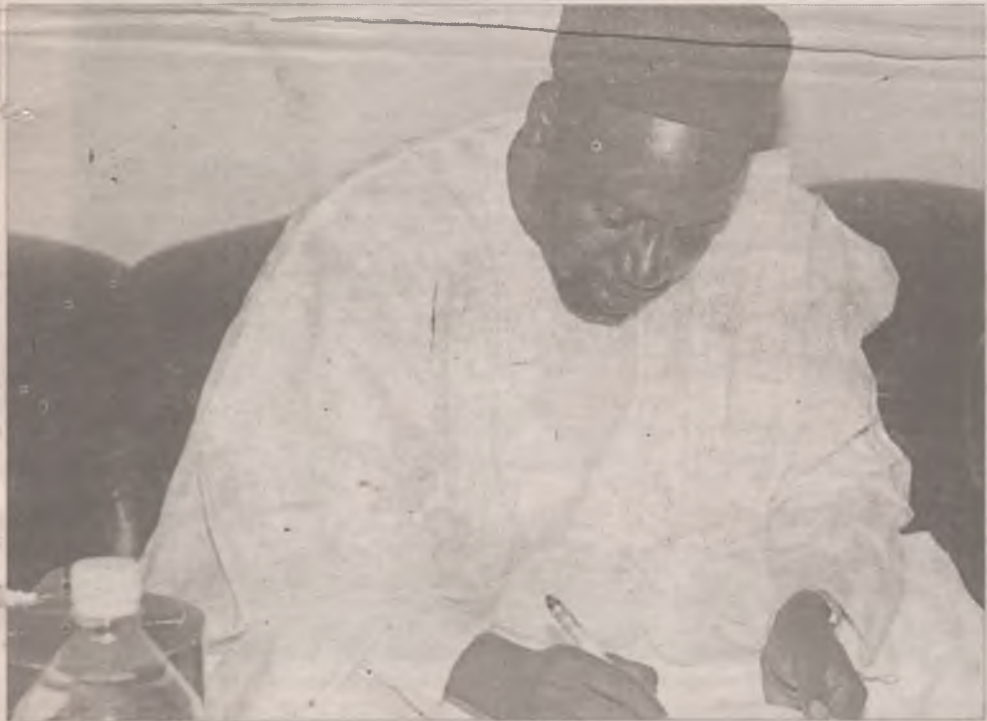


Hajj Annex of the Embassy of Nigeria in Jeddah.



Shops along a major road in Shahr-Sittin where Nigerians live and shop in Meccah during Hajj.

Science & Education



The vice-chancellor of the University of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) Bauchi, Prof. Garba Aliyu Babaji, signing the visitor's register during a courtesy call by the members of the board of management of the university on Media Trust headquarters in Abuja...recently. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

ABU warns students against religious violence

Authorities of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, has warned that it will not allow any group of students threaten the prevailing hard earned peace in the institution through their activities.

This warning which was welcomed by staff and students, is seen as a bold attempt by the new management of the university to avert the outbreak of violence as has been witnessed in the past decade.

The ABU authorities warned all students living in the two campuses of the institution to imbibe the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful resolution of religious issues, instead of taking the laws into their hands and unleashing mayhem on fellow students.

The warning which was contained in a statement from the office of the institution's vice-chancellor, Professor Shehu Usman Abdullahi and made available to *Daily Trust* is coming on the heels of a tragic incident that occurred between two Muslims groups at the Samaru main campus of the university.

During the incident, the two groups had clashed over the use of the mosque in one of the student halls to conduct unauthorised and exclusive prayers. Five students were injured in the incident.

The statement which was captioned, "The use of mosque in students hostels for the purpose of worship," said it has come to the notice of the university administration that there has been an on-going misunderstanding between some muslim students and officials of the local branch of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) over the use of a

From Waziri Isa Gwantu
Stringer (Zaria)

mosque located in Suleiman hall.

This misunderstanding, the university said revolves around group supplication (Du'a), recitation of the Qur'an and supererogatory prayer (Tahajjud) undertaken by adherents of some Islamic sects every Thursday night after Isha'I prayers.

"The bone of contention in this situation is the validity of the supplication and the group supererogatory prayers and the fear that such activities may pave the way for divisive and disruptive activities which may lead to the breach of peace and may be influenced by vested external interest," the statement noted further.

The university law, the statement added, stipulates that students be admitted from within and outside the country to be "trained without any discrimination on grounds of race, sex, religion or creed. The students in Ahmadu Bello University represent this diversity, mak-

ing the institution cosmopolitan in nature.

"The implication of this diversity is that the responsibility of the university is to recognise and safeguard freedom of worship and association among staff and students and to permit the formation of broad-based associations for the coordination and enhancement of the freedom of worship.

"It is therefore pertinent to followers of same faith and their commensurate coordinating bodies to equally uphold this principle and ensure that the right of every adherent of the religion to worship in the facilities provided within the university is not infringed upon on grounds of doctrine or sect or practice in places of worship and for the sole purpose of worship by bonafide students," the statement said.

Therefore, the university said it will not tolerate disruptive activities internally or externally-generated and advised students to notify the authorities of any suspicious activity capable of disrupting the peace.

Kaduna needs 20,000 teachers for 6-3-3-4 system — Makarfi

More than 20,000 teachers are required by the Kaduna State government for the smooth implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational system in the state. The state governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, made this known when he received members of the Governing Board of the Kaduna State College of Education.

He said the state government would do all it could to assist the college to enable it to meet the state's teachers requirement within the shortest possible time.

He, however, frowned at

the new federal revenue allocation formula where the burden of primary education was shifted to state governments without any increase in their statutory allocation to cater for the funding of the primary education sector.

Earlier, the chairman of the governing board of the college, Alhaji Garba Reis, had told the governor of the college's major constraints.

He called on the state government to address the problem of imbalance in the production of NCE teachers among the 23 local government areas of the state.

Higher Education This Week

By Dr. Isaac N. Obasi, zikobasi@yahoo.com

The hostel privatization crisis (III)

What strand of privatization policy are we advocating for and why? Like we noted in the previous part of this series, a two-track policy should be adopted for the meantime. This type of privatization approach is slightly different from what the authorities are currently doing. The advertisement in some national newspapers calling for bidders to take over hostels in federal government owned institutions is just one track approach that would not address the fears of those who would not be in a position to pay for the fully privatized hostels.

Our two-track approach involves first a privatization policy for new hostels on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis and this should be the entry point for our advocated policy shift. This first track would no doubt attract higher hostel fee regime but the services it offers would attract those whose parents can afford to pay. Experience elsewhere indicates that it would attract people from higher socio-economic status. And to deny that our present society is socially differentiated is to be pretentious and economical with the truth. Students reflect this even from the choice of food they eat on campuses. This first track has a longer time perspective. When this type of policy was implemented at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, it was targeted at the foreign students who were adjudged to be in a position to pay and who of course expected to find decent and non-congested hostel accommodation in a foreign land. The first year of implementation witnessed resistance by students' union leaders who the Vice-Chancellor confessed never opposed the policy initially but turned round as a result of pressure from the students. In the second and subsequent years, acceptance not only grew but nationals were then opting by choice to be allocated to the foreign students hostels. The experience of the University of Ibadan that also implemented a slightly different version of this first track approach of hostel management differentiation should be explored further by higher authorities to see how far it has fared. The common denominator in any version of this first track approach is higher budget outlays and increased hostel fees.

The second track of our recommended privatization policy has as its entry point a modest commercialization of the hostels. This requires either a continuation of the present management structure of the hostels with improved services, or a contracting out policy to private estate managers who would be required to raise charges incrementally to accommodate the financial ability of students from low socio-economic status. This strategy has the benefit of reducing shock attendant in a full-scale hostel privatization policy that the first track entails. In other words, these hostels still belong to the government and the authorities would retain only supervisory powers to ensure that things are going on well. The regulatory power of government cannot be wished away even in capitalist countries. It is the exercise of such regulatory powers that makes the private entrepreneurs to keep to the policy guidelines that empower them to operate. Based on the findings of our study which we published here last year as a Memo to the Presidential Committee on the Management of the Hostels, an improved services in hostel management accompanied by modest fee charges would not be as controversial as a full scale-privatization policy. The resistance of students to modest increase in hostel fees would be mild as against the kind of approach that was adopted last years when

hostel fees were hiked in the midst of the poor and corrupt management of the hostels.

We had in the past illustrated how the Chinese transitioned from the socialist based state-controlled higher education system (which imposed difficulties on the expansion of access to many higher education hungry Chinese) to a relatively market controlled system. The introduction of a gradual liberalization policy gave opportunity to many people who could afford paying fees to benefit from higher education, which otherwise they would not have under the old regulated order. The success was hinged on the adoption of a two-track policy that still saw the state providing subsidized higher education along with a fee-paying system for those who could afford it. Gradually the system stabilized over the years without any upheaval. Again in Ghana as we noted earlier, the then Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Prof. adopted this two-track system to open up a new policy in the commercialization of the hostels for better and decent living. In both the Chinese and Ghanaian experience, the desired goal of sustainability of higher education services was combined with those of equity to protect poor students (a fact of life) and liberalization of access for those who could afford to pay more and get their desired level of services (another fact of life).

Critics would say that our suggestion of a two-track approach is a call for the institutionalization of inequality in society. Far from it, inequality in the Nigerian society has been recreating itself even without this policy coming into existence. While we should work very hard to reduce inequality through equitable policies, we should not shy away at maximizing the benefits associated with the reality of inequality when the need arises. To ignore such is to be unrealistic and pretentious. In any case, many of those who would naturally resist what we call a policy shift in hostel management have their children in private schools right now rather than in government schools either at the primary or secondary school levels. They are able to do this because above all, they want quality education for their children. In any case, they would not have gone there if they did not have the financial ability to cope with the high fee regime in those schools. But we also know that they would not have gone there if the government schools were managed well and still attracted a reasonable fee structure. This is what we mean by being unrealistic or pretentious about the reality of our societal differentiation or class society which many of us hate but are yet neck deep into its practice.

In the concluding part of this series, we would use our personal and research experience to demonstrate why we now believe that there is need for a policy shift in the management of our higher education system.

Dr. Obasi who writes from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Southern Africa is currently in Nigeria for the burial of his beloved mother Mrs. Fidelia Nwaoluoma Obasi in their home town, Ezuhu Nguru in Abok-Mbaise LGA of Imo State.

Science & Education

Kwara committed to conducive learning environment

The Kwara state government has restated its commitment to make the environment in primary schools across the state conducive for learning.

Governor Dukola Saraki gave the assurance during an inspection of projects under the supervision of the state ministry of education. The essence of the inspection, Dr. Saraki explained, was to enable him obtain first hand information on the execution of contracts, to ensure that the jobs are done according to

**From AbdulRazaq Adebayo
Correspondent (Ilorin)**

In all the schools visited, the governor inspected new and rehabilitated classrooms at various stages of completion, even as the governor was particularly touched by the deplorable condition of infrastructure in the schools.

The governor's first port of call was Government Secondary School, Ilorin, where he was conducted round by the principal, Alhaji Yakubu

Yahaya Oloriegbo who expressed gratitude for the supply of electricity, purchase of hostel materials and text books as well as renovation of four classrooms in the school.

The principal said the school has 40 classrooms, out of which only 10 are in good condition and appealed for renovation of more of the old and dilapidated classrooms.

Responding, Governor Saraki pledged the commitment of the state government to assist the school especially in the provision of science equipment and recruitment of more teachers.

The governor thereafter, proceeded to Barakat Community Secondary School, Ilorin, where the government built two classrooms and renovated four others. The principal of the school, Alhaja Habiba Ayo thanked Governor Saraki for being the first governor to visit the school since it was established 25 years ago. She, however, appealed for rehabilitation of six more classrooms, provision of more teachers, a school bus, completion of the abandoned assembly hall and fencing of the school compound.

Governor Saraki, while re-

sponding, described education as the bedrock of any society and pledged to give the school the necessary support to ensure that quality education is given to the students.

At Government High School, Ilorin, where four classrooms are currently undergoing renovation, the principal of the school, Mr. James Oladimeji told the governor that the school has 36 classrooms out of which 20 were in deplorable condition and appealed for the provision of boarding facilities, school bus and a borehole.

Governor Saraki however, expressed dissatisfaction

with the slow pace of work at the school and urged the contractor to speed up the completion of the project. The visit was rounded-off at Bishop Smith Memorial College, Ilorin, where the principal, Chief Samuel Adefila Ashaolu told him that five classrooms were under renovation and solicited the assistance of the state government towards rehabilitation of 25 more classrooms which are in deplorable condition.

Govt to rehabilitate university labs, workshops

**By Aminu Yusuf Ibrahim
(Intern)**

The federal government has approved the upgrading and equipping of laboratories and workshops in all federal universities in the country.

Minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji who stated this, said the federal executive council (FEC) has already given the approval to undertake the new initiative.

According to the minister, "government took the decision to enable the institutions play their role effectively, as producers of higher level manpower for the nation's development."

This he said, is in line with the present administration efforts to reposition universities to meet with current trends the world over."

Prof. Osuji said he had already directed the National Universities Commission (NUC) to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the needs of all federal universities, the cost of equipping and rehabilitating existing laboratories and engineering workshops which should be submitted to government within two months.

Meanwhile, the NUC and the committee of vice-chancellors have agreed on the modalities for meeting the deadline.

Seven states take part in Maths competition

Primary school pupils drawn from Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba, Adamawa, Katsina and Kaduna states, participated at the Kaduna Turkish International College (NTIC) annual mathematics competition.

Vice principal of the school, Mr Waziri Moses Ashafe disclosed this shortly before the commencement of the exercise, adding that the aim of the competition is to arrest the phobia of mathematics at the foundation level of education.

Mr. Ashafe said the competition would also sensitise, encourage and motivate the interest of students in the study of mathematics, pointing out that this would lead to the improvement of the standard of education in the country.

He disclosed that at the next stage of the competition,

**From Aliyu Haruna
Correspondent (Kaduna)**

three best participants from each of the nine examination centres would be picked for the final selection process.

The vice-principal advised parents to encourage their wards develop interest in the subject and also try to make available all necessary materials that would enhance their comprehension of mathematics.

He urged government to decentralise the National Mathematical Centre in order to enable the centre organise seminars and workshops to assist learners of mathematics update their knowledge of the subject.

Also, Mr Ashafe stressed the need for increment in the areas of supervision, in order to check-mate activities of both private and public schools.



Acting vice-chancellor, Lagos State University, Professor Abisogun Leigh (right), and chairman Post Primary Teaching Service Commission (PPTESCOM), Alhaji Taiwo Ajomagberin during the 1st Lagos State Education Summit held at Excellence Hotel, Ogba, Lagos...recently. Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

LG to launch scholarship trust fund for pupils

The Katsina municipal local government is to launch a scholarship trust fund to assist primary school pupils in the area. The chairman of the council, Alhaji Bala Saulawa, disclosed this during a meeting with stakeholders of the UBE/World Bank assisted primary education in the state.

He said the initiative was aimed at augmenting the state government's efforts toward reviving the sector explaining that the fund would be used to help indi-

gent primary school pupils in the area in their educational pursuit and that a committee would be set up to facilitate the launching.

The team leader of the World Bank/UBE assisted project, Mr Mataimaki Maiyashi, commended the council for the initiative and implored the people of the area to co-operate with the local administration to enable it achieve more results.

Meanwhile, the local council had released N1.4 million for the payment of annual increment and promotion arrears of primary school teachers in the area.

This was disclosed by the supervisory councilor for education and social development of the local government, Alhaji Mohammed Kabir.

He noted in a statement that the gesture was to boost teachers' morale toward improving primary education in the area.

He stated that the council had paid the national common entrance examination fees of 162 candidates from 54 primary schools in the area to fill the council's quota in

FG sets 2005 for gender equality in education

Minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji has said that 2005 is the target year set by the federal government to achieve gender equality in access to education in Nigeria.

Professor Osuji who said this while receiving the World Bank mission on Universal Basic Education (UBE) in his office, promised to work with the World Bank to implement the UBE programme faster.

The minister restated the federal government's commitment to the success of the UBE programme and thanked the World Bank for its assistance in the execution of the project.

He told the visiting World Bank team that the school feeding programme which will cover primary and junior secondary school will soon take-off and requested help from the bank to make the programme a success since it will not only boost enrolment into the UBE, but also ensure good health among school children.

The minister further requested assistance from the

higher education sector through the provision and rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities in institutions of higher learning.

Responding, the leader of the World Bank team who are in the country to supervise World Bank UBE projects in 16 states, Mr. Bregman told the minister that the team was in Nigeria to see progress made in the projects since its last visit in September 2004.

He expressed satisfaction on the progress recorded since the team's last visit and promised that the World Bank was ready to help states move faster in the implementation of the projects by allowing them use credit facilities made for a period of five years in a shorter period provided they achieve set targets at a shorter time.

Mr. Bregman said the World Bank will ensure that states and federal agencies who are faster than the schedule in the implementation of the UBE projects are not starved of funds by providing further credit to them.

He promised that the

minister's request for assistance in tertiary and higher education and agreed with Osuji that there can be no applied science without basic science nor higher education without basic education.

Niger pays tuition fees for indigent students

The Niger state government has paid N56m as tuition fees for indigent students of the state studying at the Federal University of Technology, Minna, following the hike in fees by the school authorities.

Niger state government's gesture is contained in the latest edition of the university's campus magazine "Campus's news". According to the magazine, the sum of N65 million was paid by the government to off-set the tuition fees.

Governor Abdulkadir Kure was said to have decided to assist the needy students to end the stand-off between the authorities of the institution and the students over the increased tuition



Science & Education

FG begins reform of science, technology policy

The federal government in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has commenced the review of the nation's science and technology policy to conform with the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS).

To achieve this objective, the UNESCO and the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology is holding a one-day stakeholders summit at the Le Meridien Hotel, Abuja today.

The reform is targeted towards reinforcing the country's science and technology infrastructure, enhancing its utilisation for the attainment of micro-economic and social objectives of government as elaborated in the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS).

According to a statement from UNESCO, the reform which will focus on nine strategic areas will be implemented in phases, and will involve the design of several projects to be executed in parallel tracks.

The first phase will be on the system-wide review for the reform of science, technology, innovation system and capacity building for senior administration officials and civil servants.

"The proposed review, which fits well into the public reform agenda of the

Daily Trust columnist loses mother

The death has occurred of Mrs. Fidelia Nwaoluoma Obasi, the mother of a *Daily Trust* columnist, Dr. Isaac N. Obasi, on Wednesday, January 19, 2005, at the age of 78. She died after a brief illness in her home town, Ezuhu, Nguru, Abioh-Mbaise local government area of Imo State.

A devout Christian, Mrs. Fidelia Obasi was a kind woman who made immense sacrifice and contribution to her community.

She will be buried on Friday, February 11, 2005, after a church service at St. Charles' Catholic Church, Ezuhu, Nguru.

She is survived by many children, including Mr. Anthony Obasi, Mr. Emmanuel Obasi, Rev. Father Longinus Obasi, Mr. Stephen Obasi, Mrs. Theresa Nwaru and Mr. Philip Obasi of the Voice of Nigeria (VON) headquarters, Lagos.

By Ebenezer John Isuro (Intern)

government, will involve the participation of many stakeholders in various sectors, particularly the universities, polytechnics and research establishment," the statement added.

The reform will lead to the development of a draft of the innovation policy document and the elaboration of a multi-year

plan of action on science, technology and innovation which will be utilised by the government as a framework for investment guidance at the national level and for dialogue with donors.

The federal ministry of science and technology has provided the initial government cash counterpart contribution and it is expected that other stakeholders will also invest in the reform process, UNESCO said.

OAU expels students' union official

O bafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, has expelled the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Students' Union Government (SUG), Mr Peter Olowokandi. According to a statement signed by the Acting Registrar, Mrs Modupe Ojo, and given to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Osogbo on Tuesday, Olowokandi was expelled for his failure to comply with his suspension from the university. Ojo stated that the former PRO, a part III soil science student, was also expelled for his acts of gross misconduct in the presence of the Vice-

Chancellor, Professor Roger Makanjuola.

Olowokandi was accused of leading other students on a violent demonstration during which the vice-chancellor was molested, and which subsequently led to the closure of the institution for more than three months.

As part of efforts to bring lasting peace to the university community, the registrar said 28 other students who actively took part in the protest had been invited to appear before a special investigation panel.

Ojo warned the affected students who included a part VI medical student, Mr Adenekan Olutayo, to appear before the panel immediately in their own interest.

School expels student for assaulting lecturer

A n SS II female student of the College of Commerce, Warri, Delta State, has been expelled for allegedly using thugs to beat up a teacher. The state's Commissioner for Education, Dr Veronica Ogbuagu, said in Asaba on Tuesday that besides the expulsion, the girl would not be re-admitted into any other public school in the state. He said the student, Obiwe Rukevwe, and two of the hoodlums who beat up the teacher were already in police custody at the 'A' Division in Warri, and added that the teacher, Mr Augustine Ejaigbo, who was attacked by the miscreants last week, was severely injured and had been hospitalised.

"I have told the police, the hospital and the school authorities that the parents of the girl must pay the medical bill of the teacher," the commissioner stressed.

She decried the increasing cases of molestation of teachers by students, particularly in Warri, and called on parents to assist the school in moulding the character of

their children. Furthermore, she accused some parents of encouraging their children to be unruly in schools, and said it was unbecoming of thugs to harass teachers for punishing students.

"Government is spending so much money to ensure that the education sector is qualitative and will not tolerate any form of gangsterism in school," the commissioner warned.

Anambra demands exam ethics clubs in schools

P rivate school proprietors in Anambra State risk having their licences withdrawn unless they form examination ethics clubs. This was disclosed by the state's Commissioner for Education, Leonard Muoghalu, while launching the distribution of exam ethics materials donated to the state as "the best exam ethics friendly state in the South-East".

Noting that the state had set up a disciplinary committee on the matter, the commissioner said 27 public schools which had defaulted would be punished through the State Post-primary School Service

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is set to establish a platform for promoting community involvement in the management of schools. Dr Tom Maiyashi, the UBE Programme Coordinator for the North-West zone, announced this during a visit to the Emir of Kazaure, Jigawa, Alhaji Najeeb Husaini.

"The UBE programme is already working to encourage community participation in the sector to enhance access to quality education," he said.

Maiyashi noted with concern what he called the "nonchalant" attitude of the

UBE seeks community role in running schools

society in supporting educational institutions in the region. "Such an attitude had militated against sustainable growth," he said.

Because of that, "a comprehensive grand design is now in the pipeline for radical and practical changes in the system," he stressed, and added that the UBE curriculum would be re-designed to promote

community involvement in education.

In his remarks, the emir asked host communities to support the current moves to resuscitate the education sector.

"Indeed, the public must be mobilised and involved in the articulation and the management of policies meant for sustainable educational development," he said.



Ekiti State governor, Mr. Ayo Fayose in a hand-shake with the pro-chancellor and chairman governing board of the University of Ado-Ekiti, Chief Akin Omoboriowo and the wife of the governor, Mrs. Feyisetan Fayose at a function in Ijero-Ekiti.

Jigawa establishes 10 science secondary schools

The Jigawa State government has set up 10 science secondary schools as part of efforts to enhance science and technology education. According to the Permanent Secretary in state's Ministry of Education, Babangida Hussaini Kazaure, the gesture was part of government's determination to promote

By Hassan A. Karofi, (Correspondent, Dutse)

science education. He added that the state government had approved N1.5 billion towards the success of the state's universal education programme, and had also established 450 secondary and primary schools as part of its community development initiatives.

He told newsmen in Kazaure that the need to boost the sector, and give all citizens in the state access to basic education propelled the government to establish various schools aimed at enhancing quality education. Babangida disclosed that government had constructed 35 classroom blocks in various secondary schools as well as five boarding girls' secondary schools and eight science primary schools in the state in order to facilitate girl child education and the development of science and technology.

The permanent secretary further revealed that 10 senior schools were additionally completed in various communities while arrangements had been

concluded for the establishment of five model international schools in all the five emirates of the state as part of government's determination to spread basic and qualitative education to all its citizens.

Government, he also revealed, had distributed 100 computer sets to 16 secondary schools in the state towards information technology development and stressed that all efforts would be geared towards ensuring the success of the state's millennium goals on education, especially in the areas of science and technology.

Meanwhile, the regional team leader of the UBE north-west zone, Dr. Tom Mataimaki Maiyashi, urged communities in the region to intensify efforts towards participatory approach to educational development.

Responding, the Emir of Kazaure, Dr. Najib Adamu, called on parents to make necessary support to the education industry with a view to making the sector more viable and responsive.

ABUJA TRUST

Onaiyekan reshuffles priests

Priests working in the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja have been reshuffled. A statement from the office of the Archbishop of the diocese, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, stated that Revs. Sebastian Musa, Charles Edeh and G.G. Gomerep are now the priests of Our Lady Queen of Nigeria, Garki parish.

Rev. fathers Patrick Alumuku, Celestine Ejim and Msgr. Dominic Inyang are now the Priests of Holy Rosary parish Wuse, while Rev. Fathers Ojukwu and

Solomon Uko are priests of Holy Trinity parish, Maitama.

Also, Rev. Fabian Essien and James Okpagher are now to man the affairs of the Twelve Apostles parish, and Rev. father Innocent Jooji and Samuel Kure are now the priests of

Church of Assumption, Asokoro.

The statement also indicated some special assignments with Msgr. Inyang as the Vicar-General; Rev. J. Bello as the Archbishop's Chancellor;

Rev. Fr. Alloy Qbi as the Vicar for Religious affairs and Rev. Jooji as Vicar for Justice, Development, Peace Commission.

The major reshuffle which affected over half of about 40 priests in the Archdiocese was described as a welcome development that would enable the priests know more about other parishes.

The Archbishop thanked the priests for their good works at their former parishes and urged them to effect positive changes in their new places of assignment.



The ever busy Kashim Ibrahim Way, the main road to Wuse Old Market cordoned off by members of the Nigerian Police Force to prevent traders and customers entering into the market ...last week
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

Water borne diseases claim 13 lives in Gwagwalada

Alhaji Zakari Angulu, Chairman, Gwagwalada area council of the FCT has confirmed the death of 13 people as a result of water borne diseases in the area.

Angulu told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* in Abuja that the victims, mostly women and children, had taken contaminated water as a result of the acute water scarcity in the FCT.

"We have received report of the death of 13 people from different families and we are doing our best to overcome it," the chairman added.

Meanwhile, A medical practitioner at the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital, Dr Samuel Ajayi, confirmed the successful treatment of 17 people, comprising women and children as a result of water borne diseases. "This case is usually caused by drinking contaminated water," he said,

A relative of one of the victims, who pleaded anonymity, said that "the death of our son was as a result of water scarcity in the area."

"We have no option than to drink and cook with any available water whether it is treated or not, because we don't have any choice," he said.

When contacted, the FCT Water Board and Federal Ministry of Water Resources officials declined to comment on the issue.

The *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* recalls that the FCT has been facing acute water scarcity since the beginning of this year.

Relocation: New Wuse market traders appeal for extension

Wuse Market Traders' Association (WMTA) has appealed to the FCT ministry for three months extension to save its members merchandise and financial standing.

The traders had in compliance with an ultimatum served them, which expired on Jan. 31, started removing wares from their stalls in anticipation of a siege by the mobile policemen to pull down structures at the market.

The traders' action, which began on Monday, was informed by the fear that the fate of traders at the Wuse model market may befall them within this week.

Mr Ferdinand Agu, who is a patron of the traders' association, told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* that the traders' action was informed by the fact that the

FCT development control office had already warned WMTA officials to notify their members to leave the market by Jan. 31.

"They conducted a census of shop owners in December and released a list of 15,000 allocations at the Dei-dei market where we are to be relocated.

"Each allottee is expected to pay N11,000 to collect his papers at the FCT ministry. Our only worry is that the time given to people to evacuate the market is very short," he said.

According to him, the limited time given for the relocation is capable of making the traders to incur loss of merchandise while hastening to comply in order to avoid the fate of their counterparts at the model market.

He regretted that Abuja market shop owners had been

bearing the brunt of recklessness of some FCT ministry officials, who always evacuate them from their business environments without either erecting structures or providing infrastructure at the places they were relocated to.

"For example, the FCT ministry collected money in 2001 from traders and

promised to allocate them stalls at Wuse and Garki markets, which they are yet to do.

"We are appealing to the FCT ministry not to treat us in the same manner in addition to praying that it would without delay, complete the markets and give the owners their allocation letters.

NAN reports that the relocation of the market was informed by the fact that it was sitting on the Abuja Railway corridor.

NAN further reports that commencement of work on the 15-year Abuja railway corridor development was included in the 2005 FCT ministry's budget.

Four High Court judges to speed up armed robbery trials

The Chief Judge of FCT, Justice Lawal Gumel, has said that 138 armed robbers awaiting trial at the Kuje prison are to start appearing in court from next week.

Gumel told the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mr Sunday Ehindero during a courtesy visit that four High Court judges had been designated to try the cases. The judges are Useni Muktar, Anthony Ogakwu, Yusuf

Baba and Ishaq Bello. Gumel said that the courts would revert to their old system of trying cases as soon as the prison was decongested and appealed to the IGP to warn the police against non-compliance with court orders that would contribute to the congestion of prisons.

He noted that the appointment of the IGP came at the right time when the image of the police was at the

lowest ebb and urged him to use his experience to improve on the situation.

The IGP said he was at the High Court to intimate the judge about the repositioning of the police with the aim of allowing the law to guide their actions.

Ehindero said that as a means of decongesting the prisons nationwide the police had been warned not to allow "weak cases to go to court" and to do away with civil cases.

Area council distributes N2m educational materials

The Kwali area council of the FCT has distributed educational materials worth N2 million to students in the area.

The chairman of the council, Alhaji Mohammed Gimba, said this in Kwali while presenting a Peugeot station wagon vehicle to the local education authority in the council.

Gimba said that the gesture of distributing the educational materials to students was to improve learning.

He said that due to the poor economic background of students in the council most lacked textbooks and other educational materials.

"The presentation of the educational materials is to improve the educational level in the council," he said.

The council chairman said the presentation of the vehicle to the local education authority was to assist the authority to provide better service to the students and teachers.

He said that the vehicle would ease the transportation problems being faced by the authority.

Responding, the coordinator of the Local Education Authority, Malam Mohammed Yusuf, thanked the chairman for the gesture and pledged that the vehicle would be put to good use.

House wife Vs Nigerian Breweries: Court fixes March for hearing

An Abuja High Court sitting in Lugbe has fixed March 17, 2005 for hearing in a case filed by a housewife, one Mrs. Peace Ogu, against Nigerian Breweries Plc.

Mrs. Peace Ogu is claiming the sum of N5 million from Nigerian Breweries Plc as compensation for the trauma she and her son went through as a result of negligence on the part of the company.

The presiding judge, Justice A.M. Umar, adjourned the case following application to grant leave by the counsel to Nigerian

By Saidat Tella, (Intern)

Breweries Plc. The plaintiff, Mrs. Peace Ogu, claimed that she bought a bottle of Maltina, a non-alcoholic beverage with bottle No NRN 01-0668 from a retail shop in Jikwoyi, FCT, Abuja, in April 2004 and saw rotten maggots inside while she was drinking from the bottle.

She claimed further that she and her infant son, Joseph Ogu, with whom she was drinking the Maltina, started vomiting until her neighbours took both of them to hospital.

The plaintiff accused the company of negligence in the

process of manufacturing their product and "thereby breached the duty of care owed her and the second plaintiff" as a result of which she said they suffered physical and psychological trauma.

The plaintiff through her solicitor, Ameh Ebute Esq. wrote a letter to the defendant demanding compensation, but according to her, the defendant refused to respond.

According to the statement of claim, the N5 million Mrs. Peace Ogu is demanding was incurred while she and her son were receiving medical attention.

KANO TRUST

Kunchi LG spends N1.2m on school rehabilitation

The sum of N1.2 million has been spent by Kunchi local government area for the rehabilitation of government Junior Girls Secondary School in the area.

The council chairman, Alhaji Danlami Zakari disclosed this while inspecting

KNSG pledges to assist TCB

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, (Correspondent, Kano)

Kano State government has pledged to assist Tropical Commercial Bank Plc (TCB) to meet-up with the 25 billion-naira capitalisation set by the Central Bank Of Nigeria (CBN).

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau disclosed this to the bank's management in his office when they visited him at Government House.

Shekarau explained that despite all the hardship being experienced by the banking industry TCB continues to survive and grow.

Meanwhile, a statement from the tropical commercial bank, signed by the bank's head of cooperate affairs, Alhaji Abba Ado Dan-Dago said Tropical Commercial Bank and AfriBank Plc are currently engaged in a high level discussion on the possibility of merger between them meet up with the challenges of recapitalisation.

The proposed merger talk according to the statement also involves other banks that are in the same synergy and pedigree with TCB across the nation.

The statement added that series of deliberations are being held at various levels preparatory to signing a memorandum of understanding between AfriBank and TCB.

The bank's post merger plan the statement further said is to consolidate their various strongholds to making them a viable financial institution capable of providing standard customer service, deploying advanced and up-to-date technology available in the banking industry.

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru (Correspondent Kano)

the project, adding however that furniture and education facilities will be distributed to the school.

He said the council resolved to undertake the project as part of its activities for the development of education, saying any responsible political office holder will not hesitate to promote education.

Alhaji Zakari vowed to unveil additional plans for the general overhaul of education, saying no nation could attain rapid socio-economic development when its education sector is engulfed by predicaments.

He maintained that all the attentions accorded to education in the area were not unconnected with the council's zeal and readiness to produce experienced and talented students who could make meaningful contribution to the nation.

The council boss solicited the support and coop-

Housing authority sells houses at N2.5m each

The 30 blocks of houses built by the Kano State Housing Corporation in Kumbotso local government area of Kano State is to be sold at the cost of N2.5 million naira each.

The managing director, Kano State Housing Corporation, Alhaji Hassan Sani Na'Abba said this during an inspection tour of the estate.

Alhaji Hassan Na'Abba said the houses, which were built by the present administration at the Zawachiki Housing estate each cost 2.5 million naira and will be repaid by beneficiaries in a period of two years.

Hassan Na'Abba also said that the houses, which were an improvement on ones built by previous administrations, were built with taste for civil servants on owner-occupier-basis.

Na'Abba however expressed dismay at the lack of basic infrastructure within the area, which he said is a major setback towards the progression of the area in terms of development. He then called on the present administration to extend its



Kano State governor, Ibrahim Shekarau, congratulating Yahaya Farouk Chedi, commander of Hisbah after taking oath of office...recently.

Confab c'ttee responsible for our agenda – Shekarau

Kano's 39-member committee on National Conference has been described as responsible for shaping and formulating the true position of the entire citizens of Kano State.

Speaking while inaugurating the committee at Government House, Governor

Ibrahim Shekarau tasked the committee to not only gather views based on their personal experience and exposure but through the collection of views and positions of the people of Kano State.

According to him, the committee members were carefully selected considering the homogeneous nature as well as having eminent personalities across the state, which was done considering the various categories of people in the state.

The committee according to him is also expected to make any other appropriate recommendation that will facilitate this reform for the betterment of our democracy and for the benefit of our citizens.

zens.

He therefore tasked them to carry along the needs, expectations, and aspirations of the people of Kano State.

He then called on the entire committee to work hand in hand so as to fully equip the six people who would represent the station at the national level.

Governor Shekarau however gave the committee an ultimatum of three weeks to submit their report to the government so that the six members representing the state would have access to the relevant views, opinions and position of the people of Kano.

Earlier, the chairman of the six-man committee, Alhaji

Magaji Danbatta thanked the governor and people of Kano State for giving them the trust to represent them, saying the selection of members from different categories of people is most welcome and appropriate.

He therefore pledged to take their responsibilities with seriousness, commitment and patriotism.

He also promised to consult widely all shades of opinion in Kano in order to obtain the views and opinions of the people so as to present and defend the interest of the people of Kano and by extension the entire northerners.

The committee further vowed to work accordingly so as to bring peace & harmony in the country, as well as changing the Nigerian environment were justice and equity shall reign supreme.

The committee scheduled next week Tuesday for public hearing at the Sani Abacha Stadium, urging people to participate.

Dala LG employs 140 teachers, constructs 36 class rooms

Dala local government council has employed 140 teachers and constructed about 36 blocks of classrooms across the local government in order to complement the state governments efforts in boosting and uplifting education sector in the state.

The chairman of the council, Alhaji Mahmoud Sani Madakin-Gini, revealed that his council has made this effort in order to complement the efforts of Shekarau's administration in providing enabling and conducive atmosphere for both learning and teaching in schools.

The chairman of the council, Alhaji Mahmoud Sani Madakin-Gini, revealed that his council has employed 140 teachers who will teach in various primary schools within Dala local government council and has also provided about

1,200 chairs for both primary and junior secondary schools in the area.

Madakin-Gini also said that the council has donated one million naira for the construction of additional classrooms at Gwammaja Special Primary School and also provided 20 motorcycles to the Local Education Authority (LEA) staff as loans in which only half of the money will be repaid in two years.

In another development the council education secretary, Alhaji Muhammad Ismail Ayagi, said the council has awarded scholarship to indigenes of the area studying in tertiary institutions.

Alhaji Muhammad Ismail further said that the council has already paid about 1.5 million naira for the qualifying examination of students

that failed their previous W.A.E.C. and N.E.C.O examinations.

He also said the council donated about 1.5 million naira worth of working materials to primary schools.

KNSG pledges support for NGOs

Kano State government has pledged to support any NGO that comes-up with meaningful project aimed at developing the state.

The special adviser to the state governor on Non-Governmental Organisations, Alhaji Sule Ya'u, disclosed this while delivering his speech at a Sallah get-together organised by his office.

He said part of his office's responsibilities is to assist NGOs through adequate support and encouragement so as to benefit from government

By Aliyu Saleh Michika, (Correspondent, Kano)

plans.

Alhaji Ya'u said the meeting was an opportunity between his office and various organisations in understanding themselves more as well as strengthening their already existing relationship.

He further called on all the NGO's in the state to support the ideas and policies of the state government in order for the government to implement projects that would bring development to the state.

EKO TRUST

1004 Estate: Residents would no longer vacate premises

By Olumide Bajulaiye
(Correspondent Lagos)

The chairman of the central working committee of all federal government housing estates in Lagos, Mr. Paul Angya has said that no resident of the 1004 estate on

Victoria Island would vacate his or her apartment for the new buyers.

Angya in an interview with newsmen said that the

consortium of firms, which recently bought the estate from the federal government at a whopping N7 billion, would not be allowed to gain entry into the place.

He said that the federal

government with the sale of the estate would render over 300,000 people homeless because no proper arrangement had been perfected for their relocation into an alternative area.

He said, "Throwing out residents of the 1004 estate is like creating human Tsunami in Nigeria. We would resist any attempt by government to throw us away when we do not have any alternative place to go to."

Angya argued that the estate, just like any other federal government estates in Lagos was undervalued alleging that the process of sale is a grand conspiracy between the buyers and sellers to rob Nigerians.

"The 1004 estate was undervalued; it should be sold for N100 billion. Selling it for a paltry N7 billion is a grand theft which the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission should investigate," he added.

He therefore advised the consortium of buyers and the federal government to look for a virgin land and utilise the money to build new estates instead of relying on taking possession of the 1004 estate this month.

It would be recalled that necessary transactions concerning the sale of the estate was perfected by officials of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the

consortium of buyers last month with the latter insisting on taking over vacant apartments this month.

The chairman of the residents' association of the estate, Mr. Abdul Kohol had last week, urged the federal government to respect the rule of law in dealing with the residents because they have instituted a case before the Appeal Court while several petitions were being examined by the various agencies of government and the National Assembly on the matter.

He said the residents would defend their rights if government decided to apply force to eject them from their various apartments.

LASG raises alarm over Bar Beach

The Lagos State government has raised a fresh alarm that the Victoria Island Bar Beach might overrun its banks again this year if the federal government failed to act fast on its planned permanent development of the area into a beautiful tourist site.

The commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Mr. Hakeem Gbajabiamila and the managing director of the state's Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation, Mr. Adesegun Oniru, expressed the fear in an interview with our correspondent.

The commissioner said the soil used in sand filling the beach about four years ago was now being gradually eroded because there was no step taken to replenish it.

He said the state government had been raising similar alarm before all the committees either set up by the National Assembly or federal government and that urgent attention was needed to address all problems associated with the Bar Beach once and for all.

According to him, the state government constituted a stakeholders' forum on the issue about two years ago and that its recommendation, which favoured a permanent solution to the problem, had been forwarded to the federal government for consideration.

He said, "We have submitted a proposal to Mr. President on this issue. We believed that it was being considered and we are expecting a feedback on it. In the meantime, the soil keeps on eroding and the sooner an action is taken, the better for everybody."

Gbajabiamila said the committee set up by the federal government, which included officials of the Federal Ministry of Works, Lagos State government and other stakeholders also recommended a permanent solution to the Bar Beach problems.

He however regretted that the federal government has said nothing concrete on it since the proposal was submitted, adding that the development was giving foreign investors who had signified interest on the project, serious concern.

In his own comment, Oniru whose agency was responsible for the management of all waterfronts in Lagos State said that the

report of the federal government committee on the development of the beaches set up last year was unfortunate.

He said the state government had secured private foreign developers/investors who are willing to develop the beaches into an international tourist paradise once the federal government gave its nod.

Oniru said there could be tremendous danger if the beach was left undeveloped by government early this year especially with the rate at which erosion was taking place at the area.

Efforts to get the position of the federal government on the issue was not successful as at press time because the permanent secretary of the Federal Ministry of Works, Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, who is also the chairman of the technical committee on the Bar Beach could not be reached on phone.

Meanwhile investigations by our correspondent at the Federal Ministry of Works revealed that the technical committee might have short listed three companies out of the eight that applied for the permanent development of the beach.

A source at the ministry gave their names as; BPS Engineering and Construction Company, Dredging International & Nigerian Westminster Consortium and Energyx construction firm.

It was learnt that the companies were rated to have met both the technical and financial requirement to execute the works.

When contacted, the managing director of BPS Engineering, one of the firms believed to have been short listed for the project, Mr.

Charles Chudi Chukwudi, said the ministry has not officially notified him but expressed the readiness of his firm to handle the project.

Gbajabiamila dismissed the report and argued that the federal government was favourably disposed to giving the project to firms being promoted by the state government when it presented the proposal last year.



Some graduands of the Lagos State Polytechnic, at the 15th convocation ceremony of the school in Lagos...recently. Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Gov. orders arrest of 'philanthropist'

A philanthropist and founder of Ogunet, Otunba Dipo Dina, was on Monday arrested and detained by the local government chairman of Ipokia local government on the orders of Governor Gbenga Daniel for distributing

educational materials to students of the council area.

It was learnt that the coordinator of the Ogunet, a non-governmental organisation was also accused of child trafficking by the Ogun State government.

Investigations revealed

that the state deputy governor, Alhaja Salimot Badru, who is from the council area was in the area to order all principals of secondary schools and head teachers of public primary schools not to allow the donor give out any materials to their students and also ordered the council chairman to arrest him whenever he comes around to distribute such.

Relaying his experiences in the hands of the SSS and the police on Monday, Otunba Dina said as soon as he entered Ipokia town in the council area he was accosted by men of the SSS and the police on the orders of the chairman that he was in the town to cause disharmony among the people.

Dina who denied ever indulging in child trafficking said he was later tricked to the chairman's office who now ordered his detention, but was later released after two hours in the custody of the chairman.

allegation that he was using the NGO to engage in child trafficking, Otunba Dina said the allegation was the most impious thing to say of him, adding that ever since he had been giving students assistance, no parent has raised alarm that his child was missing.

"The whole story was all a blatant lie. I have never engaged in child trafficking. And no parent or head teacher of any school has raised alarm that his child or pupil was missing. It was another ploy from my detractors who do not want our children to enjoy the good quality of education which our fore-fathers like Obafemi Awolowo bequeathed to us."

The chairman of Ipokia local government had accused him of using the organisation to indulge in child trafficking, which led to his detaining Otunba Dina for over two hours, but for the good effort of the police who

...seeks fund for environmental protection

Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) is seeking non-governmental funding for environmental protection, even as it has blamed the decaying environment on the non-chalant attitude of industries engaging in indiscriminate disposal of affluence.

The agency canvassed an arrangement in which the funds expended for upgrading the environment are borne by stakeholders, including industries and non-governmental organisations.

In an exclusive interview

Alausa on Tuesday, the general manager of LASEPA, Mr. Adebisi Adesina, said the federal and state ministries of environment are supposed to be policy-formulating organs and should not be involved in enforcement.

According to him, it is the duty of parastatals and agencies under them to act as enforcement units, as is the case of Lagos State.

Adesina was quick to mention that the Federal Ministry of Environment has no enforcement unit therefore has no right whatsoever to monitor industries in the state

organ of the government.

The LASEPA boss said in developed countries, stakeholders like, Exxon Mobil, Procter and Gamble and other such blue chip industries supported environment protection.

He indicted industries in the state for not complying with environmental laws of the country.

He said, "Most of these industries operating in Lagos are not complying with environmental laws of the land, if we are to act we are supposed to close down all manufacturing companies in



To you,
an inseparable
part of our world...

It's all about you.





Global Bank Plc

Offer for Subscription
of

3,317,500,000

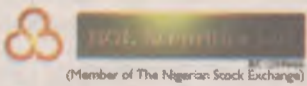
Ordinary Shares of 50k at N1.50k per share

PAYABLE IN FULL ON APPLICATION

CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE

	N'000				
	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Gross Earnings	4,045,251	3,201,572	2,913,115	2,191,728	846,217
Profit Before Tax	948,958	613,282	752,035	502,369	44,458
Dividend Paid	243,231	202,692	153,500	125,000	25,000
Dividend Per Share (k)	20	20	25	25	5
Cumulative Dividend on 100,000 shares	95,000	75,000	55,000	30,000	5,000
Value (Units) of 100,000 shares bought in year 2000	195	180	150	120	-

ISSUING HOUSES:



Offer opens: January 25, 2005

Offer closes: February 22, 2005



Global Bank Plc

-your caring bank with global connections

www.globalbankplc.com

Application forms are available at all banks, stockbrokers and all branches of Global Bank Plc nationwide.

News

Minister advocates end to human trafficking

The Minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr. Hassan Muhammad Lawal, has called on well-meaning Nigerians to rise up to the challenge of putting an end to human trafficking in the west African sub-region. Speaking at the opening ceremony of a workshop on data collection on human trafficking, Dr. Lawal, said that young and able-bodied Nigerians were being lured and manipulated into situations of exploitative labour within and outside the shores of Nigeria.

The minister who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr. Timiebi A. Karipamo-Agari, said that the exploitative labour goes on even in the formal sector of the nation's

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma,
Labour Reporter

economy where workers are retained on casual basis.

He said that the federal government recognised the magnitude of the problem of human trafficking and has taken drastic measures to address the menace.

According to him, the job creation and economic empowerment programmes of the present administration under the National Economic Empowerment Strategy (NEEDS) are geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Earlier in his remarks, the director of International Labour Organisation (ILO), Mr. Cornelius Dzakpasu, said that the baseline study is to research on the factors that

facilitate trafficking in persons and to provide data for adequate information management on human trafficking.

Shekarau canvasses review of ICPC status

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano State has advised the federal government to examine the obstacles affecting the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and other related offences commission to enable it effectively execute its mandate.

Speaking with newsmen in Abuja on Tuesday, Governor

By Austine Odo,
Senior Labour Reporter

Shekarau who expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the commission since its five years of existence said it is either the commission is being underfunded or hindered by certain legislation, which necessitates a review.

"This is a challenge to all of us, so the government that set up the commission should look into its complaints and let it live up to the expectation of Nigerians," he said.

The governor's reaction is similar to those of many Nigerians who believed that the ICPC is a near waste-pipe established to function as an agent of government's practical effort against corruption, the commission appears to be having serious difficulties which have rendered it almost impotent. This is in contrast to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which has been up against economic criminals of all grades in recent times.

A major factor affecting the ICPC is the legal frame work on which to prosecute offenders as some accused persons have argued that the commission lacks such powers.

For instances, a Federal High Court on January 25, 2005 ruled that the ICPC has powers to prosecute the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, Justice Effiong Idiong over alleged corruption.

The people objected to the ICPC's powers by filing an objection to a suit filed by the ICPC seeking to stop the ICPC from prosecuting him.

It would be recalled that the ICPC last year questioned the judge and others who were members of the Akwa Ibom State election tribunal over allegations on a bribe of N10 million

As the Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Shehu Idris, celebrates 30 years on the throne, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar said the monarch's reign had brought unity, prosperity and peace to the emirate.

In a letter to the emir, the vice president said: "Your reign in the ancient city of

Atiku congratulates Emir of Zazzau on 30 years reign

Zazzau in the past 30 years has no doubt brought unity, prosperity and peace to the emirate. It is a testimony to your deft blending of tradition and modernity that the emirate has witnessed rapid

From Reuben Yunana,
Correspondent (Zaria)

development and prosperity without losing its traditional values."

"As you celebrate the success of your 30 years on the ancient and historic throne of the great people of Zazzau emirate, in Kaduna State, join millions of other Nigerians in congratulating you and the emirate council on a successful reign.

Residents task govt on flood

Residents of the western part of Damaturu in Yobe have called on the state government to take measures to protect them from flood. The Councillor for NayiNama ward, Alhaji Mohammed Danbinta, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Damaturu that several houses were destroyed and accessibility hindered during the rains.

According to him, this has jeopardised socio-economic activities in the area.

"About 50 houses were destroyed last year and we are afraid that we will face the same or worse impact this year," Danbinta said.

Danbinta said residents of the area were also scared about water-borne diseases.

Another resident of the area, Ali Modu, said that the people had no option than to provide make-shift access into the area.

According to some women in the area, their business of frying bean cakes, yams and meat is negatively affected during the rainy season.

The women appealed for quick intervention of government to forestall further flooding.

During a visit to the area, Governor Bukar Ibrahim promised to provide a major road and drainage in the area before the rainy season sets in. He said about N200 million would be spent to ensure that the annual flood that affected Damaturu metropolis was brought under control.



Governor Ali Modu Shariff, associated by the state's commissioner, ministry for poverty alleviation and youth empowerment, declaring the commencement for distribution of poverty alleviation items to the people in Borno...recently

NDDC: Masari decries shabby treatment of Reps by Senators

The House of Representatives yesterday expressed bitterness over the unsatisfactory manner in which the Upper House treated their members at a meeting between the two parties over the confirmation of the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) commissioners.

The Speaker of the House, Honourable Aminu Bello Masari, subsequently referred the matter to the joint committee on judiciary and justice to critically examine the matter and report back to the House latest tomorrow.

Briefing the house at its plenary session yesterday, the Chairman, House Committee on NDDC, Honourable Olaka Nwogu, said that following the honourable speaker's nomination of five members of the house of which he was among those to partake in the NDDC screening, "the senate outrightly refused our participation."

He said that the senate gave them the condition of observing the proceedings of the screening exercise, while denying them active participation, a situation which he said did not go down well with them. "What they have done is wrong, the law is clear on the fact that we (house) should be consulted, but their acting to the contrary will definitely affect the smooth relationship between the two legislative arms."

However, the President of the Senate, Honourable Adolphus Wabara in a communication to the Honourable Speaker, Honourable Masari, justified the situation in a let-

From Zainab Alimi,
Political Reporter

ter dated February 8 2005, saying that the Senate believes that allowing the house members participate alongside members of the Senate will amount to joint-screening by the house and the senate, which is not the intent of section 2 (2) (a) of the NDDC Act.

Honourable Wabara, who posited that section 2 (2) (a) of the NDDC Act ought not to be interpreted to mean joint-screening by the two houses, else the Act would be contravening section 1 (3) of the 1999 Constitution.

Section 2 (a) of the NDDC Act states in part, that "the chairman and other members of the board shall be appointed by the president, subject to the confirmation of the senate, in consultation with the House of Representatives..." while section 1 (3)

of the constitution states that, "if any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution, this constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void."

Honourable Wabara said in the letter that the senate has arranged consultations with the Rep. members in accordance with the allowance granted by the law, adding that the opportunity availed the nominees of the House of Reps on the issue was rejected by the nominees themselves.

The letter reads in part: "The senate believes that allowing the house members to participate alongside members of the senate will amount to joint screening by the house and the senate, which is not the intent of the NDDC Act, section 2, subsection 2 (a)."

NRC pensioners want provisions for pension arrears in budget

Pensioners of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) have appealed to the federal government to make provisions for the payment of their pension arrears in this year's budget. They made the appeal in a statement by the President of the Pensioners' Welfare Association, Alhaji Raimi Balogun, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Lagos.

The pensioners said it was regrettable that for six consecutive years, beginning from 2000, no provision had

been made for them in the budget, they spoke of the need for provisions to be made for the regular payment of their monthly pensions and also urged the National Assembly to make all necessary adjustments to the budget before its passage into law.

The pensioners, who belonged to the 'Pre-June 1996 Pensioners Group' are currently being owed 24 months' pension arrears.

In another statement, the pensioners urged Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State, to save their secretariat from

collapse due to the presence of a pool of stagnant water around it, caused by blocked drains.

They said the blockage of the drains, caused by the erection of illegal kiosks and other structures, and the resulting collection of water around the secretariat, had begun to weaken its foundation.

The pensioners urged Governor Tinubu to order the state's task-force on the environment to demolish all illegal structures around the secretariat without delay to prevent the building from collapsing.

Hospital to operate on 200 noma patients

The Noma Children's Hospital, Sokoto, has screened and registered more than 200 people suffering from various diseases that need to be operated.

The hospital's Chief Medical Director, Dr Hartwig Sauter, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Sokoto yesterday that the patients come from all parts of the country and even neighbouring countries.

He explained that the patients would be operated upon by a team of plastic surgeons from the AWD Foundation in Germany.

"The team will be the 29th from the foundation, which operated on patients at the hospital and they have already arrived in Sokoto," the CMD, also a German, said.

He noted that most of the Noma patients also called cancrum crisis, have full blown Noma condition, cleft lips and other related ailments.

He added that the surgeons would work together with their Nigerian counterparts "and in the process, the local doctors will receive direct training and re-training".

Sauter attributed the disease to malnutrition, filth and unhygienic factors.

News



From left are, Hajiya Bintu Musa, Minister of State for Education, Col. Bala Mande, Minister of Environment and the Minister of State Transport, Engr. Mohammed Musa during the FEC meeting held at the State House, Abuja ... yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye

Minister calls for collaboration in drug war

No country can succeed in the war against hard drug production, consumption and trafficking without collaborating with other countries and their counter-narcotic agencies, the Attorney-General and minister of justice, Chief Akinlotu Olujinmi (SAN), has said.

Addressing the meeting of heads and representatives of drug enforcement bodies drawn from Europe, Africa and the Middle East under the auspices of the International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC), working group in Abuja yesterday, Chief Olujinmi said Nigeria needs to collaborate with other nations to be able to effectively combat the menace of drug in the country.

He pointed out that drug traffickers are highly resourceful and are forever improving on their modus operandi, adding that, "it is only when we stand together, philosophically, operationally and otherwise that we can win the drug war in the country and in the world at large." He also stressed the need for nations affected by the narcotics trade and consumption to dialogue, brainstorm, analyse and find better ways to counter the activities of the evil merchants.

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

"Without dynamic and progressive improvement in policies, programmes and counter-active measures, we will only barely scratch their backs," he noted. He reiterated government's determination to put behind drug menace in the country and commended the efforts of the NDLEA to in rid the country of drug related problems.

Earlier in his welcome address, the chairman and chief executive of the NDLEA, Alhaji Bello Lafiagi had said the drug problem demands a well coordinated transnational and international strategies that will give size, might and bite to global counter measures.

Describing drug problem

as a hydra-headed monster which takes hold of every sector of the society it finds its feet, Alh. Lafiagi noted that it is that view that Nigeria will do everything possible to combat this menace. "We do not produce hard drugs and we do not consume, but as 'a transit route,'" he stated and declared NDLEA's readiness to contribute meaningfully to the global war against the drug scourge.

The United States ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. John Cambell, who also spoke at the occasion said the fight against drug the scourge cannot be won overnight and as such need collaboration of countries in orders, to make headway in the fight against drug scourge.

Jigawa sets up TV station, appoints co-ordinator

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

The Jigawa State government has announced the establishment of a state television station with a view to the state with available medium of information dissemination, even as veteran broadcaster, Alhaji Ishaq Hadejia, has been announced as the substantive co-ordinator.

According to a letter signed by the secretary to the

state government, Alhaji Lawal Ya'u Roni, the appointment of the co-ordinator was in view of his wealth of experience in the broadcasting profession. The appointment takes immediate effect.

According to information from the state Broadbank Network Company, the hub has the capacity to transmit both radio and television programmes immediately arrangements are completed for the proper take-off of the station.

In a brief made available to our reporter, the newly announced co-ordinator was before his appointment, the state's director of information. A London-trained journalist, the co-ordinator has held several positions in both the former Kano state and in Jigawa state. He is married and has many children.

Already, many organisations including the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), National Industrial and Professional Unions and a host of others, have written to congratulate the co-ordinator

Turaki signs vigilante Bill into law

Determined to ensure the protection of its citizen through the provision of adequate manpower in the enhancement of public policing, the Jigawa State governor, Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, has signed a law empowering the state vigilante group to complement the police in the prevention, detection, apprehension and preservation of laws and orders in the state.

Daily Trust reports that the law, known as the Jigawa State Vigilante Group Law 02 of 2005, will among other things, help other security and para-military agencies in the state in the discharge of their constitutional duties of protecting of lives and properties.

According to governor Turaki while signing the law, the law will also allow the group to secure some government installations in order to prevent vandalism as well as to maintain law and order in any political and social gathering.

The law, he added, will apart from the raised general duties, be headed by a controller who will also be deputised by a deputy and assistant controller at the state and zonal level.

According to the law made available to Daily Trust,

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

a committee shall also be established to be known as the state vigilante advisory committee which will comprise of permanent secretary from the ministry of special services, representatives of the traditional institution, directorate of public prosecution, the Nigeria

Police, House committee on security and an assisted director from the state ministry of justice.

It also provided for the establishment of similar committees at the local government level as well as an established funding that would be deducted from the joint account and donations from groups, organisations and other interested individuals.

Thugs disrupt elections in Ilorin

From AbdulRazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

Hell was let loose in Ilorin when thugs invaded the election venue of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Ilorin south local government chapter, wielding dangerous weapons including guns.

Daily Trust learnt that during the fracas at the multi-purpose hall, Fate Road, Ilorin, on Tuesday, two people were seriously injured and are now hospitalized.

Ibrahim Noah Sarat, a staff of the United LGEA primary school, Ilorin, who is also the incumbent, was reported to have been keenly challenged by another contender, Ibrahim AbdulKadir Aremu at the elections before it was disrupted by the thugs.

Eye witnesses claimed that the thugs had a field-day breaking chairs, glass doors

and windows of the multi-purpose hall while the police on duty looked helpless.

Officials of the union could not be reached but the incident led to the indefinite suspension of the election.



Gov Saraki



NAMIS

NIGERIA AGRI MARKET INFORMATION SERVICE

RETAIL PRICES OF AGRI-INPUTS & PRODUCE

RETAIL PRICES OF AGRI-INPUTS AND PRODUCE (N/Unit) - 15th January 2005

(A) INPUTS:	Kano	Bauchi	Oyo	FCT	Adamawa	C/Rivers	Abia	Niger	Imo	Katsina
SEEDS (Kg)										
Maize (Hybrid)	145	155	130	150	130	140	138	140	150	140
Sorghum	75	90	70	75	78		100	95		60
Groundnut	95	99	140	120	130	130	140	105	135	60
Rice	95	174	60	160	85	105	115	100	130	100
FERTILIZERS (50Kg Bag)										
NPK 15-15-15	2450	2400	2400	2100	2310	2450	2400	2200	2850	3000
NPK 20-10-10	2220	2405	2400	2350	2300	2500	2500	2133	2650	2500
UREA	2350	2510	2333	2400	2205	2550	2500	2067	2800	3000
(B) COMMODITIES (Kg)										
Maize	43	43	32	45	45	50		35	55	30
Sorghum	40	50	39	55	45	80	79	37		30
Groundnut (shelled)	68	60	84	80	80	80	125	62	62	70
Rice Local (milled)	95	115	83	140	105	100	130	58	50	70
Yam	65	75	25	70	75	65	70	57	77	60
Cassava	38	25	39	40	38	25	20	55	30	80
Pepper (Dry)	90	100	80	110	90	90	90	142	52	100
Onion	40	43	57	75	60	65	75	46.5	42	50

INTERNATIONAL FERTILIZER PRICES - AS AT 25th November 2004 (FOB)

Fertilizer Type	Source	Price US\$/mt	Fertilizer Type	Source	Price US\$/mt
DAP - Bulk	Morocco	262-266	NPK - 16-16-16 (Bulk)	NW Europe	230-235
"	Tunisia	257-258	Ammonium Sulphate	Black Sea	97-100
Urea - Prilled (Bulk)	Baltic	175-178	MOP - Bulk	NW Europe	135-165
"	Arabian Gulf	220-225	"	Israel	145-165
Urea - Granular (Bulk)	Arabian Gulf	220-225	"	Jordan	145-165
Urea - Prilled (Bagged)	Middle East (Arab)	230-235	"	Brazil	196-210

A joint publication of PCU - NSPFS & IFDC

For further information please contact: NAMIS Office - 24B Suez Crescent, Wuse Zone 4, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 234-9-5235685 Email: namis@pcu.gov.ng

Commissioner wants more women at Confab

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Stringer (Awka)

The Anambra State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs. Nanye Nwangwu, has called for increased number of women delegates to the forthcoming national dialogue.

Mrs. Nwangwu said it when she was briefing newsmen in her office at Government House, Awka, yesterday.

According to the commissioner, this could be

of more women as delegates to the national assignment by the federal and state governments.

She expressed dismay at the number of women appointed as delegates by various state governments that had released the names of their nominees to the national dialogue, arguing that the representation was unfair to the Nigerian

News

FG signs N475 million Lagos outer ring road contract

The federal government recently signed a N1.3 billion contract for the second Lagos outer ring road project and the rehabilitation of roads in Niger and Adamawa states.

The Minister of Works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe who signed the contract on behalf of the federal government, said the second Lagos outer ring road which is to serve as a by-pass from the Lagos sea ports crossing Lagos-Badagry express way and by-passing Lagos and linking up with Lagos-Abeokuta and Lagos-Ibadan express way has a total length of 65km.

Senator Ogunlewe said the road was proposed with the intention of alleviating traffic situation in Lagos which is rapidly becoming a mega city, hence the need to create more adequate outlets for vehicles at Lagos, particularly heavy truck emanating from both Apapa and Tin Can Island Port.

The minister said that the

Senator introduces PAP in constituency

From Edet Etabem
(Stringer Uyo)

Senator representing Uyo senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State in the National Assembly, Barrister Effiong Bob, has reiterated his resolve to improve the lives of people of the district through poverty alleviation programmes.

Senator Bob, who made the remarks through his spokesman, Mr. Victor Ukpogon, said youths in the nine local government areas making the district are currently receiving training on skills acquisition scheme like sewing, fashion and design, computer training, refrigeration, auto mechanics and furniture making.

He said the training programme which is in conjunction with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) will assist youths and women to be self employed in order to be useful to themselves and the larger society.

He disclosed that 91 persons in the constituency have benefited in various ways under the poverty alleviation scheme of the law maker, hoping that soon, a micro-credit scheme would be introduced to empower youths and some in the area as potential employers of labour.

He disclosed that the 18 beneficiaries were drawn from Nsit Ubuim local government area of the state, 10 from Ugo, 9 from Nsit, Ibesikpo Asutan had 10, Ibiwon Iboim 9 while 8 were drawn from Itu and Nsit Iboim

By Nasir Imam
(Property & Environment Editor)

second Lagos outer ring road contract has been awarded to Yolas Consultant at the sum of N475 million with May 27 2005 as the expected date of completion.

The contract for the limited rehabilitation of the 83km Pandogari-Alawa-Bosso-Gomma-Erono-Kogo road in Niger State was also signed with Goldlight International Nig Ltd at the cost of N82.7 million with April 25 as the expected date of completion.

The scope of work on this road, the minister said, includes site clearance, surface dressing, reconstruction of surface dressed shoulders, culverts and drainage desilting and clearing of channels, provision of laterite sub-base and base course, and the rehabilitation of bridge construction.

Similarly, contract for the limited rehabilitation of Numan-Guyuk-Biv road in Adamawa State to Messr Hammoud & Saidi International (Nig) was also awarded Ltd at the cost of N770.5 million and is expected to be completed by November 25, 2005.

The Minister of Agriculture, Malam Adamu Bello, the Adamawa State Governor, Boni Haruna, and Senator Jonathan Zwingina who were at the contract signing ceremony, all spoke on how the rehabilitation of the road would impact positively on the lives of the agricultural communities in the area.

Speaking on the second Lagos outer ring road, Sen. Musliu Obanikoro, said that the ring road comprises a total length of 65 kilometres.

Benue assembly passes 2005 budget

The Benue State House of Assembly recently passed the 2005 Appropriation Bill with a slight increase on the original N44 billion presented for passage, taking it to the tune of N47,416,637,690.

The Speaker of the House, Mr. Mzenda Iho, said with the slight increase, the budget has moved from N5 billion to N6.2 billion.

Ruling, the House therefore called on the state executive council to diligently implement it with utmost regard to the provisions or face sanctions.

Mr. Iho warned that the House would not tolerate any delay in the implementation of the budget and advised members of the



Member House of Representative, Hon. Lawal Garba with (white cap) commissioning some bowhole at Daguradege, Kwagade local government, Katsina state during the Hon. Lawal constituency tour of the state...recently.

Six dead, 15 injured in Jigawa farmers/Fulani clash

Six people were reportedly killed in a vicious farmer/Fulani clash over the weekend in the village of Zangon Kanya in Ringim local government area of Jigawa State, according to Daily Trust investigations in the area.

Daily Trust quoted the state's Deputy Commissioner of Police, Haz Iwendi, as saying that only four people were killed as over 300 mobile and conventional policemen were drafted to the area to keep law and order and ensure the protection of people's lives and property.

Sources at the local government headquarters told our reporter that the incident happened after an earlier lo-

From Hassan A. Karofi
correspondent Dutse

cal dispute which led to the death of a Fulani man following wide spread rumours that the Fulanis were planning a massive attack on the community's farmlands.

According to an eye witness who claimed anonymity, the trouble began immediately after the killing of a Fulani man on Friday, February 4, 2005 which triggered planned reprisal, leading to the escalation of violence few days after the body of another farmer was found mutilated.

Daily Trust also learnt that series of letters were written by security agencies and the State Security Services department on the possibility of the escalation, yet no adequate measures were taken until the violence got out of hand.

According to politicians in the area who talked to our reporter on condition of anonymity, they accused the security agencies of paying dead ears to the earlier warn-

ings, calling for change of attitude to security reports to prevent further break down of law and order.

Furthermore, the police boss also revealed that reports had indicated that the long animosity between the farmers and Fulani communities have been leading to loss

of lives and property and becoming a serious security threat to the state.

He said the reported killing of the resident Fulani and 5 cows by a group of farmers, fearing attack from the cattle rearing Fulani on the 4th of this month triggered the violence.

Masari counsels stakeholders over passage of freight forwarding bill

By Zainab Alimi,
Political Reporter

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, has called on all stakeholders in the marine transport sector to give collaborative hand to the House Committee on Marine Transport to ensure the easy passage of its bill for an act to regulate freight forwarding in Nigeria into law.

Hon. Masari made the call while declaring open a public hearing organised by the committee, expressing a deep feeling of fulfilment over the progress of the bill.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the committee, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, stressed the importance of the bill, saying that the profession of freight for-

warding was a major component of the economic equilibrium of Nigeria which is a major exporter of crude oil and a voracious consumer of imported goods.

"There is the necessity for a freight forwarding in our national economy and successful passage of this bill will be a fulfilling moment to crown the efforts of the Nigerian Shippers' Council spanning several years," he said.

He said that apart from defining clearly who a Nigerian freight forwarder is, the bill would also establish a council which will determine requisite qualifications and skills, promote the standards of competence and practice, and maintain discipline among members of the freight forwarders, while categorising their levels of membership.

"The sanity which is a regulated freight forwarding practice could be of immense benefit by providing a more secured port environment and compliment the on-going port reforms as well as optimise Nigeria's compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISFS) code," he added.

He urged the public to contribute effectively and meaningfully to the discussions on the bill, adding that the bill has already passed its second reading in the House

Gov Bukola delegates signing of C of O to Justice Commissioner

In line with the decision of his administration to fast track the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy, the Kwara State Governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, has delegated the signing of the certificate to the state's attorney-general and commissioner for justice.

The governor delegated the power, through a notice he signed recently, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 45(i) of the Land Use Act Cap 202, according to a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Bisi Abidoeye.

had announced a policy of issuing C of O within two weeks of application for the certificate, under a slogan of 'C of O' in two weeks or money back.

Following the legal notice of the delegation of power, which came into effect on Monday, the Attorney-General and Commissioner for justice, Alhaji Saka Isau, is now the only person legally authorised to sign the C of O. The notice would soon be gazetted for public knowledge and may be cited as the Land Use Act (Delegation of Power) Legal Notice No. 1 of

Introducing **MTN Daily booster card**TM



N19 per minute / 38k per second

Load and Save for 24 hours!

To load **MTN Daily booster card** per minute, send the text message **300** to the number **131** (Costs only **N150**).
To load **MTN Daily booster card** per second, send the text message **301** to the number **131** (Costs only **N150**).
*You may also switch via **MTN Prepaid Menu** by sending the text message **MENU** to **131**.

MTN Daily booster card reduced tariffs:

Calls	MTN booster card TM per minute	MTN booster card TM per second
MTN to MTN	N19	38 kobo
MTN to other networks	N23	45 kobo

Only **MTN pay as you go** subscribers can enjoy this service.



*Standard terms and conditions apply. MTN reserves the right to change, modify, supplement or withdraw any of these tariffs. **When an ANY MTN booster card plan, you will have to wait for the expiry of your currently loaded MTN booster card before you can migrate to any other prepaid tariff plan. ***When your MTN booster card expires, you will be migrated automatically to MTN pay as you go per minute at no charge. ****You must have sufficient airtime in your prepaid account before any migration can be completed. *****MTN booster card rates are not applicable to international calls.

Inside Politics

Confab delegates: Gov Kure's fence mending move

The nomination of delegates to the Abuja National Dialogue has generated some sort of storm in almost all the states. But it is a different case in Niger State, which is a political odd ball in certain respects.

The success of the nomination can be attributed to the tradition of matured politics that has characterized political business in the state from time immemorial.

In fact, when Governor Engineer Abdulkadir Kure sent signal a week earlier in respect of the just concluded mini-confab which lasted a day, its success was already considered as achieved.

The Monday morning of the occasion at the U.K Bello theatre attracted big names in political, economic, academic and social circles from all over the state.

Also in attendance were traditional rulers the plebeians, and the entire cabinet members of the PDP-led government in the state were of course, personalities like the governor, SSG, Comrade Adams Evense, Retired generals Dago Nasko, Sani Bello, and Muhammad Wushishi, retired police DIG (Senator) Nuhu Aliyu, (rtd) Cols. Yohanna Madaki, Fidelis Makka and the rest of them were all there.

The one day conference which was graced by the entire 'who is who' in Niger State, except the two former heads of state, general Ibrahim Babangida and Abubakar Abdulsalam, was a kind of formal ratification of those nominated to represent the state just as other states have done.

The most interesting part of the history making occasion is the political fence-mending it offered.

It would be recalled that before the decision to embark on the dialogue by the federal government, the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Niger State was already in a serious political dire straits. At the center of the storm is the former SSG to the state government, Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu, who was relieved of his post and consequently renounced his party membership. Subsequently, he joined the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) along with his supporters to underscore his resentment at the shabby treatment.

As the chairman of the PRP in the state Alhaji Awaisu and the state governor, Engineer Kure, have remained at daggers drawn and have tactically avoided each other

By Kashim Suleiman,
Correspondent (Minna)

to prevent serious political crisis.

Indeed on several occasions, peace was brokered but all was in vain before now. Prior to the

Convinced that he has done no wrong, the former SSG refused to yield to all these peace overtures. But acting characteristically in tune with the adage that a patient person will witness the dissolution of a rock in the furnace, the governor was



Governor Abdulkadir Kure

nomination of Awaisu as delegate, the state governor's gift as a reconciliatory gesture to his former SSG in 2003 Muslim Ramadan which the latter rejected, reached the peoples ear. Also, the delegation sent by the governor to Awaisu's residence at the news of his mother's death and the personal visit paid by the Governor himself when the former SSG was attacked by hoodlums in the fall last year made the headlines.

only waiting for an opportunity, especially having realized that Awaisu, too, is a big fish in the political waters of Niger.

It is not therefore an overstatement when, at the inauguration of the delegates, the governor boldly declared that "Honourable Dahiru Awaisu is loved by his people tremendously," that was why he picked the ticket to represent his people.

Without doubt, all of the

Niger delegates are a mix bag of career politician, civil servants and academician of repute. But Alhaji Awaisu's image looms larger in the political horizon. With large followers drawn from the Gwari enclave which is his constituency, the respect his

wire pulling which are necessary ingredients to politics. It is even being speculated that the attempt to draft Awaisu and Abubakar Magaji who are rumoured to be in vice president Atiku Abubakar's camp into 'IBB for president project' which

different parties, but our relationship has improved tremendously. The appointment was not influenced by partisan consideration but based on competence in the effort to cut across all strata of the state."

He continued by saying that he was going not as PRP chairman in the state but as a Nigerlite to canvass Niger position on issues as they affect the state not as they affect PRP.

"It will be morally wrong to see myself as representing a political party because I would be betraying the confidence my people reposed in me if I do so," he added.

But the politician who has never lost election since he joined politics in 1979 except in 2003 when he lost senatorial seat, quickly added that, it was not that he will not make an independent contribution when necessary as long as it will benefit the state, saying that this appointment is not a sell-out neither is it a lure to compromise on his principle which has earned him admiration from his people.

"As far as I am concerned, I am going to the debate because of Nigerlites," he concluded.

While the former SSG's appointment was the one that caused the most surprise, however, the state government's decision to nominate him has been described as a wise step, to check the discontent running in the party.

But elsewhere, the government was being labeled as women-unfriendly for its failure to nominate a woman delegate.

A woman leader, Mrs. Amina Kere Ahmed, did not hide her disappointment when she told the state governor to his face at the public gathering for the oversight. The woman who taught the governor in the school before, which the latter acknowledged said, the governor should keep her appointment when he announced that eight women have been appointed to serve on the 40 member committee led by the Emir of Suleja, Alhaji Awal Ibrahim, to function as intermediary between the delegates and the people of Niger State.

This committee will guide the delegates while the former will feed the people back regarding their inputs.



Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu Kuta

people have for him would help in consolidating the political climate of Niger which many claim is somehow in disarray, because of his exit from the PDP.

Two, as a general perception that new political groupings will emerge from the national dialogue at the end of the day, it is believed that delegates have started positioning themselves for necessary political horse trading, maneuvering and

hit the rock in the past, would now pay-off.

But when *Daily Trust* visited Alhaji Awaisu's 'scorpion home' in the evening of his appointment, which instantly transformed to a Mecca of sorts at the news, he told its reporter of his political views and his stead-fastness for the truth at all times.

Politically he said "this appointment shows clearly that although we are in

"Convinced that he has done no wrong, the former SSG refused to yield to all these peace overtures. But acting characteristically in tune with the adage that a patient person will witness the dissolution of a rock in the furnace, the governor was only waiting for an opportunity, especially having realized that Awaisu, too, is a big fish in the political waters of Niger. It is not therefore an overstatement when, at the inauguration of the delegates, the governor boldly declared that 'Honourable Dahiru Awaisu is loved by his people tremendously,' that was why he picked the ticket to represent his people."

Inside Politics

Forum lauds Masari over *ThisDay* award

The Katsina state chapter of Future Leaders Forum, a non Government Organisation (NGO) that champions good leadership in the country, has congratulated the speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari over the "Best legislator of the year" award conferred on him by *ThisDay* newspaper.

The forum noted that "the Best Legislator for the year 2004 award to -Hon. Aminu Bello Masari, speaker House of Representatives by *ThisDay* newspaper is another testimony to the public appreciation of his style of leadership and approach to the challenges of office of the Honourable speaker of the House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria." In a press statement signed by its chairman and secretary, Kabir Sani Kofar Bai and Musa Rabe Daura respectively, FLF further noted that the award was also a recognition and honour to the entire members of the House of Representatives who gave him their support to be so recognised.

According to the forum,



Alhaji Bello Masari

Confab: NUF hails Gombe delegates

The National Unity Forum has hailed the composition of delegates from Gombe state for the National Confab coming up soon in Abuja.

The chairman of the forum, Malam Inuwa Abubakar, in a press statement, commended the state governor, Alhaji Danjuma Goje for choosing "tested and God-fearing" indigenes of Gombe to represent the state at the dialogue.

He said Gombe people should support the delegates during the conference.

According to the forum chairman, the delegates because of their antecedents,

the speaker's style of leadership of "recognising and respecting the inputs and relevance of each member in the administration of the affairs of the House", coupled with his simple and sincere approach to life, makes him a role model on leadership style in Nigeria.

Urging present and future leaders to borrow a leaf on humility and level headedness from Masari, the FLF lauded the speaker for "always treating his friends

with respect, his colleagues with Honour and subordinates kindly. He admits his mistakes and takes corrections rather than passes the buck, and is always ready to learn from those who know better. This simple approach to life is what is endearing him more to his colleagues and other political associates as reaffirmed by *ThisDay* newspaper, in bestowing him the Best Legislator for the year 2004."

2007: Group wants Makarfi for president

A new organisations calling itself National Vanguard for good governance (GOVAN) in Kaduna has said Nigeria needed Governor Ahmed Makarfi's formula for containing religious and ethnic violence come 2007 if our nascent democracy is to survive.

GOVAN national coordinator, Mr. Douglas Yakubu told newsmen in Kaduna Tuesday that Makarfi's rising profile in national affairs especially his organisation of the national political reform conference was a recognition of his brinkmanship in ensuring peace and stability in the erstwhile volatile state.

"Those of us in the vanguard of the campaign for good governance, are not asking for Makarfi's consent, but saying that he has done very well as governor of Kaduna state. We are therefore working assiduously together with

From Sani Babadoko
Bureau Chief in Kaduna

other Nigerians into the train that will come up with a tested "dark horse" instead of the so-called leading aspirants.

"The situation in Nigeria today needs total reversal from the old brigade to the younger elements who have proved to be pragmatic, dynamic and clearly focused. They have the ability to carry the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Nigeria to the promised land."

Mr. Yakubu said from all indication the ruling PDP will produce the next president in 2007 adding, "since the PDP has zoned the presidency to the north a roll call of its governors who have lived up to their peoples' expectation should be made and I believe Makarfi will come tops.

"He represents in a profound way and immance, the effort of bringing three identity systems-northern and southern Kaduna state, as well as religious into an integrated whole for the sake of forging a common bond for peaceful co-existence.

"This attribute of Governor Makarfi could be translated into a greater Nigeria fusing north-south dichotomy and religion into an integrated whole."

Mr. Yakubu said while some aspirants are already campaigning and consulting across the nation, Makarfi seems to be satisfied delivering the dividends of democracy and fulfilling the 2003 mandate "but we dare say that he cannot ignore the call to national service for too long.

"Based on these, we call on Governor Makarfi to restrain his aides from issuing denial to the call to national service by well meaning Nigerians. This is because he has a limit choice

Advertorial

RE: KEBBI YOUTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM - A CLARION CALL TO ABUBAKAR MALLAM, Shettiman Gwandu, A MAN OF HONOUR, INTEGRITY, AND TREMENDOUS GOODWILL

The clarion call to Abubakar Mallam, *Shettiman Gwandu*, came at a time when political activities have begun to gather momentum. As an indigene of Kebbi State and bonafide member of Gwandu Emirate, I am indeed proud to hail from the same state as a towering personality like Abubakar Mallam - a man of tremendous goodwill who has achieved so much at a relatively young age. After reading the piece published in the *Weekly Trust* of 29th January 2005, I became a little bit disturbed and apprehensive about the concept and sponsorship of the clarion call. It was not my intention at first to respond to it, but having weighed the incalculable damage the clarion call could do to the politics of Gwandu Emirate and the entire Kebbi State, I opted to write this to educate the people on the inherent dangers contained in that ignoble political piece.

Before raising the fundamental issues, I shall first address the so-called Chairman of Kebbi Youth Consultative Forum (KYCF): As an active member of all the recognised youth organisations in Kebbi State, I am not aware that any such organisation has ever elected or chosen you as Chairman. I have never seen you in the meeting of any such organisation, neither have you ever to my knowledge contributed directly or indirectly to any such meeting even as a floor member. The Kebbi Youth Consultative Forum is at best a product of your own imagination, formed with some ulterior motives which may include inviting Abubakar Mallam (who happens to be your brother-in-law) to contest for the highest office in the state. On that note, 'Mr. Chairman,' I congratulate you on your new crusade, which is no doubt aimed at galvanising support for your brother-in-law. Although a lawyer, I wonder if you are conversant with the legal implication of using a non-partisan front to canvass for support for your in-law's political ambition.

My able 'Chairman,' the taste of honey is always pleasant. As you have tasted the joy of having an in-law as the state governor, one could not but appreciate your determination not to lose out, come 2007. For that is your surest way of guaranteeing the free flow of lucrative contracts, prompt payment, easy access to the inner chambers of Government House, and so on. It appears to most people, including my good self, that you are desperate to perpetuate yourself as the permanent in-law of every occupant of the Kebbi State Government House. It is your democratic and fundamental right of course, as guaranteed by our Constitution, to support whosoever you wish; but such rights end where the rights of others begin.

The era of political mediocres masquerading themselves as representatives of the people is truly over. The people of Kebbi State are still not happy with you for misguiding your in-law and incumbent governor of Kebbi state to impose a jejune and incompetent Chairman on local government, and for insulting a Senator in public. 'Chris Uba in the making,' enough is enough! It is high time you stopped abusing our collective intelligence as a people. It is better to deserve an honour and not to have it, than to have it and not deserve it.

In you, 'Mr. Chairman of Kebbi Youth Consultative Forum,' I foresee an emerging Chris Uba out to create another Chris Ngige in Kebbi State. Since you have already positioned yourself as the *alter ego* of Governor Aliero, often claiming to speak on his behalf, no one has any illusion about the dangerous impression you want to create; namely, that Abubakar Mallam is the anointed candidate. Instead of organising a two-million-man march to Abuja to drag Abubakar Mallam home to contest for the governorship of Kebbi state therefore we have in our wisdom decided to organise a 5-million-man march from Fakai to Kuka na Yelwa and from Arewa Dandi to Shanga to congratulate you not only as the crown prince of Kebbi state politics, but also as the permanent in-law of every occupant of Kebbi State Government House. Once again, 'Mr. Chairman,' please accept my heartfelt congratulations.

As I read the excerpts of the so-called 'Chairman's clarion call,' I could not help but laugh at the contradictions that clearly expose the traits in you. According to the 'call,' and I quote, 'our decision to come together, all of us from Zuru, Yauri, Argungu, and Gwandu is to avoid winding up as the miserable, frustrated, wretched, heart-broken, and totally disadvantaged people of a disadvantaged state.' It would appear, 'Mr. Chairman,' that while you were full of praise for Governor Alhaji Adamu Aliero as a man of vision who has done so much for his people, you were simultaneously painting a gory picture of a Kebbi State that is misruled by the incumbent governor and desperately in need of another in-law of yours as the 'Messiah.' Either you are not sure of your choice of words, or you are not sincere with the praises showered on the incumbent governor. You are indeed tricky, and I fear that by the time you are done with Alhaji Aliero and have successfully installed another governor in his stead, the people of Kebbi State will witness another grand betrayal, which has now become your stock in trade.

Instead of seizing the golden opportunity to act like a bridge builder, 'Mr. Chairman,' you are busy dissipating your energy and resources sowing seeds of discord between groups that have close relationships and should ordinarily be working together for the benefit of the entire state. Your inordinate ambition and crass selfishness have so blinded your ability to read the political barometer of Kebbi State that you are luring Abubakar Mallam into a political disaster!

Curiously, Abubakar Mallam has not been faithful to his 'friend,' Governor Aliero. It is on record that this so-called 'anointed candidate' deserted Aliero when he needed him most to secure victory in the gubernatorial elections of May 1999. It is also a known fact that Abubakar Mallam, who now wants to occupy the Kebbi State Government House, never gave his 'friend' the slightest chance of being elected. Even after Aliero was declared governor-elect, this same Abubakar Mallam was quoted as saying that 'Wai wannan dan Kauyen shine Gwanna mu?' Similarly, when his re-election bid was challenged in 2003 by Saidu Samaila Sambawa, backed by the 'federal might,' Aliero desperately needed all the political and moral support he could get from his friends, but Abubakar Mallam, the so called 'anointed candidate,' deserted him. Despite his cold attitude towards the governor, Abubakar Mallam was invited to contest for a senatorial seat in 2003. In his characteristic ambivalence, however, he continued to foot-drag until he declined at the eleventh hour.

'Mr. Chairman,' you need to understand that your political demagoguery unsettles the youth of Kebbi State, and that your latest self-serving and poorly conceived political sophistry will surely collapse. I therefore wish to caution Abubakar Mallam to exercise sound judgement before vacating his lucrative office as the second-in-command in the Nigerian Customs Service, more so because he has a good chance of becoming the Comptroller General. Partisan politics is certainly not the only way that one can serve his people.

The *Shettiman Gwandu* would be well advised to remain wary of Barrister Sambo Aliyu Nassarawa, the 'Chairman' of the so-called KYCF, whose exploits in the last fifteen (15) years demonstrate that he is slippery and unreliable. He is obviously not telling his in-law the entire truth. By having him and his cohorts around, it appears that Abubakar Mallam has not learnt from history and the experience of others.

Finally, let us not forget that today 'wannan dan kauyen,' that is, Governor Aliero, is a strong factor in determining the candidate for governor of Kebbi in 2007. The hide-and-seek game that Abubakar Mallam has played with Governor Aliero has sowed the seeds of mistrust between the two friends, which hardly inspires confidence inside the Kebbi State Government House. As such, the *Shettima* and his in-law face the impossible task of retrieving spilt milk. *Shettiman Gwandu*, please do not be misled. 'Da mugunyar rawa, gwamma kin tashi.'

Handwritten signature
K.B. Umar 9/02/05
No. 75, Tudun Wada
New Extension
Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State
0804 333 7947

Sports

Ronaldinho magic as Brazil trounce Hong Kong

World player of the year Ronaldinho gave a dazzling performance as Brazil thrashed Hong Kong 7-1 in a one-sided friendly.

The Barcelona star got on the scoresheet with a cheeky lob and produced some magical touches in a virtuoso performance for the world champions that delighted Hong Kong fans celebrating the Lunar New Year holiday.

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira was left purring with delight after Ronaldinho's sublime display. "He's a wonderful player," said Parreira. "He can make special passes, special movements and special goals — everything he does is different, that's why he was voted the best player in the world and he showed it today."

Bayern Munich defender Lucio opened the scoring in the 21st minute, latching on to a Robinho cross to plant a downward header past Hong Kong goalkeeper Fan Chun-Yip.

Real Madrid star Roberto

Carlos, who had earlier cleared the crossbar with an audacious effort from the half-way line, made it 2-0 with a fierce left-footed shot before Ricardo Oliveira's curler on the stroke of half-time.

Ronaldinho made it 4-0 just after the break, and then launched the move which ended up with the fifth, outrageously looking to the left flank while spraying a pass to the right. Oliveira applied the finish.

Santos striker Robinho scored with a close-range header and a left-footed penalty by second-half substitute Alex rounded off Brazil's scoring with 10 minutes to go.

The biggest cheer of the afternoon was reserved for Hong Kong's Lee Sze-Ming, who nodded home a consolation strike for the home side after a late goalmouth scramble.

Brazil, using the match as preparation for next month's World Cup qualifiers with Uruguay and Peru, were missing star striker Ronaldo who was not released by his club Real Madrid.

However they fielded a

near full-strength side including Ronaldinho, Roberto Carlos and rising star Robinho, who mesmerised the crowd — and the home team — with their pace, power and close control.

"We knew the technical difference is too big between Brazil, who are five-times world champions, and the Hong Kong team but we knew quality is not enough if you don't commit yourself, if you don't play with heart and spirit, but we did today," said Parreira.

It could have been worse for Hong Kong if not for the heroics of goalkeeper Fan, who saved at the feet of Ronaldinho and Oliveira as well as stopping a point-blank effort from the head of the Real Betis striker.

Chances were few for the home team, ranked 144th by FIFA, although Wong Chun-Yue had a shot blocked by Brazil keeper Julio Cesar in the opening minutes and Luk Koon-Pong fired over late on.

"After this game we know there's definitely some difference in the level between Hong Kong and Brazil," said Hong Kong coach Lai Sun-Cheung.

"Hong Kong played this game under a lot of pressure but we learned a lot from their skills."

The match, which was criticised by FIFA president Sepp Blatter as a "money-making" exercise, was also

dogged by lacklustre ticket sales with the 40,000-seat Hong Kong stadium only about two-thirds full.



Brazil's Robinho, right, kicks the ball past Hong Kong's Szeto Man Chun

Arsenal threaten to sue Cole agent

Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein has threatened to sue Ashley Cole's agent over allegations he took the England left-back for illegal talks with Chelsea officials.

The Premier League are inquiring into allegations that Chelsea may have made an illegal approach to Cole. It is claimed the full-back and his agent Jonathan Barnett met Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho and chief executive Peter Kenyon in a London hotel.

"We as a club have a fairly robust document which we have evolved over the years with our lawyers," Dein told The Sun.

"One of the clauses is a non-solicitation clause where agents are not allowed to destabilise players at our club.

"Every agent we have dealt with has signed. They have to — otherwise the deal doesn't happen.

"If we are paying an agent he will enter into an agreement to look after our best interests. We expect him to abide by the contract.

"If they don't it is up to us to either report it to the FA or the Premier League. Or we could take civil action if we so desire."

Scandal tarnishes Germany's clean-cut image

Germany is proud of its reputation for impeccable organisation and a meticulous attention to detail but nothing could have prepared the country for the match-fixing scandal that has put an enormous spanner in the works ahead of the 2006 World Cup.

In a controversial election Germany pipped South Africa by a single vote — there was talk of bribes at the time — for the right to host football's ultimate showpiece in 2006 but until now everything seemed to be running as smoothly as the German transport system.

That all changed on January 27 when Berlin-based referee Robert Hoyzer admitted to manipulating four matches to net around 70,000 euros.



Franz Beckenbauer

"The public allegations against me are correct," confessed Hoyzer. "I regret my conduct in the extreme and apologise to the DFB, my

refereeing colleagues and football fans."

Hoyzer's revelation shook German football to the core but it proved to be the tip of the iceberg with more skeletons coming out of the closet.

"This whole scandal has had a damaging effect on the 2006 World Cup image," said Franz Beckenbauer, head of the 2006 World Cup organising committee.

With Hoyzer naming and shaming, the German Football Federation (DFB) have revealed that three other referees Jurgen Jansen, Felix Zwayer and Dominik Marks are suspected of rigging matches.

The match-fixing was initially restricted to the lower divisions but has now reached

the Bundesliga with Jansen investigated in connection with Kaiserslautern's 3-0 win over SC Freiburg last November.

A total of 14 players from clubs outside the Bundesliga are also accused of taking financial "bonuses" from anonymous backers to influence games they were playing in.

Croatian mafia circles in Berlin are involved too in what is the biggest scandal in German football since 1971.

Hoyzer, 25, was not even born but need only cast an eye over the archives to discover that more than 50 players and 12 coaches were found guilty of offering bribes and fixing Bundesliga games.

A scandal is never welcome but the timing of this

particular one could not be any worse with the World Cup just 16 months away.

"Germany wanted to use the 2006 World Cup as a springboard to create a good image of the country. Now media from the United States to Spain are talking about corruption and scandal," read a recent report in Die Welt newspaper.

If Hoyzer had been an isolated case then German football could have put it down to an individual's greed but there are 24 other people under investigation just a week after the scandal broke.

Can Germany solve this betting conundrum by June 9, 2006 when the hosts open the World Cup in Munich? Can they unearth all the deeply-buried secrets inside 16 months? Are new developments going to emerge from the darkness with the World Cup in process?

Even if the Hoyzer affair and everyone connected to it is punished the lasting damage can not be underestimated.

The credibility of referees has sunk to an all-time low with angry fans incensed that greed has continued to creep into "the beautiful game".

Every time a questionable decision is made by referees supporters will ask "Does the official have his own motives for making that call?"

Hard times at Britain's worst football team

They've won just six games in three years and are lucky if 100 people turn up to watch their weekly trials while the players earn the princely sum of 20 pounds each.

Welcome to East Stirling FC — Britain's worst professional football team.

In 21 matches this season, the club, based in Falkirk, Scotland, has won just twice, clinched 12 points, finding the net 19 times while leaking 52 goals at the other end.

Last season, they finished

bottom of the table winning just twice in 33 games — a return of eight points out of a possible total of 108. The previous campaign was equally discouraging. Bottom place again winning two games and the slightly better return of 13 points.

Formed in November, 1881 when the Bainsford Bluebonnets cricket team decided to form the Bainsford Britannia football team, East Stirling was adopted as their name in 1881.

Their moment of glory

came seven years later in 1888 when they reached the quarter-finals of the Scottish Cup only to lose to Celtic. Since then it has been largely downhill.

"We do our duty stoically," said Ian Ramsay, the head of the team's supporters' club when the team was heading for another season of oblivion in 2003/04.

"The season was quite painful. I wouldn't wish it on anyone. We are not competing. This cannot continue. A hundred people — that's what

we are down to for home games.

"After two seasons of pure crap. I'm amazed we've still got 100 fans," Ramsay told The Scotsman newspaper.

Things weren't helped when the club slashed wages by 10 pounds a week from the already humble sum of 30 pounds.

Despite their woeful form, East Stirling, founded 124 years ago, survive partly because there is no system of automatic relegation from the Scottish third division.

Sports

Bomb blast highlights Madrid bid security concerns

A car bomb that exploded near Madrid's main convention centre on Wednesday highlighted the security concerns that the city will have to overcome as it makes its bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

The bomb, which injured 39 people, was in the area of the IFEMA convention centre, one of the sites visited by International Olympic Committee (IOC) inspectors last week as they assessed the Spanish capital's capacity to hold the Games for the first time.

The blast went off soon

after the outlawed group ETA, which has killed nearly 850 people since 1968 in a campaign for Basque independence, gave a warning to a Basque newspaper.

Boxing, fencing, weightlifting, badminton, table tennis and wrestling are among sports scheduled to be held in the numerous pavilions that comprise the massive convention centre on the outskirts of the city if the bid is successful.

Some of the canoeing events would take place in the adjacent public park.

Ensuring the games can be held in a secure environ-

ment has become the leading priority of the IOC in making its decision to allocate the Olympics.

"Nowadays security is top of our agenda," chairwoman Nawal El Moutawakel said during the inspection committee's visit to Madrid last week.

London, Paris, New York and Moscow are the other cities bidding for the Games and the decision will be made at an IOC meeting in Singapore on July 6.

Madrid was the scene of al Qaeda-linked train bombings in March 2004 that killed 191 people and has been a

regular target of ETA.

The city's mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon sought to reassure the inspectors that Madrid would be able to cope with the increased security needed to hold the world's largest sporting event.

"During the weeks that the 2012 Games are held, Madrid will be the safest city in the world," he told journalists.

Of the 833 million euros (\$1.07 billion) that the Spanish government earmarked for the Games last October, over half the money is due to be allocated to improving security arrangements in the city.

Organisers of the Madrid bid also believe that as well as last year's train bombings, the years of violence from ETA have given the country experience in dealing with security threats.

The speedy and calm evacuation of some 70,000 spectators from Real Madrid's

Santiago Bernabeu stadium after a bomb scare in December was cited at the time by the Spanish sports minister as an example of how the city showed it could cope with security threats.

"If this affects the Madrid bid at all it will be in a positive way because it shows that the city is prepared to deal with a risky situation," sports minister Jaime

Lissavetzky said at the time, speaking of the Bernabeu incident.

However, the reality of Wednesday's car bomb and a series of small incendiary devices that exploded at petrol stations around the city in early December mean that Madrid will have to allay concerns about security if it is first win and then stage the 2012 Olympics.

Agassi finds top form in San Jose

Second seed Andre Agassi had a straight forward 6-4 6-4 win over compatriot Bobby Reynolds in his opening match at the San Jose Open.

The American has won the event three times and soon found his range.

"It took a while to get comfortable," he said. "Ultimately I started getting a sense of my court position."

"I'm hoping I can see a nice arc to my improvement. I have to be disciplined with my shot selection and learn when to be aggressive at the right time."

Fourth seed Vincent Spadea avoided an upset by rallying from a set down to beat Anthony Dupuis 5-7 6-3 6-2.

The American needed

just 32 minutes to win the third set, blanking his French opponent in three games.

Sadea now meets compatriot James Blake who advanced with a 6-3 6-4 victory over Wesley Moodie of South Africa.

Austrian seventh seed Jurgen Melzer had a 6-2 7-5 win over American qualifier Glenn Weiner.

And qualifier Tomas Zib of the Czech Republic defeated Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-4 6-3 - his fourth straight win over the German.

Top seeds Moya, Gaudio win in Buenos Aires

Top seed Carlos Moya enjoyed a straight sets win over Australian qualifier Peter Luczak in the first round of the Buenos Aires ATP tournament on Tuesday.

French Open champion Gaston Gaudio needed three sets to dispatch Italy's Federico Luzzi.

Spaniard Moya, who won the first of his 18 ATP singles

titles at the same tournament 10 years ago, beat Luczak 6-3 7-6 (7-5) to earn a second round tie against Argentine Juan Monaco.

"I'm happy considering it was a first match. I didn't play at all badly and I hope to improve every day," said Moya.

Second seed Gaudio, who won last week's Vina del Mar Open in Chile, lost the first set but went on to beat Luzzi

2-6 6-1 6-3 in a match which went on into the early hours of Wednesday.

Two other seeded players were less fortunate.

Italy's Filippo Volandri, seeded sixth, was beaten 6-4 6-2 by Germany's Lars Burgsmuller. Fifth seed Juan Ignacio Chela of Argentina lost 7-5 6-4 to Spanish qualifier Marc Lopez.



Carlos Moya



Andre Agassi

Monty likely to miss Match Play

Colin Montgomerie will play in next week's Nissan Open in Los Angeles, but looks certain to miss the Match Play Championship that follows it.

Monty, ranked 71 in the world, needs to make the top 64 to play in the San Diego event, but the cut-off point is next Monday, before the

Nissan starts.

His manager Guy Kinnings said: "The Match Play is important, but he is not building his season around it."

He was halfway leader at last week's Melbourne Classic, but finished 11th.

The Nissan Open is at Riviera Country Club, the

course where Montgomerie came closest to winning a major title.

Three closing birdies at the 1995 USPGA gave him the lowest total in major history, but Steve Elkington matched it and the Australian won the play-off with a 25-foot birdie putt.

Montgomerie needs to be

in the world top 50 to qualify for the Players Championship in Sawgrass and The Masters at Augusta.

The Europeans currently in the top 64 are Sergio Garcia (6), Pdraig Harrington (7), Miguel Angel Jimenez (13), Darren Clarke (14), Luke Donald (19), Lee Westwood (26), Thomas Bjorn (27), Paul Casey (36), Ian Poulter (43), David Howell (45), Fredrik Jacobsen (47), Thomas Levet (51), Joakim Haeggman (53), Graeme McDowell (56) and Alex Cejka (61).

Vandals strike ahead of NZ Open

The New Zealand Open will go ahead despite three greens being vandalised on the eve of the tournament.

Holes were dug in the 11th, 12th and 13th greens at Gulf Harbour Country Club, and the second 'tee' was sprayed on one putting surface.

It is believed the incident relates to last week's authorised cull of Paradise ducks which damaged the course.

Club spokesman Peter Wall said: "It is very disappointing but our greens staff have repaired the damage."

Police are investigating and the club will increase security throughout the rest of the tournament.

Tournament director Gus Seebeck told New Zealand's Radio Sport that as well as holes being dug, petrol had also been drizzled across some of the greens.

Last week about 18 of the

Fournier replaces Halilhodzic as PSG coach

Former player Laurent Fournier has replaced sacked Vahid Halilhodzic as manager of Paris St Germain, the Ligue 1 club's president Francis Graille said on Wednesday.

Fournier took charge at Wednesday's training session ahead of a French Cup second round clash against Girondins Bordeaux on Sunday.

The 40-year-old had been

in charge of PSG's reserve team after playing in midfield for the ambitious Parisian club between 1991 and 1998.

Fournier also has experience of coaching a Ligue 1 club, he was in charge of Bastia between October 1998 and April 1999 before being sacked for being too harsh.

Former PSG defender Alain Roche was also named sports director.



Montgomerie

Sports

I dont have quarrels with Ogunjobi - Galadima

On the FIFA, NFA and Sports Ministry festival of threats, promises and actions.

For all that happened, let me say this for all to understand, that whatever must have been achieved from that issue I think is not a triumph for NFA, it is not a victory for Ibrahim Galadima. It is a victory for Nigerian football. I have the feeling that Nigerian football can never be the same again. With this development now, the future looks very bright. The environment is going to be more conducive for football administration in the future. The situation in NFA is still as it has always been, the board is there, the secretary general is there but the new law that is coming into effect now is such that the secretary general is no longer the chief executive of NFA, he is going to be administrative officer of NFA. Of course the chairman is now likely going to have some powers. Unless these are defined one cannot say anything at the moment.

Now as we are talking, the entire management of NFA has been sent on compulsory leave pending the completion of investigation we are conducting with view to establishing whether they are guilty or otherwise of the points raised earlier by the ministry of sports. The board will meet after the investigation to determine their fate. The league board has been inaugurated by me on the 18th of January and we held a meeting where we told them to follow the guidelines given by FIFA as regards the establishment of the proleague in the country. We all have to appreciate that it is a new innovation and we are bound to have some hiccups along the line.

The board maybe out of their desire to be seen to be in charge now might have done one or two things which went out of the ordinary and which we drew their attention to thread cautiously. For instance, they set up committees within the board which we felt they shouldn't have done because FIFA has made it very clear that their statutes and guidelines have to be approved by the NFA which they have not done. So I said that has to be done before they can embark on establishment of any committee. They would have power to do what they want to do from the statutes and unless that is done there is no way you will be able to do anything so it is better for us to go slowly and have a good take off than allow the system to just start off in a bad way.

Also, we have made it very clear that whatever we have in place now is an interim arrangement. We had to do it because the league is to kick off on the 12th of February. We wouldn't like to be seen by Nigerians to be

inauguration and we asked them to go ahead. Between now and the end of the season, we will work out the best system of electing the membership of the board in the true sense of the word election. We have to allow what is now there on the ground because of time factor. On that basis I asked them to have that in mind which they accepted. We also set up a three man

The Nigeria Football Association is without doubt in crisis, with the suspension of the Secretary general and other key staffs of the association and also the possibility of a FIFA ban still hanging over the association like the sword of damocles; the talk on the lips of many soccer loving Nigerians has been on the way forward for football in Nigeria. In this exclusive no hold barred interview with nigeriasports.com in Cotonou, Benin Republics at the just concluded African junior championship; NFA Chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima talk to Nigeriasports.com on some of the most salient issues in Nigerian football, pointing out that he wants to leave a saner and smoother Glass House, its a must read.

committee to look into the statutes which the new board have presented for them to come up with recommendations to the board. When the board meet after the report must have been presented, the statutes will be looked into and approval will be given. That will not hinder their own operations.

We don't want to be seen as stopping them. It is a welcome development as far as NFA is concerned. It is a relief to us. It will take the league burden off NFA for now. Let the club owners be the ones to decide. But there are fundamental issues there, that the club owners or the league board has to appreciate that they cannot and they are in no position to handle effectively. Take the case of issue of referring,

"So I have never had any quarrel with the minister and I don't have any intention because I have been involved in this sector for over two decades now. I don't think it is in my character to show disrespect to the office of a minister of the federal republic"

take the issue of disciplining teams when they faulted because they are the club owners. You know fairness and justice demands that some body else will be the one to decide not the club owners who are directly involved in the issue. So, these are kind of things we are going to streamline and we are in the process.

We need to even understand what their roles are. And even the ministry of sports made it very clear that day that they have to appreciate that they are still under the NFA. FIFA have said it that all leagues in the world are subordinate to their national associations.

On the league 2005 season?

We expect a better league season. We have been the ones crying about the quality of the league, about the problem in the league, they are now the ones to run it. Let us wait and see.

But of course like I keep on saying we all have to share responsibility for all lapses in the league over time. The FA, the referees, the club managers who had always wanted to win at all cost to keep their jobs. We

all have to accept responsibility that we have all faulted at one time or the other in making the league become what it has become. Good or bad, we all have to share the blame.

On his legacy for Nigerian football

Well, this is a difficult question. I wouldn't like to be talking on these things but I have the feeling that by the time I leave NFA I would leave a fulfilled person. Fulfilled in the sense that I made promise in Nov. 2002 when I came in, in specific areas. One in the area of youth football development, I promised that and thank God like I said the U-17, U-21 we are on the way to achieving that, we also promised to work with the ministry to abrogate the decree 101, thank God we are

also now in the 11th hour position on that so to say.

We have been given the commitment by government of abrogating the decree and a new law has already been passed by the executive council which should now go to the national assembly, so the decree 101 is also out. That again is an achievement which for those who are coming after me I am sure are going to have a saner and better environment to run football more than the one I had gone through in the last two years. So it is quite an achievement that I will be proud to say I have been able to do it in my time.

Something which had been on for many years. People had been complaining of decree 101. now it is off. It is a (technical centre) FIFA project. It is part of the youth development programme that we are also having.

At completion we are going to have a conducive environment for the teams to camp, a stadium, hostel facility, lecture halls and training pitches and so on. We have got enough land for the construction of NFA secretariate. So, I think

limiting myself to those areas, one could look back to say my three years in office that I was able to achieve.

On his relationship with the minister.

Well, talking about stabbing in the back, let me say that the minister had never come out to say that he told me who he was bringing in there as secretary - General or replacement for the management. He had never said so and if he had said so, I am yet to see. He did mention to me that he had gotten approval to sack the management, of course I told him at that time it wasn't timely because we were just going to Zurich two three days after we spoke and then we have the CAF Champions League coming up immediately after our return and I said it wasn't timely for us to do that. So since we came back from Zurich after the time he announced the reforms 23rd of December, 2004, we never discussed the issue again. So, talking about stabbing the minister in the back I think it is not a fair statement.

In any case, the minister felt that as a minister he has the right to appoint whoever he wants to appoint but it has to be understood that whatever I was doing in that regard was for NFA and Nigerian football and never personal. It is never Ibrahim Galadima's personal decisions or actions but as chairman of NFA and these are two different things because Ibrahim Galadima is separate from chairman of NFA. Ibrahim Galadima as a person, I have my own personal position, but as chairman of NFA I am only conveying the position of the board which I as a chairman have the responsibility of expressing. So when it comes to that people must differentiate between Ibrahim Galadima as a person and chairman of the board of NFA, spokesman of a 22-man board that was elected to run the affairs of football.

So, whatever I say is not my personal position, it is the position of the board which I have the responsibility of articulating nation know. So I never had any problem with the minister. I keep on saying that he is my boss. I have a lot of respect for the minister because I don't have any other alternative but to respect the position of a minister because it is a position which God has placed him in and by virtue of NFA position as parastatal of ministry of sports, NFA has no alternative but to respect the office of the

On his relationship with Chief Taiwo Ogunjobi

Unless he comes out himself to say otherwise. I don't think there is any basis for me to have any problem with the Secretary General of NFA. After all we don't operate on the same level, he

is the Secretary General I am the chairman. By the virtue of the law establishing NFA as at today he is the chief executive officer. And since I came I have conceded the position to him. I have claimed to be the chief executive officer. I have never acted in anyway different from my position as chairman of NFA. And I have always conceded that position to him. I don't think there is any

minister to the extent of not jeopardizing or compromising the position of FIFA which is the supreme football body in the world. So, I don't have any quarrel with the minister. There is nothing personal I believe he can testify to that because there has not been any occasion that I have come out to attack him. I have been attacking the ministry and there is a difference between the ministry and the minister,



Galadima says he would want to leave a saner, smoother Glass House

just like when you talk of Ibrahim Galadima and NFA, there are two different things. When anybody comes out to attack Ibrahim Galadima, the person is attacking the person of Ibrahim Galadima but if he attacks the chairman of NFA he is fighting NFA as an institution. So, whenever I am complaining it has always been about the ministry and not the minister because the ministry is an institution and somebody somewhere in the ministry even a messenger represents the ministry and you may have somebody taking an action there that will be seen as a position of the ministry.

So I have never had any quarrel with the minister and I don't have any intention because I have been involved in this sector for over two decades now. I don't think it is in my character to show disrespect to the office of a minister of the federal republic, somebody I have to go through in getting whatever I want from government as at today unless something happens. So I don't have any reason to show disrespect. We go on well, he calls me on phone and I call him. We came to Benin from Lagos to this place and we were at the stadium together. I believe that is a confirmation that there is not much to say except people tend to give an impression.

On his relationship with Chief Taiwo Ogunjobi

Unless he comes out himself to say otherwise. I don't think there is any basis for me to have any problem with the Secretary General of NFA. After all we don't operate on the same level, he

basis for either him or anybody who is informed about the situation in NFA to say otherwise. I don't have quarrels with Ogunjobi.

He has accepted me to be chairman of the board which he has to work with. Unfortunately over time he has been misled to believe that his loyalty should not be to the board but to ministry of sports that has the power to appoint and sack Secretary General of NFA. That has been the problem. Of course up to the time FIFA decided that Secretary-General of NFA should not be appointed by the Ministry, but by the board I think he has now come to realise that the board is where the power lies. We keep going even in difficult times.

We never had any relationship before coming to NFA November, 2002. Since I came in we have been operating as Chairman and Secretary-General of the NFA but of course like I said along the line, he himself had really gotten himself in a situation where he had taken some actions and decisions which had gone to give the impression that the board was not as important as it

of the powers granted the ministry to protect and cover him the way he has been covered all the while. But I think that with this new development he has now come to appreciate even by tendering his letter of resignation to me when he tendered that letter personally to me was a confirmation that he now came to believe that the board was the one in charge of the situation and not the ministry any more.

Sports

NFA PROBE

Panel to give Ogunjobi soft landing

The three-man panel instituted to investigate the NFA management of impropriety may have given the Taiwo Ogunjobi-led management a clean bill of health.

The resolve to give management respite may have been to facilitate a soft landing for the management which is to be recalled and later case out by the NFA board.

Currently, the management team is on indefinite suspension but Ogunjobi and all the heads of department excepts Sabihu Abubakar, who is the Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Football League, are to enjoy the soft landing if only momentarily.

Trustsports scooped that the panel's decision may not reflect evidences presented but a consensus has been reached by the leadership of

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

the board, which does not want to stir the hornet nest.

Already, the board has resolved to get the management back for the next three months following which their respective positions are to be advertised and they would be case out without the discredit of financial indictment as alleged by the Sports Minister, Col Musa

Mohammed.

The minister had substantiated his allegations with documented evidences largely from statements of accounts, CAF, FIFA grants and non-availability of statement of accounts on proceeds from international transfer certificates.

Ogunjobi had last Friday sweated profusely before the panel as he was unable to proffer reasons why proceeds from international transfers

was not reflected on the 2004 statement of account.

Ogunjobi was latter rescued by a polyglot who had once held the forte as the head of the international department before one Jerome Moze was appointed substantive head of the department.

He bailed out Ogunjobi with the excuse that it was out of "oversight". Even then, there was similar "oversight" in the proceeding years as

there were equally no mention of such proceeds in the 2002 and 2003 statements of accounts.

The suspended secretary-general, Trustsports gathered, made contacts with several persons who pleaded for leniency on his behalf, even as he called the NFA secretariat to instruct some staff particularly those of the international department not to let the press get wind of the development.

The NFA usually gets \$5,000 per every International transfer certificate ITC issued and such is referred as administrative fees. On an average between 25 to 30 ITCs may be issued per year.

Trustsports learnt that about \$200,000 was rake-in from ITC in 2001 during the era of Dr. Ahmed Tijjani Yusuf while late Patrick Okpomo tenure equally yielded substantial amount from it before Ogunjobi took over.

Sources revealed that the three-man panel may have been urged to "paper over" the investigation to give credibility to the vote of confidence passed on the NFA management at Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the football house in Port Harcourt.

Though members of the panel had pledged their integrity and promised to do an honest job, it remains to be seen how fair and just they will be.

...gets one week extension

NFA chairman Ibrahim Galadima, has approved a one-week extension for the three-man panel probing the staff and finances of the association.

The panel, set up three weeks ago, had up till Tuesday to submit its report while the management staff and all heads of departments

of the association were sent on compulsory leave.

A member of the panel, Sabo Jumba, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that Galadima granted the extension after receiving a brief from it.

"We asked for extension of the period of our assignment



Galadima

because of the volume of work involved and the hitches we are likely going to face due to Col. Yabilsu's death," he said.

The bulk of the panel's assignment hinged on a report of late Yabilsu's committee when he was a vice chairman of NFA.

The committee was forced to adjourn its meeting on Tuesday following the announcement of Yabilsu's death.

'Wikki are Enyimba of the North'

Former international and Special Adviser to the Bauchi State government on sports matters, Patrick Pascal has described Wikki Tourist FC of Bauchi as the Enyimba of the Northern Nigeria.

Pascal, who is also the vice chairman of Wikki, told our correspondent on phone that the club banks on the experience of newly recruited coach, Bitrus Bewarang alongside the massive financial backing of state governor, Alhaji Adamu Mu'azu towards achieving their target.

"Over the years, Wikki has become a team to reckon with amongst northern clubs. You know, we have Enyimba status within the region but this season it's our resolve

From Okechukwu Eze, Sports Correspondent (Lagos)

to extend that status across the country. Towards that end, veteran coach Bewarang was hired to lead the way.

"The financial magnanimity of our governor, Alhaji Adamu Mu'azu is another great tool we bank on. For him and our fans, we hope to secure a continental ticket to assuage their quest," he said.

He explained that the club officials have learnt from their administration lapses last season which almost cost the side a premier league slot.

He, however, attributed the team's victory in the recently concluded play-off over Mighty Jets of Jos to their collective will to succeed.

"Everyday we learn. So our experience last season is now history. Thank God, we are back on course in the premier league and I can only say our return is hinged on our determination and zeal to survive. We got stretched twice before we beat Jets to qualify. That's football and we are all happy," he said.

Trustsports gathered that beside coach Bitrus Bewarang, Wikki also recruited former Green Eagles goalkeeper, Best Ogedegbe, to train goalkeepers to fine-tune their reflexes.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Amu wants govts to devote one per cent of revenue

Alhaji Abdulkarim Amu, Chairman, Technical Committee of the Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN) has called on Federal, State and Local Governments in the country to dedicate a per cent of their revenues to sports development.

Amu, who was speaking during the presentation of cash awards by Dan Ngerem president of AFN to athletes that represented the country at the Athens Olympics in Lagos on Tuesday added that the country should invest in the youths through sports.

According to Amu since no state in the country received less than N1.2b monthly, just as no local government got less than N500m for the same period, they should be able to devote just a per centage of the amount toward development of the youths through sports.

Amu, urged the three tiers of governments in the country to endeavour to do something for the youth to

enable them train adequately for international competitions in a bid to win more laurels for the country.

He said he was delighted to have had Nigeria in the finals of all four relay events at the Games.

"The performance of our relay teams at the Athens Games were fantastic as the time differences between the gold medalists and the bronze medalists were close.

"They were in camp for just three months and they matched the world. If they had been out for 10 months, they would have surpassed the world mark," he noted.

Dan Ngerem, then, lamented that athletics was not being accorded its pride of place in the country.

"Although the countdown to the Athens Olympics, I kept pleading with government to give Deji Aliu and Uchenna Emedolu grants, of 2500 dollars each to

enable them meet their immediate training needs and nobody gave it any serious consideration," he pointed out.

Ngerem added that the board developed a 10-year development plan, designed to take the athletics to 2014, when the country hoped to win the bid to host the Commonwealth Games.

"We have also synthesized a Youth Development Initiative under which sponsors would be able to give money directly to the athletes.

"These are some of the initiatives the present AFN Board has introduced for those coming after us to look into," he added.

About N1,539,999.00 was disbursed to 25 athletes and six officials by the AFN President, in fulfilment of a pledge made to the athletes that represented the country at the Athens Games.

Three foreign teams for Ramat Cup

Three foreign teams have signified their intention to take part in this years Ramat Cup International Under-16 soccer competition holding in Calabar, Ben Ekpo, Publicity Secretary of the Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON) said yesterday.

The clubs are Homlia F.C. of Norway and teams from Ghana and Togo, will join clubs from Nigeria for the week-long soccer fiesta holding from Feb. 19 to Feb. 26.

Ekpo told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos that entries were still being expected from some West Africa countries.

"This is the second time Homlia F.C will take part in the competition," Ekpo said.

He recalled that the Norwegian club first participated in the competition in 2003.

According to him, the Oslo-based club was the first European side to participate in Nigeria's prestigious youth soccer tournament, the Ramat Cup.

Ekpo noted that YSFON embraced the global campaign against racial discrimination in sports in 2003.

He said journalists covering the competition in Calabar would have the opportunity to assess the Football Academy set up last year in the Cross River capital.

The academy is a tripartite arrangement between the Cross River government, the Nigerian Navy and YSFON.

According to Ekpo, the academy has 40 students, who combine education and soccer.

"There are opportunities for any of the boys to join the Navy at the completion of their education," he added.

Coach commends Nigerian athletes

An athletics coach, Lawrence Adegbehingbe, has commended Nigerian athletes for their ability to hold their own in international competitions.

Adegbehingbe, who is the chief coach (track and field) with the Ondo State Sports Council, noted that Nigerian athletes work extremely hard under trying conditions to excel in their events.

Speaking at the presentation of cash awards to Athens Olympics relays bronze medallists in Lagos on Tuesday, the coach said: "Nigerians do not seem to know what our athletes go through to prepare themselves for international championships.

"They do not get the required support and encouragement, yet we want them to win laurels whenever they compete," he added.



Harry Blankson, Wikki keeper

Of political Reform Confab and suspicions

By Sunday Awoniyi

If you insist on better effort for better result, they say things are no longer what they were in your time, Sir.

What gives me comfort nonetheless are some young men and women of first class ability and commitment, particularly in academia and journalism. They are able to hold their own anywhere. They will have to labour over time and seek their fellows for a joint effort against our deficiencies.

The North cannot afford lackadaisical attitude to work. The Sardauna's deepest contempt was reserved for the lazy and indolent. He detested those who had no ambition to better themselves. If you were posted to his office and you did not measure up, you were out faster than you came in.



Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto

We in the North must work for and cherish excellence once again. Perfection can only come out of repetitive effort. The Sardauna did not do it all alone. At the political level, he led a team of good strong men like Ribadu, the Defence Minister, Makaman Bida, Finance Minister of Northern Nigeria, not to talk of the Sir Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister. At the civil service level, he had a crop of dedicated civil servants whom he respected greatly for their commitment and ability to innovate and deliver.

These leaders did not throw their weights around. They were farsighted and exceedingly accommodating. If they wanted you to follow a career path for whatever reason, and you said "no", they did not hound you. They were too big and large hearted to hold it against you.

For fair dealing towards others, no region could match the North. We were old enough to know, we were old enough and were present to see how the wishes of some southern lobbyists whom we and our leaders considered as friends were accommodated, over and over again, in their struggle for identity, official recognition and freedom. The North never should have changed them nor ever belittled their interests. We have now to wait and see in the difficult phase we are now passing through how much those relationships carefully forged over decades are now really worth.

The Northern leaders did not misuse their leadership positions. They knew nothing about dipping their hands into public coffers and stealing for personal or political party interests.

Unlike in other regions of those days, there were no scandalous enquiries about misapplication of public funds in the North. If Sir Ahmadu Bello used any public assets for his private affairs such as a flight in a northern Nigeria Government owned aircraft to Sokoto, he received a bill, as laid down in the regulations, and he paid! Whenever Sir Ahmadu Bello used a Northern Communication Flight plane to his farm in Bakura in the then Sokoto Province, he paid for the cost of flight.

Compare that with how our Presidential fleet and other public assets are being used today for private, personal and party political purposes unrelated to government business.

Conference on Political Reforms

We as a country are now invited to take part in a Conference on Political Reforms. My belief, which has nothing to do with my Chairmanship of the ACF and should not be taken as the position of ACF, is that, in spite of sycophantic lip services, the vast majority of our people do

not believe in the Conference because they do not trust the leader who has suddenly become a conference convert. Obasanjo's calling for a Conference is suspicious and the people do not have confidence that he will not manipulate the Conference and bring undue influences and inducements to bear on the Conference in favour of particular changes he desires. Has he some personal agenda to favour some part of the country to the detriment of other parts? People ask me. "I don't know" is my answer.

On reflection, it occurred to me that it is possible that he has not been told appropriately, by advisers and those he prefers to have around him, the misgivings of responsible Nigerians who love this country as much as anyone else. Accordingly, I thought, it may be a form of unsolicited national service to narrate, for what it is worth, some of the concerns, queries and questions raised with me by a cross section of Nigerians, young and old, cutting across the political, ethnic and other divides.

Leaving the issue of the legality of the Conference to lawyers, these Nigerians say that the call for the Conference coming from the President could not have come at a worse moment. "Why the impulsive, precipitate, haste in the face of the battalions of problems pressing on him?" They ask.

There is no trust in the leadership and there are good reasons for it: On the political front, the Ngige/Uba/ Anambra affair is damning. The brazen excessive rigging of the April 2003 elections all over the country in full view of the whole world makes the leader and Nigeria an electoral pariah. The insecurity of life and property, heightened by the murder of Chief Bola Ige, a friend of the leader and the Attorney General of Nigeria in his government, and the ensuing murders of Chief Harry Marshal and some half a dozen other high profile politicians, all of which are unresolved are grave indictments of his entire administration. The series of corruption allegations, including the recent one against the highest law enforcement officer appointed by the leader, cast grave doubts as to whether the leader had deliberately appointed, as chief law enforcement officer, a man who will do his bidding no matter how heinous. But many, in the typical praiseworthy Nigerian fair mindedness, pity the former IG and pray that God may reveal the real truth so that the poor man may not be sacrificed as a cheap gesture to impress the anti-corruption world as Chief Sunday Afolabi was.

The Nigeria Civil Service used to be reckoned one of the best anywhere in the world. Its destruction along with other institutions that enhanced stability which he and General Murtala Muhammad started in 1975 continues apace till this day. The daily denigration of every aspect of the civil service has completely sapped the morale of even the best officers so that it cannot possibly service our nation as it should today. The service will have to be painfully rebuilt under an administration that knows the value of public institutions and respect their personnel.

On the political front, his bastardisation of the National Assembly, by the repeated interference with the elections of its leadership since 1999, the destruction of his party, the PDP, by single handedly selecting and changing at will its chairmen and other members of its leadership, the destabilisation of all opposition parties have combined to precluded the practice of true democracy in the governance of Nigeria today.

The failure to achieve improvement in our essential services, power, water, roads, etc in spite of heavy expenditure have made the words of government unbelievable. All these and many more issues that I need not bore you with do not inspire trust and confidence in his administration and proposal to carry out any reform conference. As I indicated earlier, all I have tried to do is to give this distinguished audience a distillation of a few of the very many concerns, queries, and comments of responsible citizens about Obasanjo and their doubts and lack of confidence in anything he initiates.

Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF

What then is the role of Arewa Consultative Forum in all these? First and foremost, it is to do everything possible to ensure that the electoral debacle of 2003 never happens again. If elections are truly free and fair, the right quality of leaders will be elected at all levels. Nigerians will worry less about who rules them provided they are people elected by them. ACF will endeavour to enlighten the electorate to abide by the criteria in the widely distributed "ACF Suggestions to Nigerians" published in the year 2002. It will be reprinted for release. In it are stated the qualities the electorate must look for from those seeking their votes at all levels.

Difficult Times

The nation is passing through a difficult period. Our country has gone into a tail-spin. Unfortunately, there is no bailing out. We have no parachutes. The Arewa Consultative Forum will attend the Conference and try to work with others to find solutions to our problems. Even though it looks like the triumph of hope over bitter experience, ACF will not despair. We Nigerians are a "May Be" people. Very patient with our governments. "May Be" a miracle will occur this time, and our salvation. "May Be," is at hand.

Chief Awoniyi (Aro of Mopa) made this submission at the launching of the biography of Alhaji Ahmadu Kurfi (Maradin Katsina) in Kaduna recently.

At Barewa College, the General Yakubu Gowon and I, both Christians, were House Captains of our respective houses - Dan Hausa and Mort - in our last year in 1953. It was part of our duties to ensure that our Muslim boys went to the Mosque on Fridays. During the fasting period, we ensured that they got up to take their morning meal, suhur. It never crossed our minds that our actions were incompatible with our Christian faith. Some Muslim boys, out of curiosity, followed their Christian friends to the nearby Wusasa CMS Church on Sundays. We the Christian boys had our morning prayers in the physics laboratory with Capt Mills, a tall balled World War II naval officer officiating.

Between the older products of Barewa and the much younger ones who even never met at college, there was nonetheless a curious kind of bond that took no account of place of origin, religion, creed, linguistic or ethnic differences. It is difficult to explain, but this bond spread to the products of the new provincial secondary schools also.

In the rough and tumble of federal politics in later years, because of this bond, what the North lacked in the number of qualified men, it made up for by intimacy, ease of relationship and a habit of quick response to issues of northern interests. Northern leaders knew that the North was grossly disadvantaged in every facet of modern development, therefore the Sardauna and his lieutenants worked overtime so that the North would rapidly be in a competitive position in a federal set up. They worked for the integration of the so-called elite of every ethnic group. There was no discrimination in the sharing of what was available for the North. It belonged to all, and any qualified northerner who took up a position knew that he was representing the north and its image and interest. Therefore he had to perform as well as the best from anywhere.

In the massive training programme at the Institute of Administration, Zaria and in the rapid pursuit of overseas training in law, economics, engineering, etc, there was no discrimination. In the recruitment into the armed forces, nobody bothered where you came from. You filled the northern quota if you were qualified and passed a selection board. For instance, this is what made it possible for an area like Langtang in the then Lowland Division of Plateau Province (now Plateau State) to produce the largest number of army generals of any comparable peoples in size and population anywhere in Nigeria. This is why in a certain year, out of the 7 places allocated to the North in the Nigeria Defence Academy, NDA for officer training, four came from Kabba Province alone.

The education system of the North had built into it also, a policy whereby, for instance, a bright student from Daura attending his Provincial Secondary School in Katsina, was sent to Kabba Provincial Secondary School in Okene to study. This policy and similar policies in other fields were intended to enhance the internal cohesion of the North and the integration of its peoples. It was a matter of deliberate choice rather than chance. This was why within a space of 11 to 12 years, Sir Ahmadu Bello declaration of One North, One People, One Destiny became a reality not an idle slogan. So real was it that the Kanuri man from Borno Province, the Fulani from Sokoto Province, the Yoruba man from Kabba and Ilorin Provinces, the Idoma and the Tiv from Benue Province, not to talk of the Angas from Plateau Province and some over 200 tribes and "tribelets" all call themselves Northerners.

It is this cohesion deliberately forged for the harmonious coexistence of the people that some of the greatest beneficiaries of the system have made it a lifetime occupation to destroy, for private grievances or for personal political relevance Recruitment into the Armed Forces I have first hand knowledge and can vouch that Malam Ahmadu Kurfi played the greatest role of any civil servant that I know in recruiting northerners into the Nigerian Army, the Navy and the Air Force. He visited everyone of the then 13 Provincial Secondary Schools in the North in the 1960s to encourage northerners to join the Armed Forces. He flew in a Donier 27 provided by the Air Force, landing on laterite air strips built in every Provincial Headquarters and some District Headquarters as well, thanks to the foresight of the Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto.

It is interesting to note on page 105 of the book the number of military officers who appeared before the Armed Forces Selection Board of which Kurfi was a member. They include at least four who later became Heads of State, not to talk of Generals, Air Vice Marshals, Vice Admirals of the Navy, and State Military Governors, etc.

Current Attitude to Work

Today the quality of dedication that made possible such great achievements and substantial influence upon the lives and careers of so many is no more. It seems as if our youths today prefer easy life and moaning against past and present leaders. Give some of them the chance to hold any important position and you will find that they are more interested in the paraphernalia of the office rather than its content and opportunity to serve. They are easily satisfied even with shoddy work. You cannot shame them to better performance.