

Crime: Criminal gang governs Nigeria illegally- NDM

We wish our numerous readers and advertisers a prosperous New Year



6,000mw:

We are sorry, VP says

● Power, Petroleum Ministries trade blames

By AbdulFattah Olajide & Hamisu Muhammad

In an acrimonious exchange of brickbats, Vice President Umaru Yar'adua's promise to generate 6,000 megawatts of electricity by the end of 2009 ended yesterday with the Federal Government tendering an apology to the nation for its inability to deliver on the high-profile promise. Power Ministry officials said yesterday that power generation had "improved" to 3,700mw this week. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan tendered the apology in his New Year message to the nation, on behalf of Yar'adua, who had been on admission in a Saudi Arabian hospital since last November. He said many Nigerians still lack access to electricity and attributed the government's inability to meet the 6,000 megawatts target to "unforeseen and unavoidable" reasons. Jonathan said, "At the inception of this administration, we promised to drastically improve access to electric power by the end of 2009. This is because power is a basic necessity in a technologically-driven

world. Our target, which was modest, was set at generating 6,000 megawatts of electricity by year end. While I am happy today to report that we have achieved some substantial measure of success, I regret to mention that for a number of unforeseen and unavoidable reasons, this target could not be met. Millions of Nigerians are therefore still without power. For this, I tender on behalf of government very sincere regrets."

On the economic situation of the country, the vice president said many Nigerians are wallowing in poverty. He said "in many parts of the country, poverty remains a number one problem that must be confronted. True progress and development of the country can only begin when all our citizens, without exception, move out of a marginal existence."

Hot on the heels of the Vice President's apology, officials of the Power and Petroleum Ministries commenced an acrimonious exchange of brickbats over who was to

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PHOTO: AFOLABI SOTUNDE



VICE President Goodluck Jonathan

Faruk spent 21 minutes in Lagos — FG

By AbdulFattah Olajide & Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

ALLEGED Nigerian-born plane bomber Umar Faruk Mutallab spent only 21 minutes on Nigerian soil on Christmas Eve before he boarded another flight to Amsterdam, Holland, Minister of Information Professor Dora Akunyili said in Lagos yesterday. She spoke at a lunch that she hosted for newspaper editors.

Mrs Akunyili said an investigation by the Federal Government revealed that Faruk arrived Nigeria via a Virgin Air flight from Accra, Ghana. She said upon arrival in Nigeria, his passport was scanned at 20.08hrs while his passport was scanned at the check-in for the Amsterdam flight at 20.35hrs. The accused plane bomber spent much more time at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport than he did as Lagos' Murtala Mohamed Airport, she said.

The minister said Nigerian aviation authorities have a video recording of Faruk's brief stay at Lagos airport. She said the tape is in the custody of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria and would be made available to American investigators if they request for it.

According to Akunyili, Continued on page 5

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Seven parties drag Jigawa EC to court



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CROSS River State Governor, Mr Liyel Imoke (right) presenting a souvenir to his Kano State counterpart, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau during a courtesy visit to the latter shortly after the 3-day Kano State executive retreat in Obudu, Cross River State.

Court freezes Akingbola's assets worldwide

By Jibrin Abubakar

A Federal High Court in Lagos yesterday granted an injunction freezing all assets worldwide belonging to Erastus Akingbola, former Managing Director of Intercontinental Bank PLC.

Akingbola is being charged over offences amounting to the tune of N346bn and £1.08m GBP Sterling.

Head, Corporate Affairs of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) M. M. Abdullahi said in a statement that the freezing was sequel to an application filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) seeking, among others, the hearing of the Originating Motion within the shortest possible time to prevent Dr. Akingbola from dissipating the assets.

The order for which the order was granted are: Property at Milverton Road, Ikoyi, Lagos, Amazing Grace Plaza, Plot 2e-4e, Ligali Ayorinde Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, No 2 Bedwell Road, Ikoyi (suspected to be owned directly or indirectly by Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola), No. 12 Ruxton Road, Ikoyi (suspected to be directly or indirectly owned Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola), No. 12 Chester Terrace, London, England, NW1 4ND (suspected to be the residence of Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola), No. 65 Gove-End Road, London NW8 9NH (suspected to be owned by Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola and No. 8 Connaught Street, London W2 9NH, England (suspected to be owned by Dr. Akingbola).

Others are: Regal Towers, Dubai (owned directly or indirectly by Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola), properties in Accra, Ghana (owned directly or indirectly by Dr. Erastus B. O. Akingbola), shares held in listed companies in Nigeria including, but not limited to Intercontinental Bank Plc and Access Bank Plc.

Yar'adua: Criminal gang governs Nigeria illegally, says NDM

By Suleiman M. Bisalla

A criminal gang is using the ill-health of President Umaru Yar'adua as a cover to govern Nigeria illegally in spite of clear

constitutional provisions which ought to have been employed in the circumstance, the National Democratic Movement (NDM) said yesterday.

The movement, in a statement signed by its Head of Secretariat

Alhaji Sule Hamma, accused the Minister of Justice Michael Aondoakaa and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of conspiring to prevent Vice President Goodluck Jonathan from acting as President.

Goodluck Jonathan, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and former Sokoto State governor Attahiru Bafarawa, called on the Federal Executive Council to "explain to the nation where, when and how the President purportedly signed the Supplementary Appropriation Bill with incontrovertible supporting evidence."

"The criminal act of usurping powers of the President to sign the supplementary Appropriation Bill into law amounts to the most brazen confrontation with the Nigerian Constitution," the statement said in part.

The group called on FEC members to end speculation on the Yar'adua case by constituting a 15 member team of credible persons under the leadership of a retired Chief Justice, which should include the President's physician and two members of FEC, among others, "to visit the President and verify his whereabouts and obtain an authentic medical report from the hospital he is being treated."

Pending the decision of the FEC on the report, the statement said, no decision or approval should be ascribed to the President.

In tomorrow's

WEEKLY TRUST

How 'corporate beggars' operate

Story behind latest Bauchi crisis

'Woman Boku' The reddest of red-light districts

Magazine Cover: Chineze Anyaene: Stitching Nollywood & Hollywood together

... and more

Economy was poor in 2009-Mark

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

SENATE President David Mark has summed his review of the state of the nation in 2009 admitting that the economy of the country failed to improve to the desired level.

In a goodwill message to usher in year 2010, Senator Mark said in spite of the poor showing of government in 2009, Nigerians should embrace the New Year "with renewed hope and confidence for a more prosperous nation."

A statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Senate President, Mr. Paul Mumeh said Senator Mark urged the people not to be discouraged by the economic situation in the country saying "We must not be daunted by the current challenges, ups and downs of the past but to look up with confidence and working together in order to overcome."

Senator Mark admitted that the nation's economy was not in its best stead, the past year but expressed opti-

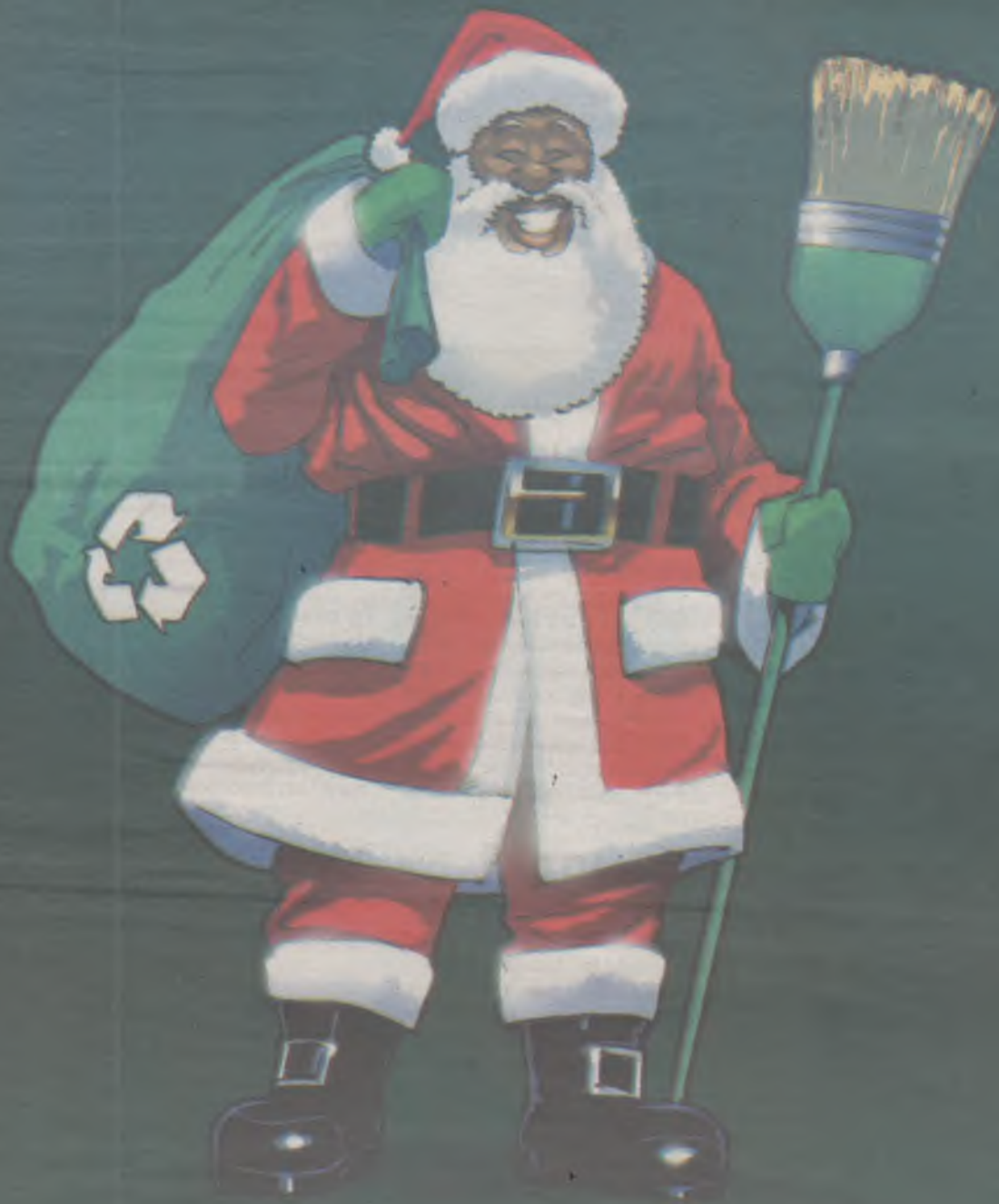
mism that the positive contributions of all would get the economy out of the woods.

He said the 2010 gubernatorial election in Anambra State would be a turning-point in Nigeria's electoral process "because we must do everything within the ambits of the law to get it right this time around".

He urged politicians to shun a win at all cost mentality often characterized by unwholesome practices such as ballot stuffing, snatching or outright violence.

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Professor Bashir Ikara dies at 66

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE Federal Commissioner of the National Population Commission in charge of Kaduna State Professor Bashir Ahmed Ikara died early yesterday in Kaduna

at the age of 66 after a protracted illness.

He was buried also yesterday according to Islamic rites in Ikara, his home town, his eldest son, Ahmed Ikara told our correspondent in Kaduna yesterday. Among those at his funeral were

the former Vice Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria Professor Shehu Abdullahi, representatives of the Emir of Zazzau Dr. Shehu Idris.

Born on April 2, 1943 in Ikara town, Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Profes-

sor Bashir Ikara attended ABU, Zaria in 1970 and graduated with a first class honours in English. He got his Ph.D from the University of Leeds, England in 1975.

He started his career as an Assistant Lecturer at the Bayero University, Kano in 1972 and

moved to the ABU in 1976.

He became a professor in 1989 and retired from service in September 1991. The late professor who was famous for his time consciousness is survived by a wife, Hajiya Sakinatu Ibrahim and 10 children.

PIC: NAN

2010: Jigawa budgets N70.9bn

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

JIGAWA State government yesterday presented a N70.9bn budget for the year 2010 fiscal year to the House of Assembly. The budget is lower than that of 2009 by 7.6 per cent.

Presenting the budget, Governor Sule Lamido told the House that it had N29.6bn and N39.5bn, equivalent to 43 and 57 per cents of the total retained revenue as recurrent and capital expenditure respectively. Governor Lamido also intimated the House that N69.1 billion was proposed as the retained revenue for 2010 while N1.8 billion covering 5% of the total budget was set aside as the stabilization funds for the year 2010. Lamido further explained that the 2010 budget was driven from a state development plan called Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). The plan, the governor added, would provide long term vision and mission for the state.

Education has the lion's share of N18.8bn with current expenditure and capital development of N12.7bn and N6bn respectively, while road construction has N13.6bn covering about 75% of the total allocation to the economic sector for the 2010. Health gulped N7bn (5% of the total budget), water projects are to consume N2.23bn while N6bn was set aside for general administration for the year.

...As Speaker faults gov's on budgets

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

THE Speaker, Jigawa State House of Assembly Alhaji Adamu Ahmad Sarawa yesterday criticised northern state governors on their budget presentations, saying most of their budgets were not realistic. Speaking shortly after receiving the 2010 budget presented by the state governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido, the Speaker regretted that majority of the budgets presented by the governors would not be realised. "Unlike in one of northern states where a budget of N190bn was presented to the state House of Assembly, our budget of N70.9bn is realistic and could be achieved. We, the members of the House are confident that the governor is capable of implementing up to 80-90 per cent of the budget," said the Speaker.



FROM left: Senator Musa Adede, former president Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Femi Majekodunmi departing the presidential wing of the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos yesterday.

Kaduna bureau de change chief not strangled - CP

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

CONTRARY to speculations that the proprietor of the Zumunchi Bureau de change, Kaduna, Alhaji Surajo Abdullahi, was strangled by unknown persons on Tuesday, the state Commissioner of Police Alhaji Tambari Yabo Mohammed yesterday dispelled it, saying his death

was a natural one.

"There was no violence on his corpse, so for any body to say he was strangled or slaughtered like a ram, it is a lie. I want to say categorically that we did not see any sign of violence on him. Those carrying rumours that he was killed are mischief-makers and we are warning them to desist from such a thing,"

he told our correspondent.

The police commissioner said his men and some members of the deceased's family discovered his corpse at Nomadic Guest-in, Malali, and that no injury of any form was seen on him. He also said his family applied that no post-mortem test be carried on the corpse in order to bury him immediately in accord-

ance with Islamic rites.

A bureau de change operator close to the office of the deceased's who did not mention his name gave another account of the story as he said the deceased received a call around 5pm Tuesday and that he left immediately without saying any word to anyone, including his close associates.

VP, IGP, Obj condole IBB

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

VICE President Goodluck Jonathan was at the Hill Top residence of former military president retired General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida yesterday to condole him on the death of his wife, Maryam Babangida.

The Vice President was accompanied by Niger State Governor Muazu Babangida Aliyu.

The Vice President shortly after his arrival had a meeting with Generals Babangida and former Head of State retired General Abdulsalami Abubakar and the governor. Dr Jonathan declined to speak to journalists.

Former president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who was at the residence of General Babangida around 4:30 pm yesterday said the former first lady did well for her generation.

Obasanjo said, "The life and programs of Maryam Babangida touched a lot of people, she was

a great mother and a role model, she would be missed greatly".

The Inspector General of Police Mr Ogbonna Onovo was with Babangida to condole him.

He remarked that the first lady should be immortalized, adding that she had done well for humanity.

The Deputy Governor of Plateau state, Mrs Pauline Tallen, who was at the Hill Top residence to condole the family, told journalists that Maryam's death was a great loss to Nigerian women.

Those present at the residence of Babangida yesterday, former Chief Justice of the Federation Justice Kutigi, Emir of Zuru General Sani Sami, Minister of Police Affairs Alhaji Ibrahim Lame.

Others were, the Governor of Kano State Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau, former Governor of Benue State Mr George Akume, Chief Solomon Lar, Justice Mohammed Uwais, Peoples Democratic Party Chairman Chief Vincent Ogbolafor.

Kano still highest in polio - report

From Hisham Habib, Kano

A recent report on the wild polio virus (WPV) indicates that Kano State has the highest number of reported cases despite efforts to eradicate the disease in the state. This was revealed yesterday in a feedback meeting with traditional leaders in the state organized by the Ministry of Health and that of the local government in Kano.

The Director, Primary Health Care of the state Ministry of Health Dr Daiyabu Muhammad in a presentation said the national WPV distribution by states up to December showed Kano having 102 cases with Bauchi and Katsina trailing behind with 43 and 36 cases respectively. He explained that the continuous media announcement by the Emir of Kano Dr Ado Bayero, adequate oral polio vaccines as well as community based micro planning were among the strengths of the campaign to kick polio out of the state.

He also said the setbacks faced included non-compliance, which may have connection with religious beliefs, too many rounds as complained by caregivers and low rou-

tine immunization coverage in many local governments.

The Emir of Kano who was represented by the Wamban Kano Abbas Sanusi said reports coming to them indicated success in the fight against the disease and urged the district heads to keep monitoring the exercise, saying it was a religious duty to take the issue of healthcare serious.

One of the participants, the District Head of Albasu retired AIG Bashir Albasu said local government chairmen should show more commitment by being physically present when such exercises as the immunization are taking place. He explained that district heads don't have the resources to handle the programme alone, and therefore need the support of the local governments.

The Permanent Secretary Ministry for Local Government Alhaji Abdulmalik Yakubu said there was the need for more inter-ministerial cooperation for the success of the program, saying many of the budget and planning constraints faced were as a result of lack of proper synergy between government ministries and departments.

Nigerian doctor 'impregnated girls and sold the babies'

POLICE in Nigeria have arrested a doctor suspected of impregnating girls and selling their babies.

The police said they found five pregnant girls aged between 12 and 17 at the doctor's clinic in the south-eastern town of Enugu.

The police said the man had confessed to getting the girls pregnant and selling their children. He is to face charges in court.

Trafficking is common in Nigeria, with children sold for labour and sex work.

In 2008, police raided a private hospital in Enugu which they said was a "baby farm". Seven pregnant young women were found. *BBC*

Faruk spent 21 minutes in Lagos

Continued from page 1

there was no evidence to suggest that the alleged plane bomber carried any lethal weapons when he went through Lagos airport. While she said Faruk was scanned on entry into and departure from Nigeria, she admitted that Lagos airport does not have 3-D scanners, which scan a passenger's entire body. She said such scanners, which are state-of-the-art technology, are not found in the airports of most developing or even developed countries, but that the federal Government has now placed an order for them.

Also yesterday, the Federal Government distanced itself from Umar Faruk Mutallab's alleged attempt to bomb the Detroit-bound Delta Airlines flight on Christmas Day, saying his conduct was alien to Nigerian culture.

In his New Year's Day message to the nation, Vice President Goodluck Jonathan said, "On Christmas day, we were presented with the most disturbing report that one of our own attempted to commit a most heinous terrorist act. Gladly, tragedy was averted, but this singular act, which is completely alien to our culture and way of life has no doubt inflicted deep wounds in our national psyche."

The vice president said "following this unfortunate incident, our security services will be more vigilant and also work concertedly to guarantee the security of life and property throughout the country, especially at our ports of entry and exit."



USED clothes sellers making brisk business at the Wuse market, Abuja yesterday.

Onovo wants better policing

By Misbahu Bashir

INSPECTOR General of Police Ogbonna Onovo seeks state-of-the-art policing in 2010. In his New Year message to policemen, Onovo said officers must handle cases with competence and avoid acts capable of upsetting the police force. He said Nigerian

police have displayed fine attitudes at peace keeping missions in other countries and such talent should be replicated at home.

He said policemen must try to address all forms of crime and violence including armed robbery and human abduction. He said all crimes that have hitherto been the bane of the society must

be reduced or eradicated.

Onovo attributed the success of the police abroad to the availability working facilities and improved welfare and assured that all necessary working materials needed by the policemen to conduct their work efficiently will be made available to them.

He said the police authority

will implement the recommendations of the of the police reform committee especially on issues to do with the improvement of the welfare of officers and the security of the nation. He said the police have been commended by FIFA for excellent performance during the U-17 World Cup football completions recently concluded.

We are sorry, VP says

Continued from page 1

blame for the failure to deliver the 6000mw electricity target.

While officials of the Petroleum Ministry in Abuja blamed lack of infrastructure such as pipelines to deliver the gas to various power plants, their counterparts in the Power Ministry said the major reason behind the failure to achieve the power target is non-availability of gas from the Nigeria Gas Company.

In different telephone chats with our correspondent, Chief Press Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum Resources Mrs Florence Mohammed and the Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Dr Levi Ajuonuma both said there was enough gas in the country to meet the power target, but that the failure was from the infra-

“The truth of the matter is that gas is available but PHCN infrastructure is very weak to wheel the gas to all its power plants. There is enough gas to provide for the power plants but the PHCN doesn't have infrastructure, the grid is not stable

structure. They said enough gas was available for the 6000MW target but Power Holding Company of Nigeria [PHCN] had no infrastructure to move the gas to the power plants. Ajuonuma said, "The truth of the matter is that gas is available but PHCN infrastructure is very weak to wheel the gas to all its power plants. There is enough gas to provide for the power plants but the PHCN doesn't have infrastructure, the grid is not stable."

However, Managing Director of PHCN Mallam Hussaini Labo said the claims by the Petroleum

Ministry officials were baseless. He said even the power plants that have intact pipelines have not been receiving enough gas from NGC.

He told *Daily Trust* through a Short Message Service (SMS) that "there are plants with pipelines available but are yet to be supplied, such as Oloronsogo, Sapele, Geregu or even Egbin. But one thing you can confirm from NGC since they own the pipelines."

Ajuonuma said it's not time to trade blames, since at least there was huge progress in power gen-

eration and that in the New Year, things will be better. "The important thing is that the future is bright and in few days coming we will witness serious progress," said Ajuonuma.

Officials of the Ministry of Power did not officially comment on the issues when contacted, but the Minister of Power Lanre Babalola was recently quoted as having blamed gas supply as the major constraint in achieving the 6000mw power target. He said the ministry was able to rehabilitate major power plants PHCN has a generation capacity of 5,300mw.

PIC: FELIX ONIGBINDE



CHILDREN of Piwoyi, a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) taking a splash in Piwoyi River, yesterday.

New Year: Bankole, Nafada task Nigerians

By Nasidi A. Yahaya

THE Speaker, House of Representatives, Mr Dimeji Bankole has urged Nigerians to remain resolute to those virtues which bind the nation together.

In his New Year message signed by his Special Adviser (Media), Eborhiana Musa, Bankole said it was important for Nigerians to continue to display love for one another and be more patriotic.

"True patriotism and brotherly love are the main ingredients we need as a people to continue to live together as one big family.

"It is only in the atmosphere of peace we can attain greatness and ultimately become the envy of other nations," Bankole said.

The Speaker also implored Nigerians to see themselves as their brother's keeper, adding that it was the basis of a united and prosperous nation.

Also, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Usman Bayero Nafada said Nigerians should channel more energy on how to make the country more peaceful, secure and politically prosperous.

In a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Public Affairs Hammed Bello, the deputy speaker said no country can progress if there is no peace and stability, and called on all Nigerians to, as part of their new year resolution, pray for a steady growth of all sectors of our national life so that year 2010 will be better than 2009 and speedy recovery of President Umaru Yar'adua.



SPEAKER Dimeji Bankole

Court: Bafarawa's arrest illegal, unconstitutional

By Atika Balal

THE arrest of former governor of Sokoto State, Attahiru Bafarawa by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) last year was illegal and unconstitutional, an Abuja Federal High Court said yesterday. Bafarawa had sued the

anti graft agency for allegedly breaching his fundamental human rights by arresting him and for the unlawful seizure of his international passport, which has since been released to him.

It will be recalled that Bafarawa had reportedly said last year that he wrote a petition to the EFCC on

May 30, 2007 stressing the need for proper investigation into the Sokoto State treasury. He also said the anti graft agency did not act on the petition but instead on May 6, 2008, invited him for questioning on the said petition and detained him for two days.

The anti graft agency

had however told the court that Bafarawa could not be investigated while he was governor because he enjoyed immunity, they also denied seizure of his international passport claiming it was one of the bail conditions meant to ensure his presence during trial.

Justice Adamu Bello in

July last year ordered the EFCC to deposit the international passport of the former governor to the Registrar of the Abuja Federal High Court after he had asked the court to hold that the continuous seizure of the passport by EFCC violated his constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of movement.

...Says Ribadu did not violate any law

By Atika Balal

AN Abuja Federal High Court yesterday said the former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Nuhu Ribadu who is challenging his demotion before the court did not violate the law by suing the Police Service Commission.

Ribadu sued the Inspector General of Police, Police Service Commission (PSC), and the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), challenging his demotion from the rank of Assistant Inspector General of Police to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police.

The PSC had told the court

that Ribadu lacked the locus standi to institute the action for failing to obtain permission from the Nigerian Police Force before doing so; but Justice Adamu Bello said the former anti graft boss was right to have exercised his constitutional right by seeking redress in court.

Justice Bello however said

the suit against the respondents cannot be statute barred since the stipulated three months within which he has to institute the suit begins from the date he received his letter of demotion and not the day the letter was written as argued by the defendants.

He also said the suit is not an abuse of court process

since one is challenging his dismissal from the NPF and the other is challenging his demotion.

The court ordered that all parties file and exchange briefs in accordance with the new rules of the court. The case has been adjourned till March 29 to enable conclusion on exchange of briefs.

Drunken driving: Police begin alcohol test

By Misbahu Bashir

THE police in Abuja said yesterday they have acquired breathalyzers to be used in determining the alcohol contents in the blood of drivers. A breathalyzer (a portmanteau of breath and analyzer) is a device used for estimating blood alcohol content (BAC) from a breath sample.

The Federal Capital Territory Police Commissioner Haruna John said at a press briefing that 20 breathalyzers acquired

would be used by officers in determining (BAC) from the breath sample of drivers.

He said any driver found to be driving under the influence of alcohol will have his vehicle impounded and prosecuted.

Haruna said the measure will ameliorate the effort of the police in detecting causes of crashes as well as discourage drivers from drink driving, adding that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has donated hand held traffic control devices for the control of traffic.

He said over 2000 officers are deployed to control traffic in Abuja daily. Police will begin publicizing the names and particulars of vehicles of traffic offenders as well as undertake special patrols to detect stolen vehicles and those with fake registration papers.

He said 160 stolen vehicles were recovered by the police in FCT in 2009 while over 60 different types of fire arms have so far been recovered from miscreants including one thousand eight hundred ammunitions.

Mother of blind baby struggles to see gov's wife

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

WORRIED by the plight of her seven month old blind baby boy, a-25 year old mother, Aisha Idris, yesterday created a scene at the Yusuf Dantsoho General Hospital venue of the free eye surgery of the wife of the Kaduna State Governor, Hajjiya Amina Namadi Sambo.

The woman's wailing gener-

ated the attention of those present at the hospital including the governor's wife who was there to inspect the ongoing surgery of 592 patients of cataract selected for the free programme.

The governor's wife who noticed the woman's struggle to reach her, ordered that she be allowed to see her. She carried the boy and told the woman to bring him to her office

next Thursday.

The woman who resides at no. 38 Gobarau Road, Uguwan Rimi told our correspondent that the baby, Nura Idris, was born blind and that his blindness was noticed by his father when he was two days old.

"Since his father who is a security guard noticed it, we have been restless but all our efforts to get him

operated of the deformity are yet to produce results. He has a stripe object in his eyes and according to ophthalmologists, he must be operated on," she said.

According to her, the boy cries every time and hardly eats. "He does not eat, and cries all the time as you can see me, I can no longer eat and sleep well because of his problem," she added.

She appealed to the wife of the governor to help find solution to the plight of the boy. "We have taken him to the National Eye Centre, Kaduna for medication. The staff of the Hospital don't help matters because each time, we want to see doctor; they would ask us to come back another time. Please Ma, help in giving my baby sight. You have done it for others, please do it for the

UNIBEN to raise funds through agric

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

THE Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin Professor Osayuki Oshodin has said that the university would concentrate on agriculture to generate revenue, saying it has the land and manpower to do so. He said yesterday in Benin while addressing newsmen that the institution could no longer wait for federal allocations. Prof Oshodin said, "We can no longer wait for funds from the Federal Government. We will approach the state and local governments. We

will even go into farming for funds."

He said apart from poor funding, the biggest challenge was trying to reconcile all aggrieved groups in the university community.

While appealing to journalists to help reunite the university community, the vice chancellor counselled against appealed negative reports that had characterised the university in the past nine months.

He said to encourage excellence, students who do well in their departments would be highly rewarded.

Budget signing not yet communicated to me – Bankole

From Nahimah Ajikanle, Lagos

SPEAKER of the House of Representatives Dimeji Bankole has said that the signing of the 2010 budget had not been officially communicated to him.

Speaking to journalists at the Murtala Mohammed Airport Lagos yesterday, Bankole said he could not establish whether President Umar Yar'adua had signed the budget purportedly taken to him on his sick bed in Saudi Arabia, because he had not been in the office for the past five days.

He said, "I cannot confirm to you whether the president has signed the budget, it has not been communicated to me, but, once it is communicated to me, the House will take the necessary actions on that. I have not been in touch for some time, in the past five days I have not been in the office. Once it is signed, it will be communicated officially. It probably could have been signed, since I have not been in the office."

On the performance of the 2009 budget, Bankole, said the House would continue to carry out its oversight responsibilities through its various committees.

"The committees are still asking questions on the performance of ministries, department and agencies, until that is completed I cannot make any official comments on the performance of the budget. Until that is completed, my comments will be based on what the House committees have done, then we make appreciable progress report."

He said he would continue to talk about the oversight duties of the House of Representatives as long as he remained the Speaker.

Bankole added that there were many questions Nigerians are asking and that the primary duty of the House was to follow the constitution.



INSPECTOR General of Police Ogbonna Onovo (left) receiving 20 units of breathalyzer and ten desk top computers from UNICEF Country Representative Suoni Sakai in Abuja yesterday. With them is the Chief Security Adviser, United Nations in Nigeria Nathan Danquah (right).

Borno budgets N85bn for 2010

From Isa Umar Gusau & Yahaya Ibrahim, Maiduguri

GOVERNOR Ali Modu Sheriff of Borno State has proposed over N85 billion budget for the year 2010 in which the re-current expenditure was increased by N3 billion from last year's budget even as the total budget shows an increase of N10 billion from what was presented in 2009.

Tagged budget of "Reformation, Sustainability, and Rural Transformation", Sheriff said the proposal which was presented before the state Assem-

bly yesterday in Maiduguri included a total N 24 billion earmarked as re-current expenditure (day to day running of government) while capital projects are to gulp N64 billion.

Sheriff noted that the increase in the 2010 budget which is higher than that of last year by 12% was because of what he called "anticipated increase in our (Borno's) revenue base due largely to the improvement in the economy and the measures that would be put in place in the generation of internal revenue".

He highlighted sectoral alloca-

tions in which the educational sector got the highest vote with N13.7 billion for both recurrent and capital expenditures while it was followed by Works and Transport which was allocated N12.3 billion, the Health sector followed with N9.8 billion while Housing and Rural Electrification as well as Agriculture and Natural Resources got N7.9 billion and N6.3 billion respectively in order of priority. Allocations were also made to all sectors with Sheriff promising that government officials would ensure the implementation of the budget if passed into law.

Zaria council donates water pumps to boost farming

ZARIA Local Government Council of Kaduna State yesterday distributed 100 water pumps to boost irrigation farming in the area.

Speaking during the distribution of the water pumps at the Agriculture Department of the council, the Chief of Staff, Government House, Kaduna Alhaji Audi Mohammed commended the council for the gesture. Mohammed, who was represented by retired Major Aliyu Mohammed, described the move as complementary to Governor Namadi Sambo's 11-Point Agenda. He encouraged the council chairman to continue with the kind gesture with a view to empowering the people and reducing the scourge of poverty among them. The chief of

staff appealed to the people to give total support to government policies and programmes in view of what the local and state governments were doing to develop the area.

In his speech, the PDP Vice Chairman in Kaduna State Alhaji Hussaini Jalo urged those that did not benefit to be patient as theirs would soon come. Jalo, who was represented by the state Organising Secretary of PDP, Alhaji Yahaya Sani, described the council chairman as a dynamic leader and urged him not to relent in his efforts. Earlier, the Emir of Zazzau Alhaji Shehu Idris who was represented by the Jakadan Zazzau Alhaji Jabiru Mukhari said the gesture was the 11th of its kind in the local government.

He called on farmers to plant Jatropha trees in their farmlands to protect the environment from desert encroachment.

The emir added that "jatropha can also be used for bio-fuel production." In a remark, the council Chairman, Alhaji Yahaya Aminu, said his administration embarked on the gesture to give all manner of people, especially the less privileged a sense of belonging. Aminu urged the beneficiaries to use the items judiciously to improve their living standards. Poverty alleviation materials distributed included 100 water pumps, 50 sewing machines, 10 refrigerators, 10 grinding machines and 10 leather sewing machines, among others. (NAN)

Red Cross to assist victims of Bauchi crisis

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

THE International Committee of the Red Cross has promised to assist children who were injured and displaced due to the recent religious crisis in Zango,

Bauchi State, where members of an Islamic sect known as Kala Kato clashed with security operatives leading to the death of about 70 persons. The Communications Officer of the committee in Nigeria Mr. Robin Waudo

who arrived the state Wednesday to assess the situation said normalcy had returned and that the committee in collaboration with the state office of the Red Cross would cater for the 23 displaced and affected children. He said

when he visited the children at the state police command where they are taking refuge, he observed that they were traumatised and needed medical attention and other assistance. Mr. Waudo said so far the children had been pro-

vided clothes, blankets and medication.

The ICRC spokesman also expressed satisfaction with the way the state government and the state office of the Red Cross were handling the situation.



LADIES preparing their hair for the New Year celebration at Wuse Market, Abuja yesterday.

Maryam was a loyal wife - Aliyu

From Isma'il Adebayo, Birnin Kebbi.

KEBBI State Acting Governor Ibrahim K. Aliyu has described the late wife of former President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida as a loyal wife and a role model for women.

Alhaji Aliyu in statement signed by the state Director of Information Garba Iyemisu Zuru said the former first lady would not be forgotten by the Nigerian people, particularly women.

The acting governor on behalf of the government and people of Kebbi State condoled retired General Ibrahim Babangida over the death and prayed to Allah for the repose of her soul.

A delegation of government officials and politicians from the state went to Minna yesterday to condole Babangida.

Don't collect 2010 hajj fares yet, Sokoto LGs told

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

LOCAL government hajj registration officers in Sokoto State have been told not to collect 2010 hajj fares in their respective areas until directed accordingly.

The Special Adviser, Pilgrims Welfare Agency Alhaji Abdul-

lahi Abdullahi Mai Gwandu gave the directive while speaking at a meeting with hajj stakeholders from across the state. Alhaji Mai Gwandu said the officers should wait for approval from the state government before receiving fares from intending pilgrims to the next hajj exercise.

Gwandu said the meeting was aimed at discussing problems that were experienced during the 2009 hajj exercise. He added that the meeting was part of measures to ensure success of the 2010 hajj exercise. The Special Adviser assured that prerequisite for the next hajj exercise would be put in

place on time to ensure its success. He expressed appreciation to God for the success of the 2009 hajj. Meanwhile, Director-General of Agency Alhaji Bello Isa Ambarura has disclosed that refund of hajj fares for intending pilgrims who could not perform the 2009 hajj would commence on Monday.

Ondo to give 5,000 scholarships

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

CHAIRMAN of the Ondo State Scholarship Board Mrs. Remi Edu Ondo yesterday said the government had approved the disbursement of scholarships to Ondo students in tertiary institutions across the country.

Edu who spoke through a member of the Board, Comrade Pius Omolola, in a chat with newsmen in Akure yesterday said the disbursement of the funds would begin next year.

Omolola commended Governor Olusegun Mimiko for approving the funds, saying it would boost education in the state.

He said members of the Board had earlier toured the six geo-political zones to get the exact data of Ondo students in higher institutions across the country.

"We have been brainstorming on how to ensure a smooth take-off of the programme. Students with physical challenges will get automatic scholarship," she said.

Polio: Katsina immunises 1.9m children

THE Executive Chairman, Katsina Primary Healthcare Development Agency (PHCDA) Ahmed Qabasiyu has said that 1.9 million children were immunised during the November round of polio immunisation in the state. Qabasiyu made this known in Katsina yesterday when members of the Journalists Initiatives on Polio Immunisation visited him.

He said the successes so far recorded in the exercise was facilitated by continuous sensitisation campaigns carried out by the state government.

"We mobilised traditional rulers, religious leaders, NGOs and other stakeholders toward a successful immunisation exer-

cise," Qabasiyu said. He also said the state government had provided mosquito treated nets to the people in an effort to reduce malaria among pregnant women and children.

The executive chairman reiterated the government's commitment toward the eradication of the six child-killer diseases. Qabasiyu commended the media for their support toward the successes recorded in the immunisation.

Earlier, the Chairman of the initiative, Alhaji Abdullahi Yamadi, pledged the support of the media in sensitising the public to the importance of the immunisation programme. (NAN).

Police foil robbery attack, kill suspected armed robber

THE police in Zaria, Kaduna State Tuesday night foiled a robbery attack and killed one suspected armed robber on the Kano-Zaria expressway.

Correspondents say the robbers had engaged the police in a gun battle but the police successfully overpowered them. Confirming the incident yesterday, the Police Area Commander for Zaria, ACP Abubakar Danmalam, said the police acted on a tip-off by some good Nigerians. He said, "The bandits had successfully mounted a roadblock on Kano-Zaria expressway terrorising commuters but with the help of God and a tip-off by members of the public we successfully

thwarted their intention. The fire exchange forced members of the robbery gang to run into the bush leaving one of them dead. I want to assure you that our operational success depends on reliable information we get from the public. We consider it very important for people to cooperate. I therefore want to appeal to the members of the public to kindly assist the police with useful information to enable us (to) discharge our duty diligently," Danmalam added. Commenting on the issue, the council Chairman, Sabon-Gari Local Government, Alhaji Kasimu Lawal-Abasco, commended the effort of the police and urged them to sustain the tempo. (NAN)

2010: DPP, NCP urge political reawakening

By Abbas Jimoh & Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

NIGERIANS should wake up and take their destiny into their hands in the interest of the nation's democracy, the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) National Chairman Lt. Gen. Jeremiah Useni (rtd.) has said.

In a New Year message, Useni said that events of 2009 are not good for Nigerians especially on the political horizon and advised politicians to serve the interest of the masses to avoid political turmoil in the country.

DPP's acting Director of Media and Publicity Abubakar Ateku Yusuf quoted Useni as saying, "Nigerian politicians have not served the interest of the masses of this coun-

try and the masses are not happy, as we approach many political activities in 2010 and the coming 2011 general elections, Nigerians must wake up and take their destiny in their hands, otherwise they would continue to be taken for a ride by the political elites," Useni said.

Nigerians will no longer tolerate blatant lies and mischievous inclinations by government officials, the National Conscience Party (NCP) has said.

NCP national chairman Afolabi Gbajumo said this in a statement to usher in the year 2010.

The party, which was founded by the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, said it would be in the forefront of constitutionally-legitimate struggles of the Nigerian masses.

Failed Hajj: Group wants travel agent tried

By Abbas Jimoh

THE Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has called for a speedy trial of a travel agent who was arrested yesterday by the Lagos State Police Command.

Alhaji Abdul Rahman Arowolo is the owner of BinSheikh Air Services which was allegedly involved in controversies over failed Hajj trips involving millions of naira in the past three or four years.

MURIC Director Is-haq Akintola said in a statement that Arowolo collected money from intending pilgrims for Hajj 2007 but failed to take them to Saudi Arabia for the spiritual exercise.

"Instead of taking them to the holy land, Arowolo transported them in two luxurious buses to Cotonou under the pretext that he had arranged a

flight which would take off from there. The poor victims were abandoned in a mosque in Cotonou for five traumatizing days. Arowolo has since been playing hide and seek since then," the statement read.

He said the travel agent had tried to do the same in 2008 and 2009, but his attempts were thwarted by the group.

Akintola said Arowolo was reported to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) in Abuja, which placed a ban on his agency.

MURIC therefore warned dubious travel agents involved in the airlifting of pilgrims to desist from their nefarious activities because the group will do all it could until they are brought to book.



CONGESTION on the Kaduna-Lokoja road yesterday.

SAN rationalises Kutigi's swearing-in of Katsina-Alu

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) Dr. Samson Sani Ameh has said that the swearing-in of Justice Aloysius Iyorgher Katsina-Alu as the new Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) by Justice Idris Legbo Kutigi who retired as Chief Justice of Nigeria yesterday was rational and in accordance with the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Dr. Ameh (SAN) told *Daily Trust* in an interview yesterday that: "What Justice Kutigi did can be termed as a rational action as opposed to people who are tied to what I

will call constitutional illusion or can be described as arm-chair critics".

According to the SAN, the swearing-in of Justice Isa Ayo Salami as the President of the Court of Appeal by the CJN was normal as it was done in the days of Justice D. D. Abutu who was recently sworn-in as Chief Judge of the Federal High Court.

"According to the second schedule of the Oath Act Cap 33 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, the President or the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) can administer both the Oath of Allegiance and the Judicial Oath on the CJN", Dr. Ameh maintained.

Women ministry, peace ambassador condole with IBB

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin & Akor Ojoma

THE Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has commiserated with the family of General Ibrahim Babangida, the people of Niger and Delta States as well as the entire nation over the death of the former First Lady Mrs. Maryam Babangida.

A statement signed by her media secretary Saghir A. El-Mohammed said the Minister, Mrs. Salamatu Suleiman, received the news with deepest regret and sorrow as the former First Lady contributed greatly to the socio-economic upliftment of Nigerian women.

"Perhaps one of the most visible contributions of the late Maryam was the establishment of the National Centre for Women Development, Abuja, which now stands as an

international monument for the integration of Nigerian women in the development process", she said.

Also, the United Nations' Youth Ambassador of Peace in Nigeria, Moses Oriri has commiserated with the family of former President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida on the demise of his wife, Hajiya Maryam Babangida.

In a condolence message addressed to the retired general Oriri described Maryam's death as a blow to Nigerians, especially those that are benefitting from her projects that are centered on women's empowerment and educational development across the country.

"Nigeria has lost a pillar, the beacon of our generation, the ray of light for the struggle," Oriri said in the condolence letter made available to newsmen yesterday in Abuja.

Ex-Trade Bank MD's family urges police to stop

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE family of the former managing director of the defunct Trade Bank Plc Mr. Samuel Ereole Kolawole who died in his hotel room in Ilorin, Kwara State capital, has urged the state police to stop further enquiries over his death.

A statement issued in Ilorin signed by the members of the Kolawole family said, "As we all know that life is

sacred and a gift from God. We thereby wish to request that further enquiries into the cause of the death be stopped to give the family opportunity to mourn our departed son and to avoid further grief on the part of the family"

The statement signed by Mr. Alabi Oluwafemi, (cousin), Mr. Dada Sunday (nephew) and Mr. Banji Olarenwaju said a follow up report from the family's medical doctor Dr. L.

Shittu, of Temitope Hospital, Ilorin, said "Kolawole died of hypertension for which he has been receiving treatment some years back now".

The deceased has been on treatment for hypertension, the family doctor for 15 years, said.

It would be recalled that, the former MD of the defunct Trade Bank Plc reportedly died in one of the hotels in Ilorin on Monday afternoon.

Gov tasks security agents over murder

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

EKITI State Governor Segun Oni has called on the police, State Security Service (SSS) and other security agencies in the country to as a matter of urgency apprehend the murderers of Prince Adebisi Ogundere, a lawyer to Osun State Gov-

ernor Olagunsoye Oyinlola who was killed by suspected assassins on Saturday.

In a statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor Mr. Wale Ojo-Lanre Governor Oni said, "Those who derive joy in taking other people's lives just to achieve temporary success

must not be allowed to live among the people. What happened is to say the least, barbaric and satanic. How can people who have blood flowing in their veins set a fellow human being ablaze? This to me is the height of barbarism and the murder of Ogundere must not be allowed to go the way of other unresolved

murder cases in this country?"

He advised politicians not to be desperate in their pursuit for power. "I have heard people making noise about electoral reforms and my reaction has always been that politicians need the reform more than the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the

electoral law. If people who claim to be democrats are forging police reports, affidavits and other vital documents in their bid to get electoral victories through the courts, then we all need to be on our knees and pray to God so that desperate politicians do not destroy Nigeria for us," he said.

New Year: FRSC cautions motorists

From Ismail Adebayo, Birnin-Kebbi

THE Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in Kebbi State has advised motorists to be cautious during the festive period.

The state Sector Commander of the FRSC M. I Garba who spoke yesterday in Birnin Kebbi said the command had put in place a special traffic control measure to make roads in the state safe and accident-free. He said over 250 marshals had been deployed to strategic roads in the state.

He said the corps would check overloading, over-speeding, dangerous overtaking and poor lighting system.

"We all know that these inherent dangers negate the principle of safe driving and could cause accidents," he said.

Sokoto commences aerial spray of farms

THE Sokoto State government has embarked on an aerial spray of farms to rid them of quelea birds, the Director of Produce in the Ministry of Agriculture Alhaji Atiku Ladan has said.

Ladan who disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Sokoto yesterday said the exercise would be carried out in Goronyo and Wurno Local Government Areas. He said the birds were responsible for over 80 per cent of destruction of farm produce in the state. Ladan also said that the menace of the birds was more prevalent on the farmlands along the fringes of Goronyo dam. He said the aerial spray was better than the traditional method of killing the birds. Ladan, however warned children in the affected areas against eating birds that might die as a result of the spraying. It would be recalled that the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources conducted similar exercise in the areas last week. Grains destroyed by the birds include rice, millet, guinea corn and wheat, among others. (NAN)



PIC: FELIX ONIGBINDE

CHAIRMAN, NDLEA Amadu Giade (right) with the Director General of the authority Lanre Ipinmiso, during the meeting with House Committee on Drugs and Narcotics at the National Assembly, Abuja yesterday.

Nasarawa proposes N67.8bn for 2010

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

NASARAWA State Governor Aliyu Akwe Doma has presented before the state House of Assembly the 2010 budget of N67.8 billion, indicating an increase of N9.3 billion over the 2009 budget.

About N40.6 billion which is 60 percent of the budget is for capital expenditure while N27.2 billion representing 40 percent of the total budget is for recurrent expenditure. The Ministry of Works and Transport has the highest allocation of N11.7 billion while the Ministry of Information has zero allocation.

Doma said the budget was guided by the internal revenue base, the current global economic meltdown and the benchmark of \$57 per barrel of crude oil. He said the budget hopes to complete all projects initiated by his administration and provide for new projects that are necessary for the socio-economic development of the state.

The governor said the sources of funds for the 2010 budget tagged, "Budget of Reality" include the statutory revenue allocation of N26.3 billion, excess crude oil receipts of N10 billion, Value Added Tax of N5.3 billion, internally generated revenue of N12 billion, grants

and loans totalling N11 billion and miscellaneous receipts of N3 billion. Accessing the 2009 budget implementation, Doma said, "I must admit that 2009 was a difficult and challenging fiscal year. This unfortunate and unforeseen situation was caused by the global economic meltdown which severely affected the national and state revenue earnings."

He added that the total revenue realised from all sources in the third quarter of 2009 was N38 billion which is 66 percent of the expected revenue. Of this amount, the recurrent receipts stood at N23 billion while capital receipts was N15 billion.

Rivers shuts down spare parts market

THE Rivers government has ordered the closure of Ikoku Spare Parts Market in Port Harcourt due its poor sanitary condition.

Mr Lekan Ige, the Press Secretary in the state's Environmental Sanitation Authority, told newsmen in Port Harcourt yesterday that the market, located on Olu Obasanjo Road, was shut on Tuesday.

"It is the intention of the Rivers State Government, through the state environmental sanitation authority, to ensure cleanliness in Port Harcourt and Ikoku spare parts market as it is

popularly known, is one of such areas that have remained very dirty in Port Harcourt.

"Several attempts to appeal to the conscience of the traders have failed and we decided to go to the market and shut it down indefinitely pending when the traders will see reasons with the sanitation authority and ensure cleanliness of the entire place," he said.

Ige said the traders littered the area with scraps and unused cars which blocked traffic on the road and the nearby Ntawogba creek, adding that the blocked creek caused flooding in Port

Harcourt city.

He promised that the market would be reopened once the traders complied with the directives of the sanitation authority. According to Ige, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr Kingsley Chindah, who witnessed the closure of the market, reiterated the government's determination to ensure cleanliness in the state capital and its environs. He said the commissioner warned that government would not hesitate to close other markets, companies or public places whose premises were dirty. (NAN)

Online Reactions

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ON www.dailytrust.com



Nigeria names 24 for Angola 2010

The coach has no better option available to him. We can only wish the nation a successful tour-

nament.
Basheer Maigandi
basheermaigandi@ymail.com

Hello Nigeria.... I think coach make a nice selection here but the problem is that we don't need lazy

strikers. The best strikers we have for now are Osaze Odemwingie and Obafemi Martins. Good luck

Nigeria.
Prince
djprincemaurice@yahoo.com

SIM card

registration:

What Nigerians say

I congratulate the NCC for their bold decision albeit belatedly. Nigeria is one of the few countries in the world where SIM cards can be purchased on the road side without documentation. The implication being that such cards could be used to commit crimes and disposed off immediately without trace. 419, kidnapping and armed robbery have a firm grip on Nigeria because before now there is no regulation on the sale and use of SIM cards in Nigeria.

Vitalis
nonvit@yahoo.com

Bauchi: Death toll from clashes climbs to 70

I am not from the north but I work here in the north, and if I am to tell the truth the northern part of Nigeria is the most peaceful part SAVE for these crises. Please what is the aim of these people?

OJ
ladiran@gmail.com

CIA rejects charge it failed to share bomb suspect intelligence

How can the CIA say a complaint was tabled on their desk and they don't have the name of the person who was complained about?

Jibril
jbally106@yahoo.com

Last moments with Mum - By Maryam's son

Salaam! I will like to condole her family and the entire people of Niger State. May her gentle soul rest in perfect peace. Ameen.

Abubakar I. Suleiman
aisulaiman@yahoo.com

May Allah SWT grant her Janatul Firdaus (Amin). May her good deeds shine in her grave and may Allah SWT give her family the fortitude to bear this great loss (Amin).

Quagmire avoided as... Kutigi swears in Katsina-Alu



JUSTICE Katsina-Alu

If the Chief Justice can swear in the Nation's President, I do not know or see why he cannot swear

in the Nation's new Chief Justice. I cannot understand what all this fuss is about. The fact that all the

former Chief Justices have been sworn in by former Heads of State is irrelevant. The outgoing Chief justice, swearing in a new Chief Justice is not a big deal. Nigeria is not ruled or governed by conventions, as such we should all move on. All those screaming foul over this issue are just mischief and trouble makers. If the new Chief Justice is capable, fair and just, free of corruption and fearless, these are the only things that matter and nothing else.

Patrick Agbobu
info@abhoils.com

The Nigeria Question is: Where exactly is President Yar'adua?

L.M. Isa
lavvista@yahoo.com

The sanctity and respectability of the judiciary in Nigeria is found nowhere in politics. May the wisdom and diligence of the judiciary be a model to the politics of the Nation.

Isa Mariri
isamariri@yahoo.com

Our new CJN of Nigeria, this is a great task that has been assigned to you for now. The eyes of all Nigerians - the common man and the rich - will be on you. Try to revive the judicial system in this country such that everyone will be treated equally before it. May Allah give you the ability to carry your duty diligently. Ameen.

Abubakar Chika Maru
abubakarsuleiman2009@yahoo.com

Galadima: FEC, N/Assembly lied on supplementary budget

I think there is a clear cut point here. Something is wrong and everything is being done to hide the truth. I don't know why Mr President will not let his VP to take over until he is well enough to come back so that Nigeria can move forward. As a nation, the world has already left us far behind and everything must be done to get us back on track. If truly Mr President did not sign the supplementary budget and PDP lied to us, then it is all over for Nigeria because we have all entered the pocket of some few individuals. Come to think of it, if Mr President has been preaching the rule of law; I believe he means

it. That means left to him he would have asked the VP to take over until he regains his strength to lead this country again. I hope 2010 will not be like 2009.

Aji Isuwa Suleiman
suleimanaji@yahoo.com

The FEC and National Assembly should prove to Nigerians that the president actually signed the supplementary budget to erase any doubt in the minds of Nigerians. Let us have the boldness to say the truth even if it will make us unpopular.

Yakubu Nandang
yakubunandang@yahoo.com

does not in any way impress Allah. Death will come upon us one day whether we like it or not. Our dear president is sick in the hospital today...who will help him except Allah? Not the best doctors of this whole world or all the riches of men/jinn can cure him. Nigerians is it not high time we look inward of us and change? Allah is full of Mercy. It is not too late to change.

Amina
suhayr1990@yahoo.com

Terror: Full body scanners for Nigerian, Dutch airports

This is a welcome development even if it infringes on privacy rights. We must pay a high price for our safety because some extremists are willing to pay any price to destroy innocent people. Kudos to FAAN!

Pwaveno Bamaiyi
phbamaiyi@yahoo.com

Whether Total Body Imaging Scanners are put in place, and whether President Obama has approved its usage, are both hypocritical questions. Unless the spirit of the security agencies is transformed into that of sincere and transparent service, no amount of scanners or approval would bring down the rates of global terror. We don't need scanners; we need spiritual reform!

Isa Mariri
isamariri@yahoo.com

I think the world is becoming another thing entirely. How can you in the name of security expose or strip a human being naked before the

public? It is a public disgrace and God forbids it. May God save this world from satan's grip.

Ademola Ojelabi
dmlojelabi@gmail.com

May Allah forgive our sins. Wallahi only Allah knows what He created in Men/Jinn. All these gadgets/IT won't help the world except we begin to adopt the right ways of doing things. Al-Qaeda is managed by people. What is the pride and for how long would we in the name of pride in this world not be willing to talk and say the truth? Young innocent people are dying and are being co-opted and brainwashed into this unholy suicide. Muslim leaders and scholars in the world must rise up to this challenge and speak to educate people about the true teachings of Islam and innovations in the religion. Allah (SWA) said He will definitely try us as Muslims

Amina
suhayr1990@yahoo.com



By Hamisu Salihu Hadejia

The Faruk Mutallab saga: Sanusi Abubakar misfired

In his Tuesday column (29 December, 2009), the newly "inducted" *Daily Trust* columnist, Sanusi Abubakar, struggled to have his gullible readers believe that the alleged attempted bombing of an airliner by a Nigerian, Umar Faruk Abdul Mutallab was, like *Boko Haram* and *Kala Kato* of late, the product of Northern Nigeria's social malfunction. This is despite the fact that Sanusi knows quite alright that the alleged attempted bomber spent much, if not most, of his life outside Nigeria rather than inside it thereby foreclosing any possibility of his getting indoctrinated in the North\Nigeria. In fact, if at all the factor of an actor's milieu is to be fallen back upon for explanation on Faruq Mutallab's alleged terrorist act, countries like Togo, Britain, Dubai and Yemen where

This is despite the fact that Sanusi knows quite alright that the alleged attempted bomber spent much

the young Mutallab had cause to spend some considerable spell of his lifetime should be the focus of our attention and, hence, the target of our vituperation; not Nigeria - a country that gave Faruk only his primary education.

Without attempting to question the competence of Sanusi as a columnist, the finality of his argument made me wonder whether he had read enough of literature before daily trust thought of thrusting a whole column unto his lap. If at all he did, why then would he (as a journalist or columnist) so presumptuously and uncritically accept or, to put it precisely, believe, that the attempted airliner bombing by Faruk really take place and was not a hoax. And, why would Mal. Sanusi even make the sheepishly sloppy attempt to draw correlation or a functional relationship between the alleged attempted bombing and the social super structure in the Muslim North? That was what statisticians would call 'type I error'!

It is my firm believe that, if Sanusi had only been aware of such incidences as the Lavon Affair and the 9/11 conspiracy theory propounded on sound empirical evidences by no less a person than the US's David Duke, he would not only have treated the "Mutallab Saga" with the uttermost circumspection deserving of it, but also, tarried his pouring of venom and blame on Northern Nigerian Muslims for the alleged attempted act. Let me enlighten Sanusi on the accounts of the above conspiratorial plots so that when next time news of Faruk Mutallab's nature comes up on the global media market, he would have first to critically examine the "commodity" before buying it blindly and going ahead to harp and pontificate about its quality and all that jazz.

The Lavon Affair

When antagonism between Israel and

Egypt was at its bitterest best in 1954, an incidence happened that caused Israeli Foreign Minister to resign in disgrace. What was it? The Israel government then launched a covert campaign dubbed: "Operation Suzannah" under which it (Israel) plotted to murder Americans and blow up American installations in Egypt. The ultimate aim was to leave false evidence that the Egyptian did it thereby instigating America in to waging war against Egypt on the side of Israel. But as the good and compassionate God would see to it, the plot was exposed (though some American installations had already been blown up) and the Israeli agents were caught red handed forcing the resignation of Pinhas Lavon; the Israeli Foreign Minister from which the affair draws its name.

The 9\11 Conspiracy Perspective

Certain happenings prior to, during and after the 9\11 attack on WTC and the Pentagon have combined to make some people (including this writer) believe that the incidence was but what Margaret Truman would (in her novel so named) call: "Murder in the White House - the crime only an insider could commit". Thus, thanks to the tirelessly courageous research of Sen. David Duke, we now know the following facts about 9\11:

(a) The U.S Army School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) had released a 68-page sturdy published in the *Washington Times* (of September 10, 2001) which indicated the possibility of America's (and Israel's) foreknowledge of the 9\11. It reads: "Of the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, the SAMS officers say: Wildcat, ruthless and cunning. Has the capability to target U.S Forces and make it look like a Palestinian\Arab act."

(b) Despite the initial claim of mass Jewish death toll, only three Jews were actually said to have been killed in the 9\11 attack. And this was confirmed to *New York Times* by Israeli U.S Consul then, Alon Pinkas.

(c) Alex Diamandis, vice President of sales and marketing in an instant messaging firm had confirmed that 'workers in Odigo's Research and Development and International sales office in Israel received a warning approximately two hours prior to the first attack on the WTC and the Pentagon.'

Now, with the very world we live in having witnessed the Lavon Affair and; failed to answer hordes of questions about the 9\11, what, in this world, will ever be taken on face value? Thus, it is, also, in this context that analysts, commentators and columnists are supposed to view the Faruk Mutallab bombing palaver because his case too has lots of vital questions begging for answers. For instance, if the Mutallab family had alerted both national and international security agencies on not only the "lost" of Faruk but also, his being a security threat, why was Faruk not placed on the no-flight lists of both Nigeria and America; which would have led to his capture hands down?

Hadejia is of the Department of Economics, Bayero University, Kano (hamsal22@yahoo.com)



By Kabiru Danladi Lawanti

Much ado about the Sardauna Foundation

Many people, including this writer, were very sceptical about the sincerity of the people who gathered in Kaduna recently to launch a foundation, to remember the life and time of the first and the last premier of the Northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto. One has cause to question the morale of those who organised the ceremony in the first place, because such events, in the past, have been used, to serve as an avenue for people seeking cheap media publicity, using the legacies of *Sardauna*, to make controversial statements that can earn them cover pages of national dailies. Thus, money realized covers the expenses of the organizers, in terms of logistics, publicity and in most cases refreshments and even accommodation in big hotels for the organizers. The fan-fair starts and ends there.

One kept wondering what the governor of a state that has no single standard primary or secondary school in his home state, was doing in raising funds for a foundation, which was meant to immortalize *Sardauna*? What the 19 Northern state governors need today is not snatching an event like that to show how they loved *Sardauna*, but to use the resources at their disposal to improve the standard of life of their poverty-stricken citizens. Of what benefit is the

Thus, Arewa House has saved the initiators from building new offices for the Foundation, which may take years to finish

foundation if the same money that was meant to provide water, schools and hospitals is set aside in a foundation that has no executive powers? The present leaders of the Northern region, 90% of them are direct beneficiaries of *Sardauna's* foresight of implementing good policies that bordered around education especially, improving the quality of life of his subject.

The best way to immortalize him is to ensure they have done something similar to what the *Sardauna* did for the region 43 years ago.

Notwithstanding, our scepticisms and criticisms are of no use for now. The Foundation has been launched. Pledges and cash have been realized; ours here as usual is to suggest to the organizers what we think should be done so that the good intention of some of the organizers does not go in vein. For me, as many suggested, with Arewa House, the need for the Foundation does not arise in the first place. Arewa House, although some argue that since the Centre is under ABU Zaria, would not be as independent as a foundation as a one created purposely for that which

is independent of anybody. But Arewa House is a legacy that would have been considered in setting up the whole idea of the Foundation. It would have been easier for Arewa House to be adjusted to meet the aspiration of the Sir Ahmadu Bello Foundation. Arewa House as it is now has just been turned into an archival Centre, where most of the materials stored, are in various stages of decay. How best can we immortalize *Sardauna* than to preserve his legacies?

According to the organisers, the objective of the Foundation is to undertake research on the life and legacies of the late *Sardauna*, in the areas of values in service, leadership, development strategies, education, religious and ethnic tolerance, transparency and accountability. However, this should be extended by really applying the funds raised to undertake a long term sustainable poverty reduction in a meaningful way that would make discernible impact on the life of the people of the North. Then a holistic approach has to be undertaken by the Foundation in making Arewa House to become research centre, inviting resource persons from time to time to undertake research in the areas of poverty alleviation, empowerment of the poor and also coming out with core programmes in economic and social development, health, education, and human rights. Thus, Arewa House has saved the initiators from building new offices for the Foundation, which may take years to finish.

Much as we want to help the North, our effort will be in vein if the political will is not there. Therefore it is the sole responsibility of State Governors to derive the social change which the North much needed. In the last decade, the region has received an unprecedented revenue from the federation account which the *Sardauna* has never seen even 5% of it, plus also the excess crude funds and internally generated revenue or IGR. But the evident of these revenues are not seen in the lives of our ordinary people. What characterized the region today is millions of school age children roaming the major streets of Kano, Katsina, Gombe, Maiduguri etc. with begging bowls, large chunk of unemployed youth in every corner with little or no hope, religious and ethnic violence, which claimed over 20,000 lives in Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, the recent one being the *Kala Kato* incident in Bauchi.

We are in deep crises as a society, but few, if at all realize this. Is it not evidence enough that hopelessness can drive young minds like Umar Faruk Mutallab to try to blow himself in a plane with hundreds of other passengers in the US? The North needs to organise itself. Our society is dying and we are busy squandering every opportunity given to us. The *Sardauna* Foundation therefore is not and should not be the last solution to our heaps of problems, but rather a starting point.

Lawanti wrote from Area 11, Garki, Abuja.



By Isa A. Abubakar

Re: Mr President, for God and country, please resign

I was delighted to have come across a piece of writing with above caption written by the former military governor of Kaduna state in your educative and widely read newspaper. The writer seems to have raised genuine fundamental issues if we are to stick to the truth without any bias or sentiment. Nevertheless, the writer has provided the advice and that is role he can play from his own part; the issue now remains to Mr. President to decide objectively in order to make better decision for himself and for the country. Positive response to the issue raised by the writer will in doubt be a good omen for our country. However, the writer's perspective to that effect is very clear but I would like to view the issue from another perspective which formed the basis for advice to the Mr. President, discussions and arguments as well as the present mercy state of the country and its citizenry.

If Nigerians, stakeholders and subordinates alike, respect and adhere to the existing laws, we wouldn't have found ourselves in the present chaotic and mercy situation in all aspects. At internal scene, it is very clear to every Nigerian irrespective of socioeconomic status and position that system is not working in our county and every one is more or less affected directly or otherwise.

Ethnic clashes have invaded many places and the culprits cannot be brought to the book despite laws and punishments to that effect. Squandering of public funds is on increase even though there what is called "EFCC" that has been formed to checkmate those activities but regrettably it is not fulfilling the task assigned to it adequate as widely expected, as there are some citizens assumed to have strong immunity despite their track record of misappropriations. Today, for one to be safe and free for the watch dog, one should hide under the canopy that is widely known as PDP.

Additionally, common man has virtually lost confidence in the leadership at all level as there is no any indicator from all perspectives that one can use to project progress in the near future. In fact, there is gloomy of hope if we fail to change the manner and attitude towards the existing laws of the country.

However, at the global level, we lost value, recognition and respect. Today, Nigerians are chase and harass in countries that are not even as important as Lagos or Kano state economically due to our refusal to use the laws appropriately. In the 1970s and up to early 1980s, Nigeria was regarded as giant in the continent but for sure without any self deception, Nigeria has since vacated from the position. This is why even among African peers, Nigerians have lost respect. Looking at the scheme of things from broader perspective, Nigeria seems to have lost almost all the valuable things that will make life meaningful internally, promote the image and restore the lost glory at international community for simple reason: failure to utilize the already existing standing laws and rule of law that are set out for proper and efficient leadership, effective functioning of the system and for achieving social justice in the country.

The Nigeria's situation of today has adversely changed patterns and direction for use of government machineries as well as perceptions of service providers due to that failure to employ the already existing set of rules and laws in governance and other aspect of leadership. Gone are the days when government machineries and services were used for the country's sake not for leaders. Now government machineries as well as the services at all level are being geared towards the interest of the leader be it at local, state or federal level. This is why governments virtually at all levels have no clear direction and objectives since personal interest are the driven force.

Our beloved country's education, economy, living standard, health care delivery, transport system etc are deteriorating for that reason. The damage done to the country's name is on increase in spite of the re-branding campaign embarked upon by the present administration. It is at this juncture, I would like to advise the re-branding campaign manager to twice regarding the N200 million earmarked for the campaign in 2010 budget appropriations. The country's numerous problems could only be triumphed over together when Nigerians are fully committed and willing to adhere to the existing laws and other rule of law enshrine in the constitutions and other sources without any sentiment, favouritism and bias. No country on the globe will move forward without the respected rule of law. Therefore it is duty bound upon the stakeholders to show an exemplary adherence to the rule of law for the masses to follow suit.

Abubakar of the Institute of Education, International Islamic University, Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Isabakar2001@yahoo.co.uk)

Your Letters

When the vice president can validly act without the president's authority

Permit me a space in your widely read newspaper to react to a publication which appeared in the Opinion Column of your paper with the above caption, credited to one Sylvester Udemezue. The said publication which appeared in the *Daily Trust* edition of Tuesday, December, 29, 2009 is

enriched with legal reasoning and argument relating to the absence of President Umaru Yaradua on health ground particularly, how justifiable it would for the Vice President to step into the shoes of the President and perform real executive functions. Interestingly, the writer tried, albeit, unsuccessfully to justify his position on the issue by relying on some constitutional provisions, particularly Sections 145, 141, 144(2) and 146(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.

To begin with, the writer pointed out significant lacunae created by Section 145 of the Constitution which, according to

him, does not say what happens in a situation where the President fails. Section 145 states that "Whenever the President transmit to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written declaration that he is proceeding on vacation or that he is otherwise unable to discharge the functions of his office, until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary such functions shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President".

Abdulrahman Njidda Esq, (Managing Partner), Njidda & Co, Plot 9, Port Harcourt Crescent, Area 11, Garki-Abuja.

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

Where's the evidence?

NIGERIANS will sure be mighty interested to see photo of the president signing the budget.

A. Mohammed, 07035218214.

Stop this vicious cycle

FOR God sake what is happening in Nigeria, especially in the north? CAN and JNI leaders should educate their people on how to leave in peace with one another. Christianity and Islam do not encourage conflict. Let's stop fighting and killing ourselves, and start talking.

MBOBALA, 07038735473.

Bauchi,

Good question

DID Faruk Mutallab do his national service via the NYSC? See how big men are not following laws?

HUSAINI, Lafia, 08039668253.

Moot point

OBVIOUSLY, the promise of

6000mw cannot be realised. That being so, Nigerian government officials should stop telling us what they know is not feasible.

NASIR Jikan Sarki, Tsohon Gari, Rano, Kano, 07035856895.

Akunyili disowns a Nigerian?

WE are not in support of Mutallab's action in the US; but we are shocked by Akunyili's remarks on the matter. She appears to disown a citizen of Nigeria. I doubt if she would done so if the individual involved hailed from Anambra or Enugu.

KAMAL Ibrahim Sani Shakhwaka, 310 Indabawa, Kano, 07037382400.

Tragic

IN what way again can our beloved country Nigeria be rebranded than this, on Christmas day at the end of the year and also at the end of a decade and on a holiday and the whole attention was on the news, CNN? It is time

for our leaders to make our education system OK, so that our youth will remain in our country to acquire the necessary knowledge for the development of our nation, because the more we travel out, the more we learn things that are not part of us as Nigerians. We also pray that God in his infinity mercy will touch the hearts of our leaders to develop our nation so that we the leaders of tomorrow will be grateful to them, because if you as a father take good care of your house and your children you don't need to hire an information minister to polish your image for you, because your well nourish children will defend you at anytime and anywhere.

MUHAMMAD Kabir Issah, Angwan Barden Pawa, Suleja, Niger State, 07036799294

SIM card registration

HAS the NCC considered both sides of the coin in proposing to enforce this rule?

08024779471.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

No. 20 P.O.W. Mafemi Crescent, Off Solomon Lar Way,
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Lessons of Hajj 2009

This year's Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia ended on Monday with conclusions about its success, because the returnees still await the arrival of their luggage. For the first time in decades, the exercise witnessed early beginning with the timely airlift of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia without much hitch in November. Though the exercise may have come and gone, some of the usual problems associated with it persist. It is a known fact that the end of every Hajj exercise usually signals the beginning of preparations for the subsequent year's pilgrimage; and this is so because every year brings up peculiar problems associated with such an extensive operation.

Before the commencement of every Hajj exercise, the Saudi authorities typically introduce new measures to enhance pilgrimage in subsequent operations. Such measures take cognisance of entry flight schedules, quota of pilgrims allowed for each country as well as accommodation arrangements at Muna and Makka, among others. Countries are expected to take note of such rules while making preparation for the hajj operations. For several decades however, Nigeria always found it difficult to abide by them, as both government and intending pilgrims take things for granted as if the rules did not apply to them. This is because while Nigerians remain fixated in their approach to the exercise, the authorities on the other hand, often lack the political will to instil discipline, shun corrupt practices and ensure good management of the operations.

This subsequently results in the recurring problems of delays in the selection of airlines, visa and departure arrangements, and accommodation in the holy land as well as the general conduct of Nigerian pilgrims before, during and after the exercise. Regrettably, this attitude was openly displayed when some pilgrims protested against the simple and long-standing rule that each Nigerian pilgrim was expected to carry a maximum of 50kg luggage (10kg hand bag and 40kg check-in luggage) while returning home. The action has on the other hand lent credence to the allegation that businessmen and women have taken over hajj operation to the detriment of those who really go to the holy land for genuine religious reasons.

Indeed, the failure of pilgrims to adhere to the instructions, leading to the unwarranted stoning of the Amirul Hajj in the holy city of Makka should not be condoned, as it did not only contradict the teaching of Islam, but also portrayed the nation's image in bad light. It is also unfortunate that Nigeria, with less than one hundred thousand pilgrims annually performing the hajj exercise, always give the Saudi authorities more logistical challenges than countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, with an average of two hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims each year.

In order to avoid a repeat of this shameless act, we call for immediate overhaul of the system to give room for thorough screening of intending pilgrims. This is to forestall a recurrence and save the country from further embarrassment. It is time that the authorities began to place restriction on people who have performed the exercise multiple times. By so doing, activities of businessmen who go to the holy land under the cover of hajj to perpetrate their activities to the disadvantage of genuine pilgrims would be curtailed.

We commend the National Hajj Commission and other stakeholders for the significant progress recorded in this year's exercise, and hope that they will build on the aspects that Hajj 2009 that were successful and address the observed shortcomings in the execution of subsequent Hajj operations. Furthermore, the Hajj commission, state pilgrim agencies and Boards should ensure that intending pilgrims are henceforth shortlisted and treated on first come - first served basis. All stakeholders in the hajj operation and the entire Muslim community should co-operate in this regard. The time to really make the move for a better and smoother Hajj operation in Nigeria is now.

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Ibrahim Tahir: Mallam of Mallams (I)

By Peter Alexander Egom

“Who is this fellow who speaks English with such Cambridge elegance and aplomb?”

This was the insistent question which coursed through and assailed my mind in the late afternoon of this crisp and early autumn day of October 1964. The occasion was yet another effete attempt at establishing a functional African Students Union at Cambridge University. And the venue was a well-lit and cozy hall somewhere at Queens, or, perhaps, at Kings. But wherever it was, that day marked a turning point in my life.

As this incredible fellow continued to talk his dyed-in-the-wool Cambridge English, I could not but ask, thus, of the gentleman sitting next to me: “Who is this African?” He, thereupon, gave me an off-hand and slightly derogatory reply as follows: “He is the new Mallam at Kings.” I was cut to the quick by this condescending response to my question. And, I promptly gave this tart rejoinder to what I considered to be an unsportly response to my question as follows: “This is no ordinary Mallam. He is the Mallam of Mallams.” This encounter was, of course, not carried beyond that instant, for it would have been caddish and bad form to do so. But, from that day, I secretly admired Ibrahim ben Tahir as my Mallam of Mallams.

Then, as soon as the struggling African Students Union affair ended, I hurried off to make the acquaintance of the new Mallam at Kings. I congratulated him on his very urbane way of talking in English and he promptly told me that he was a BBC broadcaster at Bush House on the African Service and that that was why he spoke the way he did. There was simply nothing special about how he spoke, he said, because that was his trademark business lingo, so to speak. I was quite impressed by his self-effacing way of passing over what I regarded as a great gift and I, there and then, decided that this was my kind of guy, as the Americans would say.

I then asked him what he was reading at Kings and he told me that he had just started

off with economics in the Moral Science Tripod, but that he was finding the mathematics and statistics of it rather heavy-going and boring and that he was, therefore, likely to switch over to a less dry and more people-friendly course in Social Anthropology after the end of his first year. And I really got him talking when I told him that I had just done a switch from the boring *bones-and-stones* of Archaeology to the exciting *sex-and-food* of Social Anthropology because I felt that the latter enabled me to deal with flesh and blood human beings in the living Nigerian societies,

lari” moral and legal order of Cambridge as overseen by the Proctors and my almighty College tutor. And, the whole place was crawling with world-class minds on any subject under the sun so that every social contact I made gave me the opportunity of widening and deepening my curious and hungry intellectual horizon. Yes, I was really cut out for Cambridge and Cambridge also for me, or so I thought.

But, after my twelve steady months of virtual King's Street pub runs and gadding about the Cambridge social circuit of sherry, port and white wine, it soon dawned on me that there was more to Cambridge than met my eye. It became

“Cambridge was telling me to begin to grow up and to, hopefully, find and forge the moral and ethical template that would give direction and substance to the rest of my life on this earth”

for example. It was on this topic of Social Anthropology that our minds met. And so it was that from that very *Cox-Orange* type of autumn day in October 1964, Ibrahim ben Tahir, as I soon began to fondly call him, became a fixed daily feature and the larger-than-life boon companion of my term days at Cambridge until I went down from Cambridge in June 1966.

What Ibrahim ben Tahir came to mean to me during and after my two-year stint with him at Cambridge can be teased out from the following brief rehash of the state of my mind at the time we met at Cambridge and what I thought about him thereafter. I had clocked 22 on July 24, 1964 and was in October 1964 at the beginning of my second year at Downing College. In my just ended first year, Cambridge had been a rather dizzying experience for me. I was, indeed, left speechless and bowled over by how zany beautiful life could be on this earth. I had so much freedom to do as I liked and the means to do much as I liked within the very elastic and “*in statu pupi-*

clear to me that Cambridge and its elusive air of *freedom-without-responsibility* held out a very serious challenge to me. Cambridge was telling me to begin to grow up and to, hopefully, find and forge the moral and ethical template that would give direction and substance to the rest of my life on this earth. And I had only two years left to do so! In fact, this life-defining challenge to declare my stand on the human condition which Cambridge brought me face-to-face with, at this time, had to do with my relationship to God, on the one hand, and on whether I was an urban-and-bond-man of a British cultural toady or a rural-and-free-man of a Nigerian Mbonu Ojike, on the other hand. And the story of how these two key issues of my self-identity became very central to my conscious life in October 1964 goes as follows.

First, my first twelve months of the elusive freedom at Cambridge had sapped and destroyed the Roman Catholic ethical foundation and pillars of my adolescent years in, especially, the rural Nsukka of Eastern Nigeria. Some wiseacres would, of course, say that my faith in Christ was not strong enough at that time and that that was precisely why the “*wein, weib und gesang*” of Cambridge got the better of my religious piety. That could jolly well have been the case.

To be cont'd.

Egom, a consultant publisher, wrote from NIIA, Lagos.

“I had clocked 22 on July 24, 1964 and was in October 1964 at the beginning of my second year at Downing College”



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INTERNATIONAL

Guinea stagnates over leader's health question

GUINEA will make no economic or social progress until uncertainty over the health of its wounded junta chief is resolved, potential investors and Conakry residents said yesterday.

Defense Minister Sekouba Konate assumed interim control over the mineral-exporting West African country after a failed assassination attempt on the military ruler on December 3.

Junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, known to most Guineans as "Dadis," remains in a Moroccan hospital. Guinean officials say his health is improving, but Dadis, for most of 2009 a fixture on Guinean airwaves, has made no public appearance since then.

"It's a matter of urgency to get out of this situation as quickly as possible, otherwise the coming months are going to be very tough," said Boubacar Diallo, an executive with a Nigerian bank which is close to opening an operation in Guinea. "As long as the situation is unclear, and until Guineans are properly informed about the health of their leader, the economy will continue to slow down," he said.

A measure of economic regression in the world's biggest exporter of aluminum ore bauxite -- shipments of which have fallen this year -- is the cost of foreign currency.

On the black market, U.S. dollars changed hands for 6,250 Guinean francs this week, up from around 5,000 francs before September 28, when security forces killed more than 150 pro-democracy marchers. Earlier this month, the United Nations said



GUINEA'S junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara

Dadis bears direct responsibility for those deaths. The sight of some Guineans recently damning France for the former colonial power's criticism of Dadis perplexed shoeshine man Alpha Sow.

"I don't understand how people can demonstrate for the return

of someone who's supposed to have recovered his health, but who hasn't said anything in public for almost a month," said shoeshine man Alpha Sow. "It's time to move on."

Since Dadis was airlifted to Morocco, Guineans have received

no reliable information about his condition, according to civil society coalition the Guinean Social Movement (MSG).

"This lack of respect shown to the people is an unacceptable situation which creates a malaise fed by the statements made without

any medical basis by members of the government," said the group, which threatened to stage peaceful protests this month. "The MSG calls on you to take responsibility for a rapid exit from this crisis," the group told Konate in a statement.

Zimbabwe considers mortgaging minerals to offset debt

ZIMBABWE is considering mortgaging its mineral wealth to offset the country's 5.4 billion dollar debt owed to multilateral donor agencies, a government report says. The ministry of finance report seen by AFP said various options were being considered for paying off the external debt, an essential step to secure new financing from lenders for 2010-2012.

"A key conditionality for unlocking new financing of 7.5 billion -- 10 billion (dollars) ... revolves around the development of a Debt Relief and Arrears Clearance Strategy for the country's external debt overhang of 5.4 billion, of which 3.8 billion is in arrears," the report said.

Also under consideration was using internal revenue resources, asking for debt restructuring from the Paris Club of lender nations or "going through the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC)

route for debt forgiveness," the report added.

Government, in co-operation with major creditors will undertake in-depth studies on the various options to come up with a "sustainable debt management and clearance solution which balances the interests of the country and its creditors," it added.

Zimbabwe has vast mineral resources, but the sector has been set back by a near decade of political and economic instability worsened by a hyperinflation, and power cuts. According to Finance Minister Tendai Biti the country will need 45 billion dollars to restore its economic performance to levels seen in 1996/7.

Zimbabwe's economy has contracted every year since then, but is expected to grow 4.7 percent this year after the local currency was abandoned in January and a unity government took office the following month.

....Unions ask for details of junta leader's health

LABOUR unions, employers and civil society groups have called on interim president Sekouba Konate to provide details of the state of health of the junta leader, who was shot on December 3.

"Since December 4, the date on which President Moussa Dadis Camara was evacuated to Morocco after an assassination bid (...) the Guinean people have received no reliable information on his state of health," the Guinean Social Movement (MSG) said in an open letter.

"This manifest lack of respect for the people is an unacceptable situation that creates a malaise fed by declarations without medical foundation by some members of the government and on RTG (Guinean Radio and Television)," the letter warned.

It said that Captain Camara's health was a "major preoccupation which must not be hidden by erroneous statements."

The MSG consists of eight trade union federations along

with the national bosses' organisation and the national council of organisations of civil society in the west African country.

The head of one main union, Rabiou Serah Diallo, told AFP that, "Since General Konate is due to give a speech, we would like the people to be truly informed of the health of the president, because rumours are circulating. Some even say that Dadis is dead and that troubles the peaceful population."

Konate has made no official comment since flying Tuesday to Rabat to see Camara in hospital. The formerly verbose junta chief has been silent since he was shot in the head by his aide de camp.

According to a source close to the junta reached in Rabat by telephone from Conakry on Wednesday, General Konate has said that "Dadis was not conscious of what was going on around him" and "you can't get anything out of him."

The MSG threatened to

"unleash peaceful protest actions" from January 5 if the authorities did not implement "a rapid and peaceful way out of the crisis."

Guinea has been plunged into chaos since September 28, when soldiers killed at least 156 people and wounded hundreds more during a peaceful rally in a Conakry stadium to protest at Camara's plan to stand as a candidate in presidential elections announced for June.

Women and young girls were raped and then sometimes shot, and UN investigators have accused junta members of "crimes against humanity," while the European Union has imposed tough sanctions on the regime.

"When General Konate says that he will hold elections as rapidly as possible and condemns violence, saying 'Enough is enough,' Guineans breathe a sigh of relief," Serah Diallo told AFP. "But we're still hungry for actions, because we want him to take real actions to get us out of the crisis."

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun



HAJIYA MARYAM BABANGIDA

WE EXTEND DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO FORMER PRESIDENT IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA, GCFR, fss, min AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY ON THE SAD AND UNTIMELY PASSING AWAY OF HIS DEARLY BELOVED WIFE AND LIFE PARTNER AND MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN, THE FORMER FIRST LADY OF NIGERIA, **HAJIYA MARYAM BABANGIDA (1948-2009)**.

WHICH SAD EVENT TOOK PLACE ON SUNDAY, 27TH DECEMBER, 2009.

ALLAH YA JIKANTA. ALLAH YA GAFARTA MATA.
ALLAH YA RAHAMSHETA. ALLAH SA TA HUTA.
ALLAH BADA KAKURI DA JUREWA
ALLAH HUMMA AMIN.

Signed:
Ambassador (Professor) Jibril Aminu, CON, FAS

International

Sudan braces up for south's independence referendum



PRESIDENT Omar Bashir (centre), flanked by the Southern Sudanese leader, Mr. Salva Kirr (left).

By Is'haq Modibbo Kawu

ON Tuesday, this week, the Sudanese parliament adopted a key law that sets the stage for a referendum on the independence of Southern Sudan.

The adoption of the law removes a major dispute which has threatened to jeopardize the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the bitter civil war, between the Khartoum-based Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army.

The new law adopted by parliament included "a contested provision", according to Agency reports, demanded by Southern politicians, which requires Diaspora southerners to cast their ballots in the referendum planned for 2011. South Sudan would choose either to remain a part of the unified Sudan or become an independent country.

The Southern politicians had insisted upon the "contested provision", because of fears that large numbers of Southern votes in the North can be compromised by

the government in Khartoum. The new article states that South Sudanese living outside the south, and born before January 1, 1956, the date of Sudan's independence, must vote in the south.

But those living outside of the south and born after that date, would be able to vote in their place of residence, whether in the north, south or abroad. The adoption of the new provision removes a major blockage on the route to what is still expected to be an acrimonious process. But it underscored the depth of distrust between the two sides to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), of 2005.

The ruling National Congress Party (NCP) had initially deleted the provision in a previous version of the law adopted last week, allowing for absentee votes in the referendum. It had based its move on a claim that the article "violated the interim constitution which gives every Sudanese freedom of movement from one region to another".

The move prompted a walkout from parliament by MPs from the

Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement, which is the ruling party in the South, as well as other southern parties.

A senior official of the NCP, Ibrahim Ghandour, was quoted by the press as saying that the decision to adopt the provision, was taken "to give our southern Sudanese brothers more impetus to vote for the unity of Sudan during the referendum". The SPLM's deputy secretary general, Yasser Arman, also described the outcome as "a new day for the establishment of trust. The people of the south deserve the right to a referendum and more besides".

Negotiations for the new legislation had taken several months of often tortuous and problematic sessions between northern and southern politicians. Under its terms, an independent South Sudan will be recognized if it is approved by 51% of voters at the 2011 referendum, if there is a 60% turn out of voters.

The two parties- NCP and SPLM, formed a national unity government, following the CPA of 2005, and both had pledged to

"If you want to vote for independence so that you are a free person in your independent state, that will be your own choice and we will respect the choice of the people"

make a united Sudan an "attractive" option in 2011, but in the past few years, tensions have increasingly led to suspicion which has in turn fuelled sentiments for separation, especially in the South.

The death of John Garang, the founder of the SPLM, and a genuine Sudanese nationalist, has removed the figure who might likely nudge Southerners in the direction of a vote for a united country. His successor Salva Kirr Mayardit does not have the same clout as Garang, and his vision is even less broad, leading a nouveau bourgeoisie in the South running a government that is dogged by accusations of corruption.

Many of the people in the South are now hoping that the referendum will give them the opportunity to accede to an independent country. One of the most difficult issues to untangle in the process will be the fate of the oil-rich Abyei region, which is claimed by the two sides and which has seen several bloody clashes between forces of the GOS and the SPLM, in the past two years.

Abyei's population consists of Ngok Dinka ethnic groups, seen to be loyal to the south as well as Messiriya Arab nomadic groups that are seen to be supporters of the GOS in Khartoum. How the issue of the demarcation of the border is handled will largely overshadow the lead to the independence referendum, since both sides want to own the oil riches of the region of Abyei.

The outgoing year has been a very difficult year in South Sudan. According to the international charity organization, Medecin Sans Frontieres (MSF), at least 2000 people have died and 250,000 have fled their homes following violence in the south.

These have worsened the humanitarian crisis in the region, considering that over 2million people were killed in the civil war that ended in 2005. The violence in 2009 were described as the worst since the signing of the CPA.

Previous acts of violence were linked to land clashes and cattle rustling; however, the MSF operations director for the Sudan, Stephen Goetghebuer, told the Associated Press (AP) that this year, "villages have been attacked, and raiders have targeted and

killed women and children".

MSF said that 87% of the people it treated this year were victims of gunshot wounds, but that the number of people killed in the violence is three times higher than the number of wounded. "There are very few survivors. People are killed massively", according to Goetghebuer.

The increase in violent activities has led to the expression of concern by officials of the United Nations as well as the GOS who say the violence in the south can hamper preparations for the national and presidential elections scheduled to hold in April 2010.

An official of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS), Garang Garang Diing who spoke to the Associated Press, blamed some of the violence on the North and the rest he said was due to incidents of cattle rustling. He also denied that the southern government had prior knowledge of the attacks saying that there was evidence of elements of Sudan's northern government's involvement in some of the attacks.

Diing linked the growing violence to the 2011 referendum, arguing that the north could be causing the violence to make the south look ungovernable. It should also be recalled that the South Sudanese president, and Sudan's vice president, Salva Kirr Mayardit, had urged Southerners in October 2009, to choose independence in the 2011 referendum, if they want to be free.

"When you reach your ballot boxes the choice is yours: you want to vote for unity so that you become a second class in your own country, that choice is yours". He was addressing a cathedral congregation, in Juba, the Southern capital, during a service to launch a prayer campaign for elections due in 2010 and the referendum in 2011.

Salva Kirr said "if you want to vote for independence so that you are a free person in your independent state, that will be your own choice and we will respect the choice of the people". What is certain is that the fate of the Sudan will be determined one way or the other come 2011, but the prelude to that decision might be very uncertain and bloody for the long suffering people of the Sudan.

International

Yemeni forces raid al-Qaida hideout, clashes erupt

YEMENI forces raided an al-Qaida hideout and set off a gun-battle yesterday as the government vowed to eliminate the group that claimed it was behind the Christmas bombing attempt on a U.S. airliner.

The fighting took place in an al-Qaida stronghold in western Yemen, haven for a group that attacked the U.S. Embassy here in 2008, killing 10 Yemeni guards and four civilians. A government statement said at least one suspected militant was arrested during the clashes.

"The (Interior) Ministry will continue tracking down al-Qaida terrorists and will continue its strikes against the group until it is totally eliminated," Deputy Interior Minister Brig. Gen. Saleh al-Zawari told senior military officials at a meeting in Mareb, another province believed to shelter al-Qaida fighters.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, an offshoot of Osama bin Laden's group, claimed it was behind the attempt to bomb a Detroit-bound airliner. Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a 23-year-old passenger, was arrested Friday after he allegedly tried to bring down the Northwest Airlines flight, carrying 289 people. U.S. investigators said Abdulmutallab told them he received training and instructions from al-Qaida operatives in Yemen. Yemen's government has said Abdulmutallab spent two periods in the country, from 2004 to 2005 and from August to December of this year, just before the attempted attack.

Abdulmutallab's Yemen connection has drawn attention to al-Qaida's growing presence in the impoverished and lawless country, which is located on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula across the Gulf of Aden from Somalia.

Yesterday's clashes took place in Hudaydah province, an al-Qaida stronghold along the Red Sea coast. A security official said the target was a house owned by an al-Qaida sympathizer. The official said the owner was arrested, a suspected al-Qaida member was injured and several militants who fled were being pursued. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

Before yesterday's clashes, Yemeni forces backed by U.S. intelligence carried out two major strikes against al-Qaida hideouts this month, reportedly killing more than 60 militants.

The U.S. has increasingly provided intelligence, surveillance and training to Yemeni forces during the past year, and has provided some firepower, according to a senior U.S. defense official, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the subject.

Activists in Gaza and Israel protest Gaza blockade

HUNDREDS of demonstrators rallied on opposite sides of an Israeli-Gaza border crossing yesterday to protest the blockade of the seaside territory imposed by Egypt and Israel.

In Gaza, about 100 international activists gathered with some 500 Gazans, chanting and carrying signs denouncing the blockade. A small number of

anti-Zionist, Orthodox Jews were among them, a rare sight in Gaza.

Rabbi Dovid Feldman, from New York, said he came to Gaza for the march with three others from the small Neturei Karta sect, which denounces Israel's existence. Feldman said Israel's offensive in Gaza last winter was "against Palestine, against Judaism, against the Jewish people and

against humanity."

Thirteen Israelis and almost 1,400 Gazans were killed in the three-week war, which Israel launched to stop years of militant rocket fire on its southern towns.

March organizers said Egypt allowed only 100 of the 1,300 international activists who came to Cairo for the march to enter Gaza. About 300 people held a

similar protest on the Israeli side of the crossing, most of them Arab citizens of Israel.

Israel and Egypt imposed a strict blockade on Gaza after the Islamic militant group Hamas seized control of the territory in 2007. The blockade has increased poverty in Gaza and prevented it from rebuilding after last winter's war.



PALESTINIANS hold flags during a rally marking the first anniversary of Israel's three-week offensive in Gaza, in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Taliban claim blasts killing Americans, Canadians

THE Taliban claimed responsibility yesterday for bombings that killed 14 people, including eight Americans and an Afghan in a suicide attack at a CIA base in the volatile east, and five Canadians in the south.

CIA employees were believed to be among the victims.

It was unclear how the bomber at U.S. Forward Operating Base Chapman at the edge of Khost city was able to circumvent security. Khost is the capital of Khost province, which borders Pakistan and is a Taliban stronghold.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement that an Afghan National Army officer wearing a suicide vest entered the base and blew himself up inside

the gym.

A U.S. official who was briefed on Wednesday's blast also said it took place in the gym.

Forward Operating Base Chapman used to be a military base, but was later turned into a CIA base, according to a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the record.

Some military men and women work there on a Provincial Reconstruction Team, one of several joint civilian-military units that secure and develop areas of Afghanistan.

A NATO spokesman said "other personnel" operate from Chapman as well, but he said he could not elaborate.

Malaysian court rules Christians can use 'Allah'

A Malaysian court ruled yesterday that Christians have the constitutional right to use the word Allah to refer to God, striking down a government ban as illegal.

The landmark ruling appeared to be a victory for freedom of religion in the Muslim-majority country, where the ban had become a symbol of what minorities say is institutionalized religious discrimination.

Government lawyers said they will consult with the Home Ministry before deciding whether to appeal Judge Lau Bee Lan's verdict in a higher court, where the ban could still be reinstated. They have one month to appeal.

Lau said in her judgment that Christians have the "constitutional

right to use Allah" and that the Home Ministry is "not empowered" to impose the ban. She was ruling on a lawsuit filed in late 2007 by the Herald, the Malaysian Roman Catholic Church's main publication, after the government blocked non-Muslims from translating God as Allah in their literature.

"This is indeed a landmark case for our nation," the Herald's editor, the Rev. Lawrence Andrew, said in a statement. He said the verdict upholds constitutional liberties of freedom of speech, expression and religion. Authorities have insisted that Allah is an Islamic word that should be used exclusively by Muslims, and its use by other religions would be misleading.

International

Gunman kills five, himself in Finland

A Kosovan-born gunman shot dead four people in a Finnish shopping mall yesterday and killed his ex-girlfriend in an apartment before killing himself in Finland's third shooting spree in as many years.

Police said Ibrahim Shkupolli, 43, killed three men and a woman at the Sello mall in Espoo, a town near Helsinki, as shoppers stocked up for the New Year holiday. They confirmed that Shkupolli, as well as his ex-girlfriend who had worked at the mall, were among the dead after the five-hour incident.

"It has been confirmed that the sixth victim is the suspect (himself). He was found in his home," Chief Inspector Jukka Kaski told a news conference.

Police said Shkupolli was already known to them and had a foreign background, but refused to say what nationality he held.

However, a Kosovo police source said the gunman was from Mitrovica in the former Serbian province which declared its independence last year, and had visited the town last month.

Finnish police would not confirm his motive. However, they

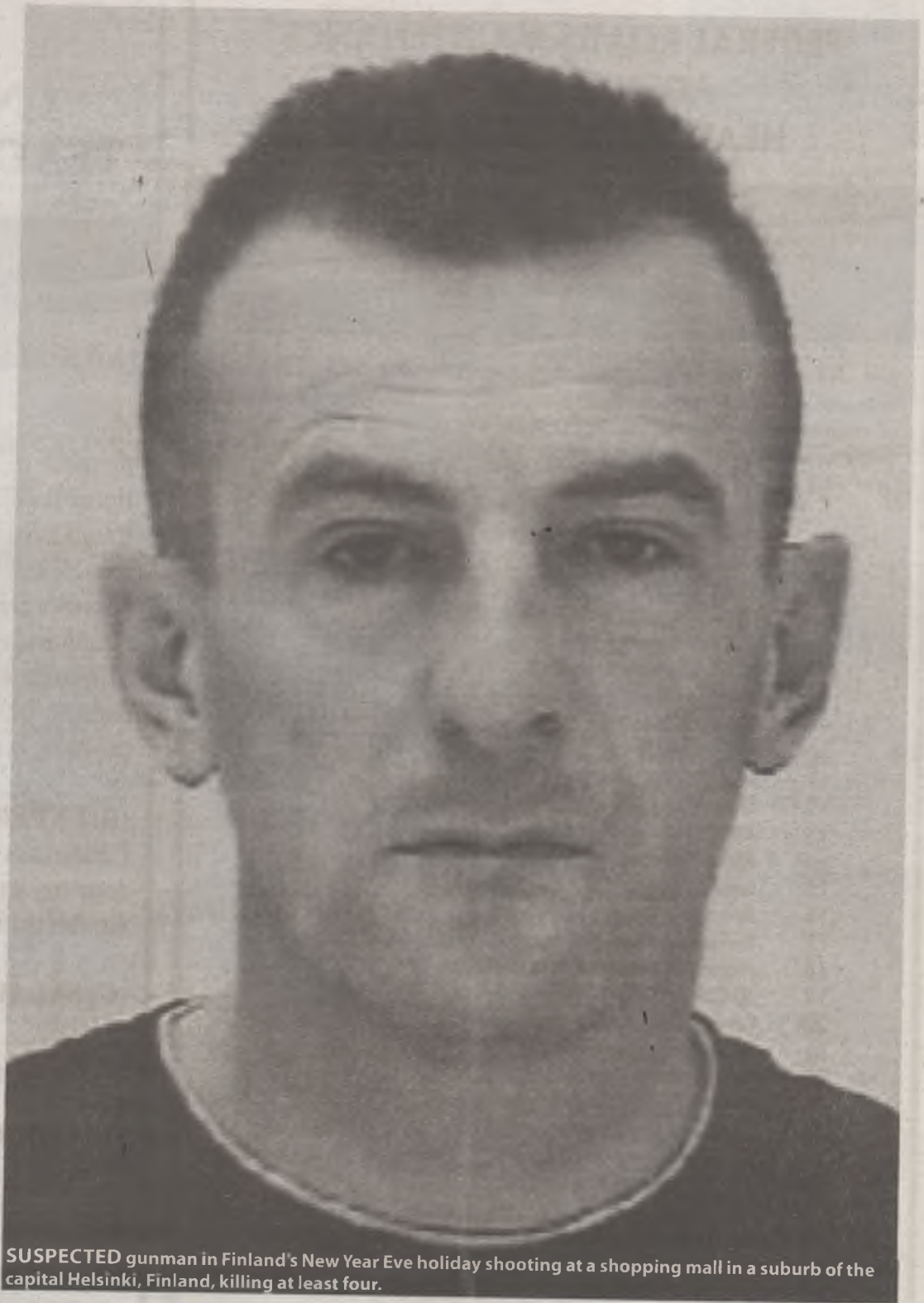
said Shkupolli had been under a court order banning him from contacting his ex-girlfriend, who was found dead at an apartment in Espoo, and that the shootings were probably linked to their relationship. Local media said the gunman had previous convictions for firearms offences.

The New Year's Eve carnage followed shootings at Finnish schools in 2007 and 2008, after which Helsinki tightened gun control regulations, with further restrictions planned.

A Reuters reporter at the Sello mall, one of Finland's largest shopping centres, saw helicopters overhead and fire trucks around the entrances after the shootings. The mall was shut down as police hunted the gunman.

"When we were going out I heard sounds like shots from the third floor, and then I left," said a mall employee, who declined to give her name.

"I paid for my groceries and I wanted to go to my car when I was told that you cannot go there," shopper Jorma Romo told Reuters outside of the mall. "They were hurrying people out and people were asking (why)."



SUSPECTED gunman in Finland's New Year Eve holiday shooting at a shopping mall in a suburb of the capital Helsinki, Finland, killing at least four.

Escaped British convict taunts police on Facebook

AN escaped British criminal dubbed "the Facebook fugitive" has become an Internet hit, taunting police via the online social networking site and notching up nearly 30,000 "friends" by yesterday.

Craig "Lazie" Lynch, 28, absconded from prison in Suffolk, eastern England in September, where he had been serving a seven-year term for aggravated burglary.

Over the Christmas holiday season, he has posted pictures of himself posing with turkey and tinsel -- as well as a profile shot of him raising his middle finger in defiance and hints about his location.

On Christmas Day itself, he left a status update saying: "Merry xmas i made it." while on December 27, he wrote: "WAKE UP PEOPLE ITS THE WEEKEND WHERE'S THE PARTY AT?"

Australian residents return to razed homes

RESIDENTS returned yesterday to nearly 40 homes razed in Australia's most destructive wildfires in almost year, which left four people injured.

Wildfires possibly sparked by fallen power lines scorched a swath of western Australian farm and forest land Tuesday and Wednesday, and hundreds of fighters worked to contain them by yesterday, emergency authority spokesman Allen Gale said.

The fires destroyed 38 homes around the township of Toodyay, 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of the coastal city of Perth. A woman resident required hospital treatment for burns while three firefighters were treated for smoke inhalation and a heat-related illness, Gale said.

About 150 people who had been evacuated from the fire path

Tuesday were given permission yesterday morning to pass the police blocks and return to the destruction zone, he said.

It was their first opportunity to assess the damage to their property. Gale said that destroyed houses may still be smoldering, and that even houses that had survived undamaged were without power.

"There will still be heat in some of those buildings," Gale said. "It's not the time to go sifting through the remains and the debris; it's time to see what the situation is and make an assessment," he added.

The federal government Thursday joined the Western Australia state government in offering financial assistance to communities affected by what has been declared a natural disaster.

Venezuela's Chavez says coup attempt would fail

VENEZUELAN President Hugo Chavez is looking to 2010 facing a recession, trying to prevent widespread power outages, and warning his opponents against a coup attempt.

Chavez said in a televised speech yesterday that any action like the failed military rebellion against him in 2002 wouldn't have a chance.

"If something like that occurs to you, our counterattack is going to be firm. I'm warning you," Chavez said.

The leftist leader, who has consolidated power in the years since the short-lived 2002 coup, said if opponents wanted to try again "they'd have to import an armed force."

Chavez was responding to a prediction by Newsweek maga-

zine, which listed a coup in Venezuela among its world predictions for 2010. It also predicted Chavez's friend and mentor Fidel Castro would die.

"Newsweek magazine takes the liberty of predicting and saying that 2010 will be Fidel Castro's last year on Earth. Well, could it be that he's going to the moon?" Chavez said with a chuckle, dismissing both predictions as the wishes of those who prepared the list.

He also repeated his near constant theme that Venezuela is facing threats from the U.S. and neighboring Colombia, and repeated his accusation that U.S. military planes are using the nearby Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao as hubs for intelligence operations.



**FEDERAL ROADS MAINTENANCE
AGENCY (FERMA)
HEADQUARTERS – ABUJA**

**RE: FERMA'S MAINTAIN, OPERATE & TRANSFER
PROGRAMME
RESULT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE EXPRESSIONS OF
INTEREST**

The following Consortiums/Investor/prospective Concessionaire has emerged successful after a thorough evaluation of the submitted Expressions of Interest (EOI) on the Agency's Maintain, Operate and Transfer (Maintenance Concession) programme:

- 1 Nairanet Technologies Ltd
- 2 Western Corridor Consortium
- 3 Rosehill Group Ltd
- 4 Cwell Ltd
- 5 Philko Abuja-Kaduna Toll Road Ltd
- 6 A.I.L Infrastructures Ltd
- 7 Triacta Concessionaire Ltd
- 8 Fung Tai - JNC Consortium
- 9 Roads Nigeria Plc
- 10 Pelican Bay Ltd
- 11 Megaforce Consortium Nig Ltd
- 12 Quartzlink Resources Limited
- 13 All Works Nigeria Ltd
- 14 Africa Finance Corporation
- 15 Hapel (Nigeria) Ltd
- 16 Teleview International Nig Ltd
- 17 Percasa Limited
- 18 Marsellis - Warner Const. (WA) Ltd.
- 19 JD Capital Ltd
- 20 Ferotex Construction Company
- 21 Dirham Infrastructure Ltd
- 22 Monier Const. Co. Nig. Ltd.
- 23 Bulletine Const. Company Limited
- 24 Ginger A. Construction Limited
- 25 Obioma Enterprises (Nig) Ltd
- 26 La - Ann Engineering Limited

However, due to a harmonization scheme in the National Road Sector, a NEW list of Federal Highways has been approved for the Agency's Maintain, Operate and Transfer program, which are:

1. 9th mile - Otukpa - Otukpa Road
2. Mokwa - Tegna - Birnin Gwari - Kaduna Road
3. Ibadan - Ife - Ilesha Road, and
4. Jos - Bauchi - Gombe Road

The Agency wishes to call on the pre-qualified Investors/Consortiums/prospective Concessionaires listed above who is yet interested in the Maintain, Operate and Transfer program of the Agency on these new roads to promptly signify such interest(s) in writing to:

**The Managing Director
Federal Roads Maintenance Agency
Plot 163, Aminu Kano Crescent,
Wuse II - Abuja.**

Attention: **GM (Procurement)**
Not later than 12 noon, Friday, January 8th, 2010.

The Agency regrets all inconveniences that the change in the list of roads under its Maintain, Operate & Transfer program has caused its numerous partners especially the pre-qualified Consortium/Investor/prospective Concessionaires listed above.

Signed
Management



**UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN
TEACHING HOSPITAL ILORIN**

STAFF VACANCY

(A) QUALIFICATION:

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Director of Administration in the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.

Candidates must possess good Honours degrees from recognized Universities in any of the Social Sciences OR Master's Degree or Final Diploma of the Institute of Hospital Administrators of U.K. and must be a member of the Institute of Health Service Administrators' of Nigeria. Those who are earning below salary CONTISS 14 need not apply for the position.

(B) EXPERIENCE:

Candidates must have had not less than 15 (fifteen) years cognate experience in a Teaching/Specialist Hospital or similar institutions.

(C) SALARY:

CONTISS 15

(D) CONDITIONS OF SERVICE:

These will be as obtained in other Teaching Hospitals or similar institutions in the Federation.

(E) REFEREES:

Candidates should have three (3) referees and request them to write directly to the Ag. Chief Medical Director, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, P.M.B. 1459, Ilorin.

(F) METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Applicants should submit twenty (20) copies of their letters of application with detailed Curriculum Vitae to the Ag. Chief Medical Director, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin within 6 weeks of the publication of this advertisement.

(G) Only applications of those short-listed for interview will be acknowledged.

**Dr. C. C. Okeke
Ag. Chief Medical Director
University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital,
Ilorin.**

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Airports security



PIC: OLADIPUPO ODUNEWU

MANAGING Director, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Mr. Richard Asuebeogun (left), Director General, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Dr. Harold O. Demuren at the World Press Briefing for enhancing security at Nigerian Airports yesterday.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Arik Air
PH-Abuja: 08.45, 12.12.50, 17.00 (Mon-Fri), 08.45, 17.30 (Sat), 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Abuja-PH: 07.15, 11.20, 15.30 (Mon-Fri), 07.15, 16.00 (Sat) 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Lagos-Kano: 12.20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun)
Kano-Lagos: 02.35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Kano: 03.35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Kano-Abuja: 05.20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Gombe: 11.10am (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Gombe-Abuja: 12.30pm (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Lagos-Yola: Lag-Abj 04:50pm, via Abj-Yola 06:45pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Yola-Lagos: Yola-Abj 08:40am, Abj-Lagos 10:20am (Mon-Fri/Sat); Lagos-Maid: Lag-Abj 03:50pm, via Abj-Maid 06:00pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Maid-Lagos: Miud-Abj 07:30am, via Abj-Lag 09:15am (Mon/Fri/Sat); Abuja-Sokoto: 11:10am (Mon-Fri); Sokoto-Abuja: 12:50pm (Mon-Fri)
Abuja-Akure 02:10pm (Mon, Wed and Fri); Akure-Abuja: 08:50am (Mon, Wed and Fri); Lagos-Kwara: 07:30am, (Mon-Fri) 07.30, 03:50pm Sat 08:00am, 11:45am Sun; Kwara-Lagos: 4:10pm (Mon-Fri), 01:10pm, 05:30pm Sat 09:45am, 05:00pm Sun
Abuja-Kwara: 03:25pm (Mon-Fri); Kwara-Abuja 01.30pm (Mon-Fri); Lagos-Jos: 09:05am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); Jos-Lagos: 11.00am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
ABV-QOW 02:30pm (Mon-Fri), 11:30am Sat 03:20pm Sun; Lagos-Kaduna: 10:20am, 04:10pm (Mon-Fri), 10.20 (Sat/Sun); Kaduna-Lagos: 12:10pm, 06:00pm (Mon-Fri), 12.10 (Sat/Sun); Lagos-Warr: 07:30am (Mon/Fri) 07:30am, 03:50pm (Sat), 08:00am, and 11:45am (Sun)

Aero Contractors
Lagos-Kad: 08.00am (Mon/Fri/Sat/Sun)
Kad-Lagos: 09.40am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Jos: 11.15am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Jos-Lagos: 13.15pm (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30; 16.30; 19.45 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16.45 (Sat) Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30, 14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30 (Sat); Lagos-Ben: 07:45; 11:00; 15:30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).
Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun); Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun); Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun); Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00 (Sun); Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)

Chanchangi Airlines
Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 10.00, 13.10, 15.30, 17.30
Abj-Lagos: 08.00, 11.45, 13.40, 15.30, 17.00
Lagos-Kad: 10.45, (on Fri), 17.00 (Mon/Fri/Sat/Sun)
Kad-Lagos: 07.30 (Mon/Fri), 08.00 (Sat/Sun)
Nigerian Eagles Airlines (Virgin Nigeria)
Abj-Kano: 18.40 (Mon-Fri)/Sun
Kano-Abj: 08.35 (Mon-Fri) /Sat
Abj-Soko: 09:35, (Mon), 10:10 (Fri), 11:20 (Wed/Sun)
Soko-Abj: 11.35 (Mon), 12.00 (Fri), 13:20 (Wed/Sun)
Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 11.40, 14.00, 16.30, 17.00, 17.20; 18.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun), 8.00; 12.40; 13.10; 20:00 (Fri); Abj-Lagos: 07.00, 09.30, 10.30, 11.15, 16.15; 19.15, 19.25, 19:35 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 14:55; 15:15; 20:45 (Fri); 19:45 (Sun); 11:25, 13:35, 16:25 (Mon)
Lagos-PHC: 07.40, 09.30, 10.00, 12.20, 13.30, 14.00, 16.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); PHC-Lagos: 10.50, 11.20,

Stockbrokers reject CBN's 'bad bank' bill

CAPITAL market operators yesterday disassociated themselves from the Asset Management Company (AMC) Bill, otherwise known as 'bad bank' bill now before the National Assembly.

The operators under the aegis of the Stockbroking Houses of Nigeria (ASHON), warned that the policy as proposed would aggravate the national economic problem.

They said the bill championed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) lacked the ingredients of a national economic policy.

ASHON Chairman, Alhaji Rashied Yusuff, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos that AMC as being canvassed was a segmented policy instrument that would not

leverage the nation's troubled economy.

Yusuff said that unlike in other countries where AMC served as a vehicle for economic rebound through acquisition of toxic assets, the bill as canvassed by CBN covered only voluntary assets of banks.

He said that the proposed AMC, which excluded the capital market operators, showed that the sponsors did not understand the structure of the nation's toxic assets in a depressed economy.

The Chairman said ASHON rejected the bill, which had passed the second reading at the National Assembly.

Yusuff said the rejection was because it failed to appreciate that capital market operators own 30 per cent of the toxic margin facilities offered by banks.

He contended that AMC in acquiring the toxic assets should cover the 30 per cent owned by market operators through collateralised stocks in the vaults of banks.

"The truth of the matter is that AMC acquisition of toxic assets does not call for debtors. "If the regulators understand the structure of the margin loans, capital market operators would not be seen as debtors," Yusuff said.

The Managing Director of Compass Securities and Investment Ltd., Mr Emeka Madubike, said that ASHON would support the proposed bill "only if AMC is made a national economic policy that will acquire all toxic assets".

Madubike said that voluntary acquisition of toxic assets and the bureaucratic foot dragging in the establishment of AMC negated its objective as a proactive global economic policy.

He said that contrary to other opinions, AMC benchmark price acquisition of toxic assets in the company's 10 years life span would form the road map to growth. (NAN).

CBN EXCHANGE RATES				BUREAU DE CHANGE RATES	
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	Selling (NGN)	BUYING	
CFA	0.3041	0.3141	0.3241	DOLLAR	N155
DANISH KRONER	28.5326	28.6296	28.7266	EURO	N222
EURO	212.4418	213.1639	213.886	POUNDS	N254
POUNDS STERLING	235.4041	236.2043	237.0044	SELLING	
RIYAL	39.2267	39.36	39.4933	DOLLAR	N157
SDR	230.5645	231.3482	232.1319	EURO	N225
SWISS FRANC	142.8433	143.3288	143.8143	POUNDS	N257
US DOLLAR	147.1	147.6	148.1	Source: Daba Bureau De Change, Lagos	
WUAU	229.792	230.5731	231.3541		
YEN	1.6035	1.6088	1.6142		

Stock Market Index	
Date:	Thursday, December 31, 2009
Index:	20,827.17
Deals:	5,179
Volume:	267,217,844
Value:	N 1,197,016,271.07
Cap.:	N 4,989,385,147,463.94

Business/Finance

Bank losses: Any hope for investors?

By Mbadiwe Okwor

IN 2002, John Edi, a small-time investor, purchased 1000 shares of one of the new generation banks in Nigeria during its initial public offering.

Over the years, Edi has recouped the N5100 he spent in buying the shares through the bank's impressive annual performance and dividend payments.

Just seven years after, Edi's shareholding in the bank is close to 4000 shares, courtesy of the regular award of bonus shares. The price of the stocks got close to N40 per share at the peak of the market boom in April, 2008 and currently hovers between N12 and N15.

The above success story, as modest as it may seem, summarises the bountiful harvest by investors on the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) until the recent meltdown in the market.

Unlike Edi, some investors – being new on the block – have only stories of woes about the NSE.

Sam Ojobe, a civil servant, bought 10,000 shares of a bank in January 2008. The public offer was made at N9.50 per share.

Presently, the N95,000 he invested would only give him N5,000 as the price of the bank's share – one of the most distressed – has plummeted to a mere 50 kobo!

The story is virtually the same worldwide and many investors have been known to commit suicide or develop heart problems due to the huge losses they recorded.

Market watchers believe that while the boom days lasted, investment in the NSE was a lucrative way for the ambitious investor to rake in millions as price movements continued to maintain an upward swing.

With the meltdown, however, only the diehard investor currently dares to touch the stock market with a long pole, even with analysts' predictions that the market may rebound in the course of the New Year.

The crash, with its attendant losses in investments, impoverished many Nigerians and put many banks on the brink of collapse.

It also put many borrowers on the high jump as the banks used anti-corruption agencies to recover the non-performing loans.

With market capitalisation now hovering around N5 trillion, investors in all lost about N8 trillion from its peak in mid-2008. Presently, there is no hope of any significant improvement.



SANUSI Lamido Sanusi, CBN Gov



NDI Okereke Onyuike, NSE DG

Although the meltdown was a global phenomenon, its depth in Nigeria only became manifest when the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) took over eight banks out of the 10 banks that failed its audit.

The situation threw Broad Street in Lagos – Nigeria's commercial capital – into a sober mid-December after five banks submitted their second quarter audited and not audited results to investors through the NSE.

The five banks, among the 10 that failed the CBN audit, made a combined loan loss provision of about N1.394 trillion.

The result for the sixth – Bank PHB – which also posted a red balance, was published in a newspaper as required by law, but was not then part of those

presented to the NSE.

Market analysts believe that the huge provisions for non-performing loans by the banks are indications that a significant rebound by listed equities on the NSE may take longer than anticipated.

They opine that banks as the drivers of the market, both in the provision of funds and price movements, play a significant role on which direction it takes.

A breakdown of the aggregate loan loss provisions showed that Intercontinental Bank had the highest provision of N436.69 billion, followed by Oceanic with N315.115 billion, Bank PHB with N232.16 billion and Union Bank with N172.29 billion.

FinBank Plc and Spring Bank Plc also provided N88.8 billion

and N18.16 billion respectively for loan losses.

Oceanic, on its part, also reported a net loss of N286.199 billion, explaining it as "the full impact of previous misjudgments in lending policy, poor corporate governance and serious risk management lapses".

Analysts say that in all of these, the shareholder bears the brunt as profits made by the banks in the near future would be channelled to offset these provisions.

This is evident since investors who jumped into the market in the boom days appear determined to keep it down as they rush to take profit from any significant recovery, leading to persistent glut.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which reg-

ulates the market, has waded in to stem the downward trend in the market and to bring it back to life.

Its acting Director General, Ms Diasy Ekineh, said recently that the commission would deal with operators who engaged in any form of market infractions.

Ekineh, who was reviewing the market's operations in 2009, said that regulators, investors and other stakeholders in the financial sector had learnt their lessons from the meltdown.

"The commission is committed to bringing insider dealings and market manipulations to the barest minimum," she said, adding that the slow recovery in the market was due to the huge margin loans overhang.

The NSE, on its part, had earlier introduced some measures to check the activities of operators, particularly stock-brokers who were in the habit of manipulating prices in favour of certain stocks.

It also introduced the concept of market makers to control dumping in the market.

With the measures and resilience on the part of investors who see the market as a place to save for the future, it is expected that the current downturn will eventually become a blessing in disguise. (NANFeatures)

“Market analysts believe that the huge provisions for non-performing loans by the banks are indications that a significant rebound by listed equities on the NSE may take longer than anticipated



NIGER STATE GOVERNMENT



INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHI RAJI'UN

The Government of Niger State mourns the death of former First Lady, Hajiya Maryam Babangida which sad event took place on Sunday December 27, 2009 at California, Los Angeles, USA.

A piece of diamond cannot compare in value to you, neither can the riches of earth take your place in our hearts, even though you left us, we shall miss your motherly love, care and affection nonetheless we are consoled by the knowledge of what you left behind, memories of true friendship and hard work.

Although we are pained by this sad and irreparable loss, we are also consoled by the belief that it is only Allah that gives and takes, "To Almighty God we all came and to Him we shall all return"!

May your gentle soul rest in eternal peace and may Allah grant you everlasting home in Aljannah Firdausi, Amen.



LATE HAJIYA MARYAM BABANGIDA
Former First Lady
1948-2009

SIGNED:

DR. MUHAMMED KUTA YAHAYA
SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER STATE

Nigeria's sea of emp

Spread across the nooks and crannies of the nation, the presence of filling stations that are constantly without stock of fuel raises concerns amongst Nigerians, even as authorities battle the perennial fuel scarcity in the country.

by Tosin Omoniyi

MANY would have passed the area several times without noticing the presence of the filling station. Idowu Aka, an entertainment consultant who lives in the suburb area of Jikwoyi in the Federal Capital Territory, says that ever since he relocated to the area from the central business district, he has seen the petrol station dispensing fuel to motorists only about twice.

'I usually prefer to go to the NNPC Mega station in town to buy fuel for my car, because of the reasonably affordable pricing system in operation there. But at times I need to top the fuel level of my vehicle on my way home, so I have no choice but to branch at any of the numerous filling stations on my way home so you can imagine the surprise of any motorist when he notices that a particular filling station cannot boast of having any supply of fuel almost on daily basis. There is this particular filling station along the Jikwoyi-Karu way that cannot boast of having fuel to sell most times. I have only seen the station in operation just about once or twice. I begin to wonder why it is called a filling station then, if a motorist cannot drive in and buy fuel. But it is not a total surprise because there are other such filling stations like that which are really empty cans' Idowu ponders.

Many like Idowu are worried at the large and increasing number of petrol filling stations in the country that are not functioning or are functioning under par and are calling on the relevant authorities to either sanction or close such stations, as they constitute a nuisance and needless frustration for motorists. A respondent, Sina Ayodele is particularly peeved at the presence of such filling stations along the nation's major highways, while crisscrossing the expanse of the nation. He says that he is a regular traveler especially to the south western part of the country, and many times he sees large numbers of filling stations along federal roads that do not sell fuel. 'There was a particular time that our fuel got exhausted as we were nearing the road leading into Oye Ekiti in Ekiti state, and it was getting dark. Just as we were wondering what to do, my partner in the vehicle pointed to a filling station just ahead of us and we were overjoyed at the sight. You can just begin to imagine our disappointment when we got there and we were told that they were not selling fuel. The guard we met there even made matters worse when he told us that he could not even remember the last time that they sold fuel there. We had to go back to the expressway to stop vehicles in the hope that some would be magnanimous enough to help us with a little, to take us into the town so that we could refuel. On another occasion on my way to Ile Ife I had to abandon my vehicle somewhere along the Ibadan Ife road, when I could not get a filling station that had supply of fuel. I had to take public transport in order to go and get fuel to move the car. I wonder why such filling stations are

not just closed since they are simply useless,' he fumes while recalling the event.

Indeed many of such fuel stations abound across the country. In fact it is believed strongly in most quarters that out of the estimated 15,000 filling stations in the country, over 70% of them are moribund, while a great percentage also are not functioning to full capacity. This has raised concerns amongst Nigerians as to why the authorities are not monitoring the issuance of permits for prospective owners of such filling stations.

A respondent, Uche Mbakwe who worked once as a fuel attendant believes that many owners of such stations do not actually appreciate the enormous responsibility conferred on them as owners of filling stations, before deciding to go into the business. He says: 'it is not just the prestige of ownership of filling stations that matters. Most owners especially those that are privately owned units do not have the required funds to sustain the operations. Maybe, after the initial mini capital they invest, mismanagement of accrued profits makes it practically impossible for them to maintain further operations. Owning a filling station apart from being a big business, is capital intensive and requires constant funding. As against the generally held belief that there is money there, the truth of the matter is that losses are equally inevitable. So it is not unlikely that many of these owners after the initial euphoria of owning a filling station find it later hard to keep in business. From my little experience, I found out that it is only prudent managers and owners of such stations that survive in the business.'

Findings reveal that some countries around the world that experienced the same upsurge in number of empty filling stations took drastic measures to address the trend. In 1992, in the United Kingdom, there was a total number of 18,000 gas stations available, but it was discovered that many were not functioning. The authorities had to reduce the number through outright purchase of such outfits or cancellation of their license. The number was pruned down to about 9 271 in 2007. Presently the number of such inefficient stations is negligible. In Canada and China where there was a similar trend, the numbers of filling stations were also reduced to 14,000 and 30,000 respectively functioning ones. Interestingly, in some other countries like Turkey and Mexico the reverse is the case where filling stations are rather on the increase due to the inability of the existing ones to meet the consumption needs of citizens. As at 2008, Mexico had 8200 of such stations while Turkey had 12,139.

Perhaps to exercise greater efficiency and control some African nations have decided to promote a deliberate policy of having few petrol stations in operation. Kenya has 1,300 filling stations while Tanzania has 1000. Malawian citizens have to make do with just a little above 500 of such petrol



OUT of the estimated 15,000 filling stations in the country, over 70% of them

stations.

Possibly as a measure to exercise greater control over these numerous units of distribution of the black liquid, recently the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, while ordering for 12 cargoes of refined crude also bought over about 178 filling stations across the country. Through the action the corporation has increased the initial number of 38 Mega stations and 12 Floating stations, which it hopes would increase access of commuters to fuel. It also ordered the Pipeline and Product Marketing Company, PPMC to increase the tempo of supply and dis-

“Indeed many of such fuel stations abound across in most quarters that out of the estimated 12,000 of them are moribund, while a great percentage also has raised concerns amongst Nigerians as to why issuance of permits for prospective owners of such

oty petrol stations



to be the main concern of most Nigerians rather than incomprehensible policy thrusts of the government. Deregulation touted as the solution by the authorities has continued to receive stiff opposition by the organized labor and by most Nigerians, who ironically do not actually know what the policy is all about.

Managing Director, Heyden Petroleum Ltd, a leading operator in the downstream sector, Dapo Abiodun believes that deregulation will go a long way in solving the perennial fuel scarcity. He posits: 'deregulation is a step that the nation does not have a choice but to accept and come to terms with for some specific reasons. One reason is that the nation cannot afford to continue to regulate petrol. It is the product that we consume the most in Nigeria. We consume about 1 billion litres of petrol a month. Currently, government is regulating or subsidizing the landed price of petrol to almost 50 per cent, so this means that government spends an average of about N50 billion a month on petrol subsidy. This money can be spent on other critical sectors of the economy.'

He adds that the issue of inadequate supply of fuel is man-made. 'I can assure you that the PPMC has continued to import the required volume of petrol that they have always imported or probably more. I can assure you that they are probably more efficient because they are trying to be creative about their means of distribution, so that the public can get the products on time. I can also assure you that they have continued to keep the strategic reserve as required; which is a minimum of 30 day supply at any point in time. In terms of products' supply, the volumes are there; the supply is there; distribution is there. You now begin to wonder why you see queues. The queues are man-made; there are people who are hell-bent in sabotaging the system and causing problem in the country.'

He also concludes that in most states, the FCT particularly, the number of filling stations is actually inadequate to cater for the fuel consumption of residents: "There is shortage of filling stations in Abuja. So, any slight disruption in supply in Abuja is easily felt. We do not have enough filling stations in Abuja as it is, so you can see the cause of the long queues."

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tribution of fuel across the nation. The government agency is also hoping to acquire more of such filling stations soon, to beef up its control of sale and distribution of petrol. There are also calls in certain quarters that the federal government in addition to the measures being taken should carry out a massive audit of existing filling stations in the country, to ascertain their state of health and adherence to regulations governing operations in the industry. It would be recalled that same was carried out in 2001 and stations that were found to have flouted any operational rule or posed inefficient, had their licenses withdrawn or revoked. Others were simply blacklisted and fizzled out of reckoning swiftly after

the exercise. However a few operators still wonder if acquisition of these filling stations as being currently done, would supply the needed panacea.

Even for filling stations that have steady supply of fuel to dispense to motorists, complaints still emerge. Manager of Conoil Filling station, Central Business District, Ibrahim Isah says that the issue of black marketers appears to be a tough nut that the NNPC is not yet ready to crack. He believes that is a more pressing need for all concerned if the issue of inadequate supply of fuel is to be tackled. 'If we sell full tank to drivers, a few minutes later you will see them coming back to refuel after they have sold the initial one they bought to black marketers. This is a more pressing problem. PPMC therefore instructed us not to sell more than N2000 worth of fuel to any motorist,' he enthuses.

While agreeing with his counterpart, Rilwan Kabiru, manager of Total Filling station, in Area 11, Garki adds however that most filling stations are forced to operate under inadequate supply by marketers. 'Besides, as against the regular three tankers that we have been used to having in terms of supply, for the past one month now we have had to make do with just two,' he complains.

Despite all these, persistent fuel shortage and attendant endless queues at the few stations that still operate, appears

s the country. In fact it is believed strongly filling stations in the country, over 70% so are not functioning to full capacity. This the authorities are not monitoring the n filling stations.

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NASARAWA STATE GOVERNMENT

O B I T U A R Y

His Excellency, Alhaji (Dr) Aliyu Akwe Doma, OON (Madauchin Doma), Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, on behalf of himself, family and the government and people of Nasarawa State announces with deep sorrow but total submission to the will of God, the death of Lady Theresa Mataki Wuya, which sad event occurred on Saturday 19th December, 2009 after a brief illness.

Until her demise, Mrs. Theresa Wuya was the Special Adviser to His Excellency, the Executive Governor on Women Affairs.

Mrs. Theresa Mataki Wuya was a dedicated, loyal and conscientious public officer and senior citizen who contributed immensely to the development of the State. She was a dogged advocate of gender issues and awareness

Prior to her last appointment as Special Adviser, the deceased served the public in many capacities including Registrar, College of Education, Akwanga, and State Director National Orientation Agency (NOA). She also served in many Government Committees and Boards.



May the Almighty God grant her Soul eternal and peaceful rest in Paradise.

SIGNED:
TIMOTHY A. ANJIDE
SECRETARY TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT.
19th DECEMBER, 2009.

Business/Africa

Coted'Ivoire gets \$35 million for IT development

COTE d'Ivoire has received 25 million euros (35 million U.S. dollars) from the European Union for the development of information technology.

A government statement said the donor countries included Japan, Norway and Germany.

Cote d'Ivoire's Minister of Technical Teaching and Professional Training Mousa Dosso unveiled the aid programme on Wednesday.

The World Bank also offered support for the programme for activities in education and training.

"The evolution of the new information and communication methods has drastically changed the working methods, habits and performance in the world," the minister said.

"Our ministry is to come up with a strategy for the IT popularisation in our administrative and teaching systems.

"Peace must come back to the country so that the

national centre for promoting the new technologies can play its role after the crisis.

"The reconstruction may take long. It's a must that those who are competent enough after going through the training centres should bring their knowledge and work for the reconstruction of Cote d'Ivoire," the official said.

Cote d'Ivoire is yet to cater to IT equipment, especially in the areas of police service and provincial administration, where officers are still working with the old-style typewriters.

The government has created the National Information Development Agency and a training centre for the IT orientation in anticipation of a post-crisis era of development.

The country is preparing for its first presidential elections between February and early March since 2005 to end the political crisis, which was triggered by an attempted coup in 2002. (Xinhua/NAN)



PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma of South Africa

S/Africa's rand retreats slightly versus dollar

SOUTH Africa's rand retreated against dollar on Wednesday after rallying 1.7 per cent to a 2-week high the previous day.

Stock futures pointed to a soft start for the local bourse, after the rand firmed to 7.3695 against the dollar on Tuesday.

Its strongest level since Dec. 16 according to Reuters data, tracking stronger global markets and supported by dollar selling interest from local exporters wanting to square off their books before year end.

On Wednesday, the rand traded 0.19 per cent softer at 7.4385 versus the greenback compared with Tuesday's close at 7.4242.

The blue chip Top-40 March futures contract dipped 0.22 per cent prior to the JSE Securities Exchange's open in the early hours.

Government bonds held steady at previous closing levels, with the yield on the 2015 note unchanged at 8.425 per cent. The longer-dated 2036 was also flat at 8.795 per cent. (Reuters/NAN)

Zambia to seal 1.4m tonnes of oil supply deal in January

ZAMBIA is to sign a new 1.4 million tonnes oil supply contract next month after the expiry of an existing arrangement with Kuwait's Independent Petroleum Group (IPG).

Zambia's energy minister Kenneth Konga disclosed this on Wednesday.

Konga said Zambia, Africa's top copper producer, would announce a new preferred bidder to supply its crude oil during the same month after the closing of tenders.

In the past Zambia has concluded long term contracts lasting two years for the purchase of 1.4 million tonnes of oil.

But Konga did not specify what period the coming deal would cover. The country's fuel needs have grown along with mining activity.

The government had initially said it would rely on imports

of petrol and diesel to supply to the mines, the country's economic lifeblood and for other uses. Crude oil imports into the Zambia are expected to resume in April 2010.

Zambia resorted to imports of finished petroleum products after its sole refiner, Indeni Petroleum Refinery was shut due to a machinery fault last October.

This was ahead of a planned routine maintenance closure during the same month. The refinery has slowly been ramping up production.

"The closing and opening date for the oil tender will now be Jan. 8, 2010 and we expect that the long-term contract will be signed in the same month," Konga told Reuters.

An industry source told Reuters that fuel imports which the country started in October would continue to avoid dis-

ruptions mainly to the copper mines.

The mines use a lot of diesel in their production of minerals.

"When the tender closes, there will be sufficient time for us to agree with the supplier when the first shipment will be delivered.

"But we don't anticipate shortages of fuel because there are measures in place for a steady flow," Konga said.

The Zambia Public Procurement Authority (ZPPA) said last month that the 1,440,000 tonnes buyer's option would be brought in cargo lots of 60,000-90,000 tonnes at evenly spread intervals.

The signing of a new crude oil supply deal would be delayed until April. (Reuters/NAN)

Gambian economic growth seen at 5% in 2009

GAMBIA'S economy will grow by 5.0 per cent in 2009, thanks in part to stronger second-quarter growth in the agricultural sector, Central Bank Governor Bamba Saho said on Tuesday.

Gambia, a tiny slither of land within Senegal on the coast of West Africa has few natural resources and most of its population is involved in subsistence farming.

The country recently passed a 5.47 billion dalasis budget for 2010, a 20 per cent increase from 2009 on the back of higher tax revenue, grants and external budget support.

Saho spoke at a news conference held by the Monetary

Policy Committee of the Central Bank.

He said provisional data on government's fiscal operations in the first ten months of 2009 indicated that revenue and grants rose to 4.3 billion dalasis.

Saho said Gambia recorded 3.1 billion dalasis in the same period in 2008.

The Central Bank governor said gross official reserves at the end of November stood at 182.40 million dollars, equivalent to 7.5 months of import cover.

He added that inflation data from the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, as measured by the National Consumer Price Index, continued to point to the easing of inflationary pres-

ures.

Saho said headline inflation would likely be contained below the 6.0 per cent target by the end of December.

He said food consumer price inflation fell to 2.7 per cent at the end of November from 8.4 per cent a year earlier.

Saho added that non-food consumer price inflation also declined by nearly 2.0 percentage points to 2.7 per cent during the same period.

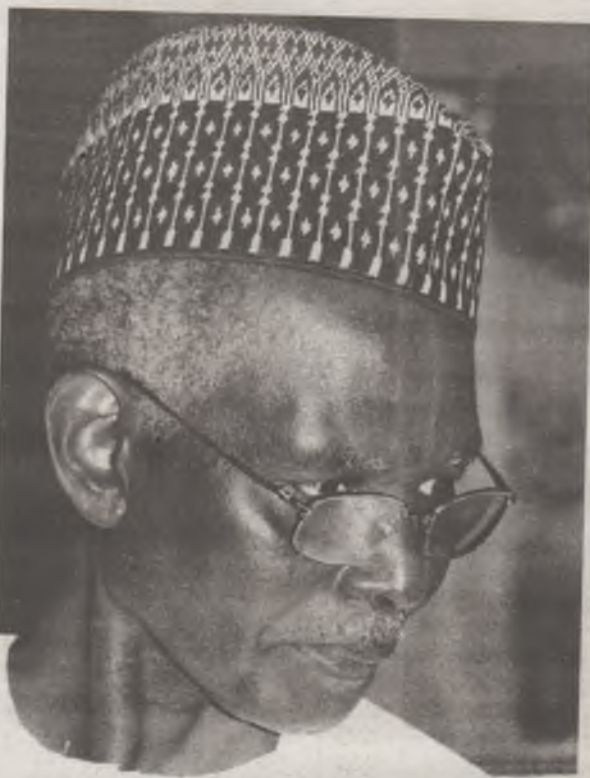
He said that the Central Bank's measure of core inflation which excludes prices of energy and volatile food items also decreased to 3.0 per cent in November.

It was at 6.6 per cent in November 2008. (Reuters/NAN)

Business

2009: Energy on the edge

Despite the promises and assurances to boost power and oil supply in the country, the history of the sector is just being recycled. Below are some of the events in the energy sector.



DR. Rilwan Lukman, Petroleum Minister



CHIEF Odein Ajumogobia, Minister of State, Petroleum

By Hamisu Muhammad

Petroleum industry

THE year began with the controversial reduction by government of the petrol pump price from N70 to N65 in January in the name of extending goodies to Nigerian citizens due to the downfall of crude oil prices but the gift was attacked by organised labour unions and industry experts which they said was part of the plan to introduce deregulation policy.

As a result, the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN) threatened to stop importation of Premium Motor Spirit unless the government addresses "some controversial issues" in the new pricing template, because according to them they were selling below cost. Members of MOMAN include African Petroleum Plc, Chevron Nigeria, Conoil, Mobil, Oando and Total Nigeria, which together said they are responsible for 50 percent of total petrol importation into the country.

The former Group Managing Director (GMD) of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Alhaji Abubakar Yar'adua got his sack letter from the President Umaru Yar'adua and replaced with NNPC's Group Executive Director (Special Project), Muhammad Sanusi Barkindo. Yar'adua also approved major changes in the top Management of the NNPC where the six Group Executive Directors were replaced with new ones.

One incident within the early part of the year was the vandal attacks on the PPMC major pipeline (system2B) which moves products from Atlas Cove to Mosimi, Ejogbo, Ibadan, Ilorin and Ore. These effectively shut down PPMC capacity to move the product by about 30 percent, a minimum of up to 380 trucks per day.

The Minister of State for Petroleum, Odien Ajumogobia, at the Nigeria Oil and Gas Conference in Abuja justified government's intention to deregulate the downstream oil sector. Soon after that the government announced subsidy removal on PMS otherwise known as Petrol.

A shocking news revealed by Mr Mohammed M. Ibrahim, Chairman of the OGIC, sub-committee on policy framework was that Nigeria is adjudged to be the largest importer of refined petroleum products in the world despite being among the top 10 oil producing nations in the world.

Secretary General of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Abdalla El-Badri arrived Nigeria with his delegation and called on Nigeria and other OPEC member countries to work together to ensure that the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change was sustained.

The Public hearings on the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) were conducted by both the Senate and House of Representative members. Senator Ike Ekweremadu, deputy senate president stated that members of the upper legislative chamber have resolved to pass the oil reform bill before the end of the year. He said so at a gala in honour of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member Countries' visiting team led by His Excellency, Abdalla S. El-Badri, Secretary General of the organization.

Speaking also during a fact-finding visit to the Minister of Petroleum Resources and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to understand the Petroleum Industry Bill before the National Assembly and the rationale behind it, the leader of the IMF delegation and the Adviser Fiscal Affairs Department, Mr. Charles McPherson said the bill was professional and was properly done.

The Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), the Exploration and Production arm of the NNPC discovered Oil from its Oil Mining Lease (OML) 64, otherwise known as Kukaku-1 well with potential of 1, 285 to 3, 110 barrels per day of crude oil. The well was drilled to a total depth of 11,150 feet and encountered six major hydrocarbon intervals, three out of which bear oil with a net thickness of about 50 feet.

The NNPC signed a "Modified Carry Agreement" to the tune of \$1.69 billion with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), TOTAL and Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) designed to finance their Joint Venture Upstream project in Gbaran-Ugbidie, in Bayelsa state.

International Oil Prices

The substantial parts of the year witnessed surges in international crude price after the early fall from \$145 a barrel in the beginning of the year. The crude oil price nearly hit \$80 at the end of the year.

Electricity

As part of the effort to revive the sector, the federal government promised to repair the turbines and other installation belongs to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) as a short term measures to at least generate 6000MW of electricity before the end of the year. The Federal Government announced the removal of the Chief Executive Officer and two other executive directors of the state power company, in what the government said was a move towards achieving its power generation targets.

The Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) Engr. Bello Suleiman was kicked out alongside the Executive Director in charge of Finance and Administration Engr. Isiaka Abdul Razak and his counterpart

in charge of Operations, Engr. Simon Atakulu. Suleiman was replaced by Engr. Husein Labo, while Mr. Pius Apuye is the new Executive Director (Finance and Administration) and Engr. John Ayodele is Executive Director (Operations).

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) descended on the Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Ransome Owan and six other commissioners on alleged N1.54bn fraud perpetrated by them. The Minister of Power, Lanre Babalola shortly after that announced their suspension and at the same time announced the appointment of a new administrator without seeking the consent of the presidency, thereby generating another controversy in the sector.

President Umaru Musa Yar'adua sent a bill to the National Assembly asking for the repeal of the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) Act after the fraud incident allegedly perpetrated by some law makers, Permanent secretary of the ministry of power and the Director General of the Agency of about N5.6 billion.

The Federal Government later scrapped the REA through a letter from the minister of State for Power, Nuhu S. Wye even though the bill sent for the repeal of the REA establishment Act 2005 is still hanging in the National Assembly.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s nuclear regulation expert, Anthony Evans said at the IAEA regional Regulatory Infrastructure for Safety in Abuja that Nigeria had been a role model in nuclear regulation in Africa and if work went according to plans, the Nigeria's Nuclear Power programme will be the best in the continent.

PHCN workers threatened to go on strike to press home their demands including salary increment and unbundling of PHCN. Riot as a result of poor power supplied to the death of five people in Zaria, Kaduna state on Monday, May 25th, 2009, but PHCN said the riot has nothing to do with power supply in the town.

Gas

The country's natural gas reserves of 185 trillion cubic feet was not properly explored within the year due to absence of enabling regulation. The domestic gas obligation by the International Oil Companies remained in coma throughout the year due to issues concerning pricing and payment.

The plans to raise earnings from natural gas exports to 50 percent of oil revenues by 2010 remained in papers throughout the period but some efforts were made to increase the level of gas production. NNPC estimated that \$15 billion in private sector investments is necessary to meet its natural gas development goals by 2010. Still within the period, Nigerian gas flaring accounts for 20% of the world total which could be ended by 2010 by collecting associated natural gas and processing it into LNG.

NNPC and Gazprom signed an agreement in Abuja to form a new gas company called Nigaz. At the same time the Nigeria government hosted Algeria and Niger Republic to conclude the 4,000km-long Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline project agreement.

The talks about the \$7 billion Nigeria-Algeria (NIGAL) project planned to be finished by end of 2009.

The Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr. Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo said the corporation put in place a short term gas supply plan to deliver about 1.2 billion cubic feet of gas (bcft) to the domestic market by the end of this year.

The federal government warned all International Oil Companies (IOCs) operating in Nigeria not to fail in meeting their domestic gas supply obligation designed to meet the 6,000MW target for domestic power supply before the end of the year.

Geometric Power Limited signed a gas supply agreement with Shell Petroleum Development Company and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation for the generation of about 188 mega watts of electricity. The first time an IPP signed such agreement. The gas shortage was blamed for the failure to achieve the 6000mw of electricity by the end of the year by both the minister of power and the managing director of the PHCN.

Niger Delta/Amnesty

Royal Dutch oil giant - Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) was fined N1 million over failure to clean up oil spill sites which resulted in an inferno that destroyed some part of Peremabiri community, in southern Ijaw Local government Area of Bayelsa state in 2008.

The financial penalty was imposed by the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA). The main militant group in Nigeria's Niger Delta attacked an oil facility. Royal Dutch Shell stopped some production as a precaution after reports of an attack on two oil well clusters near its Forcados terminal.

Also some militants group threatened to blow up Kaduna Petroleum Institute if government continues to go ahead with its agenda of moving the Federal University of Petroleum Resource from its present location at Effurun to Kaduna, the federal government officials said there are no plans to like that.

Business/Finance



Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE)

Thursday, December 31, 2009

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	3	0.59	12,880	7,728.00
SECTOR Totals	3		12,880	7,728.00
AGRICULTURE				
FTN COCOA PROC. PLC	11	0.52	396,950	207,103.50
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	5	0.57	224,400	127,908.00
OKOMU OIL PALM COY PLC	1	22.75	288	6,226.56
PRESCO PLC	4	5.60	220,000	1,232,000.00
SECTOR Totals	21		841,638	1,573,238.06
AIR SERVICES				
NIG. AV. HAND. COY PLC	56	7.05	146,345	1,042,454.38
SECTOR Totals	56		146,345	1,042,454.38
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	22	0.50	4,999,447	2,499,723.50
INCAR NIGERIA PLC	1	4.33	54,333	235,261.89
R. T. BRISCOE (NIG.) PLC	9	6.15	319,653	1,977,392.70
SECTOR Totals	32		5,373,433	4,712,378.09
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	64	7.61	2,101,864	16,384,320.67
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	63	2.50	1,985,378	4,886,030.89
DIAMOND BANK PLC	64	7.38	7,590,682	55,508,958.48
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	2	10.63	8,332	84,153.20
FIRST CITY MON. BANK PLC	26	7.00	3,301,419	23,570,830.03
FIDELITY BANK PLC	97	2.42	5,413,023	12,956,955.39
FIRST BANK OF NIG. PLC	433	14.60	7,146,676	101,746,495.69
FINBANK PLC	115	0.53	42,943,899	22,087,278.28
GTBANK PLC	247	15.50	7,166,447	110,357,134.84
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	19	7.15	1,373,659	9,823,048.18
INTERCONTIN. BANK PLC.	36	1.61	2,431,195	3,914,223.95
OCEANIC BANK INT. PLC	32	1.69	1,323,709	2,237,068.21
BANK PHB PLC	77	1.31	6,867,704	9,064,099.28
SKYE BANK PLC.	62	5.27	2,193,663	11,746,613.81
SPRING BANK PLC	11	0.76	144,793	110,042.68
STERLING BANK PLC	31	1.23	1,795,771	2,189,616.28
UNT. BANK FOR AFR. PLC.	134	10.76	4,059,497	44,252,501.62
UNION BANK OF NIG. PLC	108	6.00	1,897,613	11,339,652.89
UNITYBANK PLC	24	0.80	913,909	736,349.58
WEMA BANK PLC	15	0.93	224,710	208,980.30
ZENITH BANK PLC	166	13.50	5,288,482	69,506,626.64
SECTOR Totals	1,826		106,172,425	512,710,980.89
BOND				
CRUS. NIG. PLC UNS. CONV. BOND	5	100.00	43,800	0.00
SECTOR Totals	5		43,800	0.00
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	29	11.55	255,348	2,907,799.07
BEN/CEMENT COY PLC	16	43.01	500,677	21,625,017.98
CEM. CO. OF N/NIG. PLC	12	12.46	175,500	2,247,056.40
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	29	30.00	927,475	27,684,715.94
SECTOR Totals	86		1,859,000	54,464,589.39
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
NIG.-GERMAN CHEM. PLC	1	15.04	182	2,600.78
PREMIER PAINTS PLC.	1	13.40	5,260	66,959.80
SECTOR Totals	2		5,442	69,560.58
COMMERCIAL/SERVICES				
AFROMEDIA PLC	3	0.80	4,584	3,483.84
COURTVILLE INVEST. PLC	2	0.50	11,500	5,750.00
NAT. SPORTS LOTT. PLC	1	4.35	52	215.28
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	12	2.15	476,082	1,033,301.26
SECTOR Totals	18		492,218	1,042,750.38
COMP. & OFFICE EQUIP.				
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	8	0.50	223,500	111,890.00
TRIPP/GEE AND COY PLC	2	4.84	1,496	6,881.60
SECTOR Totals	10		224,996	118,771.60
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIG.) PLC	1	2.36	8,000	18,080.00
CHELLARAMS PLC	3	14.13	1,947	26,148.21
JOHN HOLT PLC	4	9.28	1,136	10,019.52
PZ CUSONS NIG. PLC	19	25.00	145,572	3,612,854.70
SCOA NIGERIA PLC	1	8.81	1,000	8,370.00
TRANSN. CORP. OF NIG. PLC	28	0.52	5,182,940	2,643,344.80
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	17	36.75	230,065	8,451,871.95
UNILEVER NIG. PLC	9	18.50	144,865	2,674,062.07
SECTOR Totals	82		5,715,525	17,444,751.25
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	10	3.81	77,708	288,690.40
G. CAPPAL PLC	2	14.46	741	10,714.86
JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	22	25.90	500,266	12,311,546.26
MULTIVERSE RES. PLC	2	0.50	15,000	7,500.00
SECTOR Totals	36		893,715	12,618,451.52
FOOD/BEV. & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	6	29.40	16,147	474,721.80
BIG TREAT PLC	12	0.63	360,400	227,052.00
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	30	10.49	2,521,023	26,445,544.13
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	116	9.93	4,554,255	44,975,551.82
DANGOTE SUGAR REF. PLC	47	15.00	1,685,019	24,885,683.95
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	19	36.00	167,131	6,025,460.60
H/WELL FLOUR MILL PLC	1	8.50	300	2,424.00
NAT. SALT COY NIGERIA PLC	47	4.35	2,464,271	10,652,626.35
NIG. BOTTLING COY PLC	12	21.42	294,112	6,299,879.04

What is Call Option

An option which gives the holder the right, but not the obligation, to buy a fixed amount of a certain stock at a specified price within a specified time. Calls are purchased by investors who expect a price increase.

Google

NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	30	239.50	62,797	15,143,631.50
N/NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	1	21.85	52,000	1,136,200.00
TANTALIZERS PLC	9	0.77	116,120	90,626.52
UTC NIGERIA PLC	2	0.86	5,007	4,506.23
SECTOR Totals	332		12,298,582	136,363,907.94
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	2	1.07	99,200	106,144.00
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	6	1.78	654,000	1,163,880.00
GLAXOSM. CONS. NIG. PLC	3	22.40	3,337	74,745.50
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	12	3.86	395,083	1,451,476.43
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	12.28	18	210.06
NEIMETH INT. PHARM. PLC	7	1.50	34,864	49,855.52
UN/DIAG. & CLIN. SERV. PLC	7	0.61	1,100,000	671,000.00
SECTOR Totals	38		2,286,502	3,517,311.51
HOTEL & TOURISM				
IKEJA HOTEL PLC	1	0.87	5,000	4,550.00
SECTOR Totals	1		5,000	4,550.00
INDUST/DOMESTIC PROD				
B. O. C. GASES NIG. PLC	2	13.48	6,087	77,974.47
NIG. ENAMELWARE PLC	1	55.63	4	222.52
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIG. PLC	3	0.50	139,326	69,663.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC	9	5.65	95,589	540,127.85
SECTOR Totals	15		241,006	687,987.84
INF. & COMM. TECH.				
CHAMS PLC	30	0.57	1,174,112	689,726.08
MASS TEL. INNOV. NIG. PLC	1	0.50	65,000	32,500.00
STARCOMMS PLC	14	1.75	3,849,184	6,736,682.90
SECTOR Totals	45		5,088,296	7,458,908.98
INSURANCE				
AFRICAN ALL. INS. PLC	3	0.87	23,500	19,505.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	105	0.79	9,659,829	7,750,975.13
CONTINENTAL REINS. PLC	2	1.15	27,000	29,950.00
CORNERSTONE INS.CO.PLC.	16	0.52	7,214,848	3,750,072.48
CUST. & ALLIED INS. PLC	64	2.86	803,000	2,205,423.50
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	8	0.50	1,329,000	664,500.00
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	18	0.95	2,744,500	2,607,275.00
GUARANTY TRUST ASS. PLC	9	2.07	323,500	672,900.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	4	0.50	18,800	9,400.00
CONS. HALLM. INS. PLC	3	0.50	244,500	122,250.00
INV. AND ALLIED ASS. PLC	4	0.50	400,000	200,000.00
INT. ENERGY INS. COY PLC	13	0.63	573,527	360,093.47
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	37	0.59	5,288,884	3,120,441.56
L/UNION & ROCK INS. PLC.	5	0.51	178,857	91,485.65
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.50	30,000	15,000.00
MUTUAL BEN. ASSUR. PLC	1	0.64	50,000	32,000.00
N.E.M. INSUR. CO. (NIG.) PLC.	12	0.52	860,024	447,722.96
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	7	0.97	209,256	202,833.20
OASIS INSURANCE PLC	3	1.49	252,000	375,480.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	4	4.00	137,042	548,141.55
SOV. TRUST INSURANCE PLC	6	0.50	1,490,000	745,000.00
STACO INSURANCE PLC		1.25	107,500	134,375.00
STAND. ALL. INSUR. PLC	17	0.55	1,558,100	856,955.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.10	3,001,000	3,301,000.00
INTERC. WAPIC INS. PLC	7	1.10	217,000	238,700.00
SECTOR Totals	359		36,741,667	28,501,479.50
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNIC. PLC	34	0.56	318,750	178,100.00
SECTOR Totals	34		318,750	178,100.00
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAV. AND LOANS PLC	11	0.56	738,050	415,029.00
RESORT SAV. & LOANS PLC	24	0.50	19,470,000	9,735,000.00
UN/HOMES SAV. & LOANS PLC	28	0.82	1,598,155	1,344,125.83
SECTOR Totals	63		21,806,205	11,494,154.83
PACKAGING				
NIG. BAG MAN. COY PLC	963	1.45	2,486,122	3,594,440.53
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	1	6.99	630	4,189.50
POLY PRODUCTS (NIG.) PLC.	1	4.68	48	213.60
SECTOR Totals	965		2,486,800	3,598,843.63
PETROLEUM(MARK.)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	22	33.51	67,276	2,182,270.80
BECO PETROL. PROD. PLC	2	2.53	12,000	28,920.00
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC.	12	69.79	11,263	816,996.43
CONOIL PLC	19	27.63	104,500	2,956,484.05
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	14	4.98	244,302	1,218,402.34
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	9	98.80	3,101	302,774.24
OANDO PLC	11	93.99	1,677	157,621.23
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	10	149.00	11,727	1,659,956.85
SECTOR Totals	99		455,846	9,323,425.94
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	3	5.40	2,320	12,009.60
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	5	9.03	12,170	114,079.30
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	4	4.97	17,660	88,123.00
SECTOR Totals	12		32,150	214,211.90
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROP. DEV. CO. PLC	8	19.36	154,100	3,060,426.00
SECTOR Totals	8		154,100	3,060,426.00
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANS. INCORP.	11	15.00	34,500	513,860.00
SECTOR Totals	11		34,500	513,860.00
OVERALL Totals	4,362		209,373,326	866,713,925.88

GAINERS

NFM	1.04
NBC	1.02
WAPCO	1.00
NB	0.82

LOSERS

UAC-PROP	1.04
ETERNAOIL	0.26
INCAR	0.22
PRESTIGE	0.20

THE HOME FRONT

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Fighting endometrial cancer in women

By Akor Ojoma

ENDOMETRIAL cancer is the fifth most common cancer affecting women worldwide. It is the cancer which usually begins in the endometrium that is the lining of the uterus, a hollow, pear-shaped pelvic organ where the baby grows. The cancer forms more than 95% of the cancers that affect the uterus of women and is mostly diagnosed in women over 50 with very few women diagnosed under 35. A large percentage of Nigerian women are affected by it.

Those at Risk

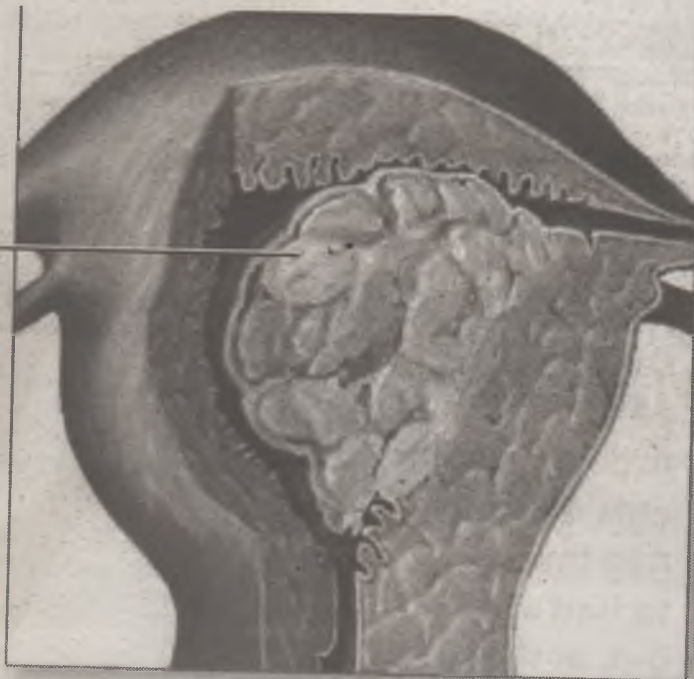
According to Dr Nathaniel Adewole, a consultant gynaecologist at the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Gwagwalada "The women at risk comprise; women who start menstruation early, those who attain menopause late, women who take hormones that contain only estrogen, women who don't have many children and quite ironically women who have many children don't usually have the disease though it is not a yardstick to have many children as that also has its attendant problems. Having risk factors for endometrial cancer doesn't mean you'll get the disease. It means that you're at risk and should be alert to possible signs and symptoms of the disease. Conversely, some women who develop endometrial cancer appear to have no risk factors for the disease."

Symptoms

The doctor said The first clue that something is wrong is abnormal vaginal bleeding. Others include Prolonged periods or bleeding between periods, more frequent vaginal bleeding or spotting during the years leading up to menopause, perimenopause, any bleeding after the time of menopause, a pink, watery or white discharge from your vagina, pelvic pain, especially late in the disease, pain during intercourse and weight loss.

In the words of Dr Adewole "Abnormal bleeding from the womb is the main symptom. For example in younger women the bleeding will be irregular and more than normal but for a woman that has gone beyond the years of menstruation and starts bleeding from the uterus you can think of endometrial cancer. Generally a woman in any age group

Endometrial cancer



who starts bleeding abnormally especially if above 39 or 40 years should think of endometrial cancer. At later stages you may notice the stomach getting bigger and pains too. At the advanced stage the woman can also start losing weight having lost much blood from the bleeding. She can also be weak and loose appetite. The abnormal bleeding often marks the phase of transition before it develops to endometrial cancer."

Causes

Dr Adewole said like most cancers generally one cannot pin point the exact cause of endometrial cancer "When the balance of the two female hormones -estrogen and progesterone shifts toward more estrogen which stimulates growth of the endometrium -a woman's risk of developing endometrial cancer increases. Factors that increase levels of estrogen in the body include: many years of menstruation, never having been pregnant, irregular ovulation, obesity, diabetes, estrogen only replacement therapy, personal history of breast and ovarian cancer etc." He explained

Prevention

According to the gynaecologist "A woman who gives birth several times is protected, a woman on combined oral contraceptives pill which contains combination of estrogen and progesterone, the pill being taken morning and evening by women is also protected."

The gynaecologist said "Since

the disease is caused mainly by hormonal imbalance, pills can be protective but we can't say because of this every woman should use the pill since the pill may not be a suitable family planning method for some women. The main thing is if the disease is detected early, more problems can be avoided. Once abnormal bleeding is noticed the woman should go to the hospital for screening because this is a transition to endometrial cancer and if picked up at this early stage and treated endometrial cancer will not develop."

Diagnosis

When a person comes for screening the major thing that will be done is the endometrial sampling. It involves taking sample from the lining of the womb of the woman and sending it for histology or medical history even as an outpatient. Another way is once a woman is past 40 if she can do transvaginal scan, it can easily investigate her susceptibility in developing it. This measures how thick the endometrium is, there may also be blood test and other things pap test, endometrial biopsy, dilation and curettage.

Treatment

The major treatment is surgical and the operation is usually to remove the womb and ovary. Once the womb is removed, if it is at the early stage it will cure it. But if it is at the late stage apart from the womb and the ovary, one will need radiotherapy and sometimes

one may also use drugs called hormonal drugs or chemotherapy. The hormone that could be used at the last stage is progesterone. But if cut up at early stage removing the womb will be able to cure the disease. Talking about removing the womb and ovary as a cure for the disease destroying the woman's chances of motherhood, the Doctor said the good thing is that the disease mostly occurs after the reproductive years that are usually after years of giving birth.

The gynaecologist added that the major problem associated with this disease in Nigeria is that of lack of awareness on the part of the Nigerian women.

"There are cases of women who experience abnormal bleeding for up to three-four years and they will just keep it to themselves until it leads to their death because the cancer may have spread beyond the uterus when only what such a woman need do is present it early so it can be cured without removing the womb and the situation that involves removing the womb may not lead to death but eliminate all the cancer."

Dr Adewole advised government to take up the challenge and train personnel on this cancer He said: "There should also be provision of cancer points across the country. There is lack of information and co-ordinated policy on cancer in this country. We also need a cancer policy in the country."

Don't nag graduate children into a job...

BY the time their offspring hit their 20s, most parents would probably assume they have got the hang of child-rearing.

But ministers seem to disagree and are today publishing a guide on how to help 20-something graduate children.

Over 18 pages, it urges parents not to nag them to find a job but, at the same time, not to make things too cosy at home.

They are urged to curb unrealistic ambitions and call in favours from friends and contacts to help their child find work experience.

The advice, published by Lord Mandelson's business department, covers the over-21s. This age group can already vote, work, join the Armed Forces, get married or even be parents themselves.

Aspects of the guide seem at odds, urging parents not to nag as it makes young people feel more



Ministers have published an 18-page guide on how to help graduates

“Over 18 pages, it urges parents not to nag them to find a job but, at the same time, not to make things too cosy at home

stressed and makes the failure to get a job worse.

But the advice, entitled Parent Motivators, also warns against being 'too supportive'.

It asks: 'If you are making life too comfortable at home, why would they get a job?'

'If you are providing free board and lodgings, a well-stocked fridge, washing and ironing done, plus an allowance, there's not much drive there. So cut back to help increase their motivation.'

The guide, available on the official website direct.gov.uk, is being issued nationwide this week.

It follows a barrage of advice to parents on raising children from birth to leaving school.

The latest example of the nanny state has a list 15 of 'dos and don'ts' to help parents 'motivate not alienate' their child.

These include an instruction to 'allow them some time to relax once they graduate but don't let a few weeks turn into months.'

Parents are even told to encourage their children to see a doctor if they notice changes to eating and sleeping habits or a

“If you are providing free board and lodgings, a well-stocked fridge, washing and ironing done, plus an allowance, there's not much drive there

loss of energy.

Written by career coach Denise Taylor, the guide said that after university, 'reality hits' as graduates realise the financial crisis has cut their chances of finding work.

She said: 'Despite their children being grown up, many parents are still naturally concerned about their prospects and want to help.'

Another of her tips said: 'Arrange a regular update to avoid nagging. This can help keep you informed without adding pressure on them.'

And parents are told: 'Don't dismiss their ideas but also encourage them to be realistic.

'Some will make it as actors and film scriptwriters but many just waste away the years.'

'People often pursue careers such as this alongside a job, so encourage them to get a job to increase their independence and so they can support themselves on their dream path.'

The scheme comes days after figures obtained by the Conservatives showed that nearly 50,000 recent graduates are unemployed or in stop-gap or unpaid jobs.

It has also emerged that hundreds of students are forking out up to £8,000 for unpaid internships in a desperate bid to land a job.

FRAGMENTS

By Safiya I. Dantiye
safiyaadantiye@yahoo.com

Maryam Babangida: Bringing rural women to the fore

THE death of Hajiya Maryam Babangida, wife of former President, General Ibrahim Babangida on Sunday December 27, was taken by people differently. While many see her as the initiator of the glamorization of First Ladyship, some see her as an epitome of women emancipation from the drudgery of poverty, among other perspectives.

Her pet project, Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLPRW) which was started in 1986 ushered a new era of helping women realize and utilize their potentials. It was essentially a programme aimed at improving the status of women; where they learnt new skills or improved on the ones they already had, in order to be economically empowered.

Even though at the beginning, sceptics were of the view that the programme would make women disrespect their husbands if they got some income, the programme continued and women were happy for being propped to have something doing. Most importantly however, the programme brought the issue of rural women to the centre stage.

Even before she became the First Lady, Maryam Babangida was noted for her involvement in women issues, where she served as the president of Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA).

Many people in high places hardly think of the people at the rung of the ladder, haven escaped such a fate, so to say. There are many examples where those with socialist ideology transform into the 'bourgeoisies,' they hated with passion; this makes one wonder whether their ideology in the first place was due to principles, envy or poverty.

Most of such betrayers stop fighting for the masses, and if they do, it is not sincere, they only do so in order to keep deceiving the people that they are with them while they have become 'converts' and actually dine with the 'mighty.' Or are becoming the 'mighty' themselves, as the case may be. In any event, many women, haven risen from a humble background as Mrs Babangida to such prestigious position of being the president's wife, may have nothing to do with anything 'rural,' let alone identify with rural women and mingle with them. Thus, it will take a woman of great convictions of her ideals in her position to really do something that will improve the lot of rural women.

Even though I was young at the time the programme started, I was excited, not with the glamour of the office, the entourage and other perks, but with the prospect of helping women do something that would improve their lives.

Over the years, the programme's name was altered to encompass African rural women: Better Life Programme for African Rural Women (BLPARW), which many see as ambitious. Even though in recent years the activities of the Better Life are far and between, Mrs Babangida had changed the lives of many women and families for the better. This is because even the realisation of being able to do something better is a great encouragement. From her project, she set the precedence of pet projects, whether this is good or not is debatable, as critics have pointed out that these projects are funded by the government, and they are hardly sustained after the First Ladies leave 'office'. Apparently some of the First ladies may not have the passion to form any pet project, but since it has become a trend, it will be out of place now for a president or governors' wife not to have a pet project.

Every human being has his good and his bad sides, and we don't have to love a person, if we are fair. So no matter what else she might have done, Mrs Maryam Babangida had cared enough about women to make their problems her problem, even as she had a choice not to. She will be remembered for that.

“Every human being has his good and bad sides, and we don't have to love a person, if we are fair. So no matter what else she might have done, Mrs Maryam Babangida had cared enough about women to make their problems her problem, even as she had a choice not to. She will be remembered for that

Health interactive

Write in confidence to healthinteractive@hotmail.com; www.healthinteractive.wordpress.com or send a text message to 080-89972539 or P.O.Box 14807, Kano, Nigeria

Advice by Dr Aminu Magashi

I am confirmed to have Hepatitis

I have been experiencing pain in my tummy, mostly on the right side. It comes on and off and I normally take strong analgesics. The pain became severe recently and on visiting the hospital, my doctor told me I have hepatitis. I am devastated and need information on it.

John from Abuja

Hepatitis is a condition affecting the liver, an inflammation result in damaging liver cells (hepatocytes) with subsequent cells death. Acute injury of the liver, may be followed by complete recovery and prolonged or chronic problem may be compounded by healing by fibrosis (laying of fibers) and progression to shrunken liver (liver cirrhosis)

Among the causes of hepatitis are:

1. Hepatitis viruses, A, B, C, D, herpes simplex virus,
2. Toxins
3. Drugs like anti tuberculosis drugs such as Isoniazid and Rifampicin
4. Chronic alcoholism

Initially, there are non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea, upper abdominal discomfort, tender liver, joint pins and skin rashes.

In severe hepatitis, it may lead to liver failure and brain affectation (encephalopathy)

Hepatitis A can be contracted through feaco-oral route due to food contamination and hepatitis B can be contracted through sexual intercourse, from mother to her unborn child and through blood transfusion and use of unsterilised instruments. Those at risks of getting hepatitis B are (parental drug users, homo sexual, newborn of infected mother, regular sexual partners, patients on chronic hemo dialysis and medical and laboratory personnel)

Among the complication of hepatitis are:

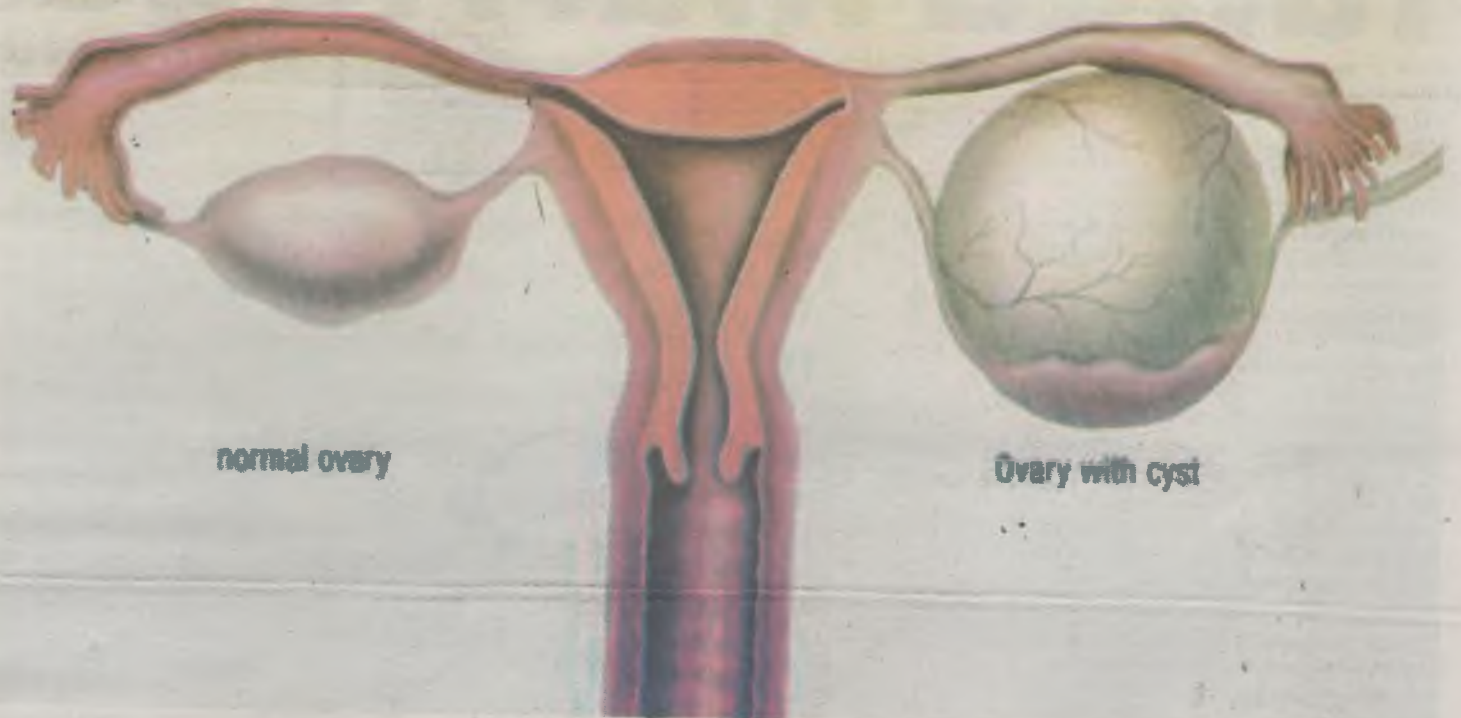
1. Acute hepatic (liver) failure
2. Relapsing hepatitis
3. Anemia (decrease blood level)
4. Renal failure
5. Hepatocellular (liver) Carcinoma

The management is to encourage dieting with good protein, drugs should be discouraged. The use of Interferon when it is due to viruses is encouraged. And if severe, liver can be transplanted.

In case of viruses, sanitation will reduce cases of hepatitis A and both A and B and C and D hepatitis can be prevented by taking vaccination, be it passive or active.

I advise, you visit your doctor regularly

Fallopian tube



What causes Cord Prolapse?

During my last pregnancy, I had prolapse. I want to avoid it in subsequent pregnancies. What are the likely causes and potential danger to babies?

Eunice from Rivers State

The umbilical cord is a flexible, tube-like structure that, during pregnancy, connects the fetus to the mother. The umbilical cord is the baby's lifeline to the mother. It transports nutrients to the baby and also carries away the baby's waste products. It is made up of three blood vessels - two arteries and one vein.

Umbilical cord prolapse is a complication that occurs prior to or during delivery of the baby. In a prolapse, the umbilical cord drops (prolapses) through the open cervix into the vagina ahead of the baby. The cord can then become trapped against the baby's body during delivery.

The most common cause of an umbilical cord prolapse is a premature rupture of the membranes that contain the amniotic fluid.

Other causes include:

1. Premature delivery of the baby
2. Delivering more than one baby per pregnancy (twins, triplets, etc.)
3. Excessive amniotic fluid
4. Breech delivery (the baby comes through the birth canal feet first)
5. An umbilical cord that is longer than usual

An umbilical cord prolapse presents a great danger to the fetus. During the delivery, the fetus can put stress on the cord. This can result in a loss of oxygen to the fetus, and may even result

in a stillbirth.

Prolapsed umbilical cord can be diagnosed in several ways. During delivery, a fetal heart monitors to measure the baby's heart rate. If the umbilical cord has prolapsed, the baby may have bradycardia (a heart rate of less than 120 beats per minute). Also pelvic examination might help to see the prolapsed cord, or palpate (feel) the cord with fingers.

Because of the risk of lack of oxygen to the fetus, an umbilical cord prolapse should be dealt with immediately. If a doctor finds a prolapsed cord, he or she can move the fetus away from the cord in order to reduce the risk of oxygen loss. In some cases, the baby will have to be delivered immediately by caesarean section. If the problem with the prolapsed cord can be solved immediately, there may be no permanent injury. However, the longer the delay, the greater the chance of problems (such as brain damage or death) for the baby.

Ovarian Cysts and Infertility

I have Ovarian Cysts according to my gynaecologist. Please does it lead to Infertility?

Habiba

Ovarian cysts are benign growth (not cancerous and enclosed cavities that contain fluids). The cyst could be only one (solitary follicular cyst) or it could be found on the surface of the ovary in many places (multiple follicular cysts) which is also called polycystic ovary. And they can be found in normal ovary.

A woman can have cyst and still able to have children but cysts that are related to pelvic

inflammatory diseases (PID) may contribute to infertility.

Some of the complications of cysts are:

1. Torsion, it can be twisted and cause pain, nausea and vomiting
2. Rupture, and discharge very irritant content
3. Hemorrhage, it can bleed and lead to shock and severe pain (acute abdomen)
4. Malignancy, the normal cysts can transform to become cancerous and lead to more problems.

Sustained Headache: My Dilemma

I am always disturbed by headache that comes and goes and sometimes stays for a long time. Please educate me about the causes of headache and its remedy.

Bararabe

Headache has a lot of dimension; it could be a symptom of a particular disease. In another angle it could be psychological problems either due to anxiety, stress, emotional imbalance, over working and exhaustion.

Among the common headaches, are as follows.

Tension head ache, this is the commonest, it is dull, tight or like a pressure and there is a sensation of as if a band is tied around the head and the cause of such may be emotional strain, anxiety, and depressive illnesses.

Migraine (cluster head ache), it can be a common migraine which is characterized by only repeated headache or classical which is characterized

by repeated (paroxysmal) headache, vomiting and focal neurological events (visual disturbance).

Headache due to raised intra cranial pressure, this type is worse in the morning and improves as the day progress and it is associated with morning vomiting and aggravated with cough and straining and it is dull and often mild.

Important points to consider when diagnosing head ache are as follows:

1. The degree of the severity from onset
2. Time of the day of onset of maximal pain
3. Effect of posture, coughing and straining
4. Location of the pain
5. Other associated symptoms.

To pin point the cause of your headache, all the above mentioned factors have to be considered and you need a careful clinical assessment by a doctor.

Happy Xmas and New Year to our Readers

This is to wish numerous readers of this column happy Xmas in arrears and Happy New year of 1431 AH and 2010 AD respectively.

MY READOMETER

Last week (Friday, 25th - Thursday, 31st December 2009), our blog address (www.healthinteractive.wordpress.com) had recorded 506 visitors, with Saturday being the busiest with 79 visitors.

I am glad that we witnessed daily visitation to our blog throughout the week. You can log in and not only read the latest edition and archives but can as well post questions and/or comments. Have a lovely weekend.

The bane of most failed marriages...

By Bunmi Omolehin

HAVE you ever wondered why many marriages fail today? Several feel that the bad economy plays a major role why these marriages do not stand the test of time. But findings show that the reasons go beyond that. According to most people, the problem often lies in the foundation of these marriages.

The basic foundation of any marriage or union is love. Today however, it is unfortunate that the issue of love has been relegated in most societies. In some cultures, some families prefer to marry out their children to the wealthy or those who belong to the same class as theirs. In politics today it is common to see political friends or associates cementing their partnership by marrying of their daughters and sons to one another. The same goes for the business class, many such marriages have been conducted in the past. But how often do these marriages survive?

According to respondent Olusina Omoniyi, unless the issue of love is revisited in the process of conducting marriages, the high rate of divorce may continue in the country. He believes that the failure of most marriages has little to do with political class or race of the parents.

He says "Even the poor do it, they prefer to give their children out to people

“ Unless the issue of love is revisited in the process of conducting marriages, the high rate of divorce may continue in the country

they know can change their fortunes; that is why you hear parents telling their children not to bring home an uneducated person or someone that cannot take care of them when they are old. All parents now want their children to marry a graduate and this is not good. Unless people begin to see the issue of love as necessary in a marriage then divorce cases will continue to increase.”

Many consequences of marriage without love abound. These include broken homes, untrained children; break down of communication between spouses, incompatibility, hardships, unrest and unhappiness and a whole lot more.

Sadly today, many of our singles, males and females alike prefer to settle

for money, wealth, position, prestige and other selfish considerations.

Also many parents still decide to give their children out in marriage without bothering if love exists between them or not. Some parents even send pictures of prospective brides and bridegrooms to their children abroad while a few others threaten to disown such children if they refuse to marry the husband or wife chosen for them.

A respondent, Ige James shares the view that some parents give their children out because of money. "This has been happening for a long period of time. For instance if the man lives in the USA and the lady lives in Nigeria they will like to bring them together because the man has money; after some months or years

they begin to have problems. They do not understand each others character and this may lead to divorce.”

According to Dale Matthew, the issue of divorce does not arise if first things are done first. "When people want to get married they behave as though they are good people but when they get what they need they change their attitude.

Character must first be built if the marriage must work. For many women they do not submit to their husbands and for a lot of men, there is totally no love for their wives. How then will there not be strain in such marriages?" he asks.

According to Mrs. Kemi John love between a couple is always the most important factor in marriage "When couples love themselves they will not have

any problem but if you see a woman who gets married and divorces her husband ask the woman what happened before the divorce.

There is a Yoruba proverb which says the person inside the water is the one who knows how big the water is; I say this because for some married men have terrible characters, there is no iota of love for their wives. They prefer to go out and spend for other women rather than their wives; they also prefer to give more love and attention to these girlfriends rather than their wives of many years. This is bad.”

The list of failed marriages is endless and the reasons are also unlimited. The question however is when will this social scourge be eventually eradicated?



Glow in the little black dress this season

By Akor Ojoma

DURING festive seasons, ladies go all out to add something new to their wardrobe. The little black dress popularly called LBD fits in this time. This ageless dress can get you through all your social functions between now and even beyond the New Year.

There are always new designs and sizes each year for your festive parties and visits to relatives, friends and other acquaintances.

Aside the festive season, you never know when, a wedding, fancy dinner party, date, family get-together or even a funeral may happen and you need that little number in your closet ready and waiting.

There are a number of styles to choose from when it comes to the little black dress: wrap, tank, A-line, princess cut...just to mention a few. You can have several and different little black dresses in your wardrobe with each giving you a new and desired outlook each time you wear them.

You can wear your little black dress to the office and then change the accessories with it to go for those evening or weekend social functions.

More so, this season, gift-giving is the in-thing and the gift of a little black dress will be well appreciated by the ladies.

“ You never know when, a wedding, fancy dinner party, date, family get-together or even a funeral may happen and you need that little number in your closet ready and waiting



DIGEST

How women love their mobile phones... more than their boyfriends

WOMEN treasure their mobile phones more than their boyfriends, research has revealed. The poll of 4,000 women showed that four in 10 said they would be 'devastated' if they lost their phones, while a third admitted they could happily live without a man in their lives.

Mothers came top in the list of women's most treasured possessions, followed by photographs and best friends.

The study, by online pawnbroker Borro.com, saw boyfriends come fifth in the list, placing above diamond rings, pets, laptops and hair straighteners.

One in five would consider pawning their valuable items to raise much needed cash, and the majority would even dump their boyfriend or husband in exchange for £700,000.

Borro.com CEO Paul Aitken said: 'The list certainly threw up some surprises with boyfriends featuring below photos and mobile phones.'

'It's understandable why mums come out top though - they are there to lend an ear, offer support and a best friend to many girls.'

'Photos hold fun and significant memories which could be devastating to lose and a mobile phone keeps women connected and it's always by their side.'

The survey found that treasured possessions helped raise a smile at least five times a day for three quarters of those polled.

Other items among the top 20 included a favourite pair of shoes, Vaseline, concealer and mascara.

The research also revealed that the average woman will spend £624 a year on treats - such as lipstick or jewellery - to boost her mood.

Mr Aitken added: 'Diamond rings represent 70 per cent of the loans we give to women so we are not surprised to see them right at the top of the list alongside mothers and boyfriends, that have a high emotional value but zero material value.'



MOBILE phones came higher than boyfriends in a poll of women's most treasured possessions

An illness we still dare not speak of

WE don't know whether to accept that the Northern Irish MP Iris Robinson's stated reason for quitting politics - depression - is the whole story.

A row about the fact that she and her First Minister husband employ four family members on their staff may have also been a

contributory factor.

BUT I welcome the attention she has drawn to the issue of mental health, which remains too little understood.

There has been some progress. Bulimia and anorexia are now high profile.

Twenty years ago, children

who struggled with exams were dismissed as being thick; now, teachers, parents and GPs are alert to the problems of dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia and other conditions, including ADHD.

But depressive illness among adults remains a taboo.

It is difficult to admit to it in

the workplace, where the weakest go to the wall, P45 in hand.

Darling dare not feel smug about Ireland Politics tends to attract manic personalities, on an invincible high when things go well, sunk in a darkness of the soul when they don't - think of Churchill.

But ordinary life has its share, too. My blood runs cold whenever a tube train is disrupted because some unfortunate individual has flung him or herself on to the tracks.

Let's hope that, as Mrs Robinson quits the public stage, she takes away some of the stigma.

Sign Language



New Year resolution: Don't give credit

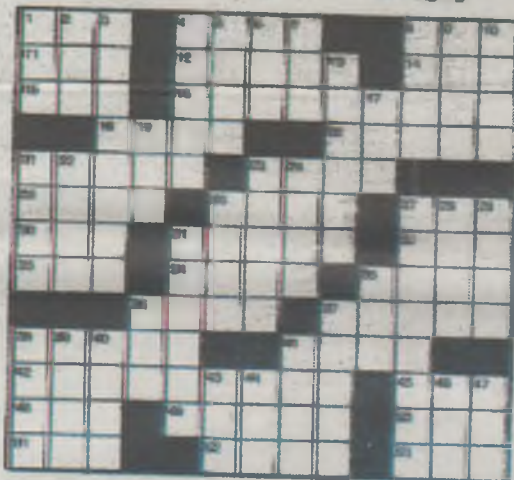
Photo location: Bhutan, by Fred Bedells

Culled from www.signspotting.com

EASY CROSSWORDS

- ACROSS**
- 1. Gp.
 - 4. Horned vipers
 - 8. Calendar abbr.
 - 11. Scarce country
 - 12. Elementary
 - 14. Zodiac sign
 - 15. Biology, e.g. (abbr.)
 - 16. Held one's attention
 - 18. Most fruit
 - 20. Library contents
 - 21. Holograph
 - 23. Swab (abbr.)
 - 25. Engage
 - 26. Sam _____ (Pasta Mico)
 - 27. Singing
 - 30. Groom's answer (2 wds.)
 - 31. Wild hogs
 - 32. French for "king"
 - 33. _____ gallon hat
 - 34. Umpire's counter-gauche
 - 35. Catholic Christian
 - 36. Love _____
 - 37. Dining dinette
 - 38. Incredible
 - 41. Sawyer's tool
 - 42. Little pig's dinner (2 wds.)
 - 45. Tooth-maker's mts.
 - 46. Reply (abbr.)
 - 49. Bald _____
 - 50. Used a match
 - 51. Archer _____
 - 52. Day care charges
 - 53. Listening equipment

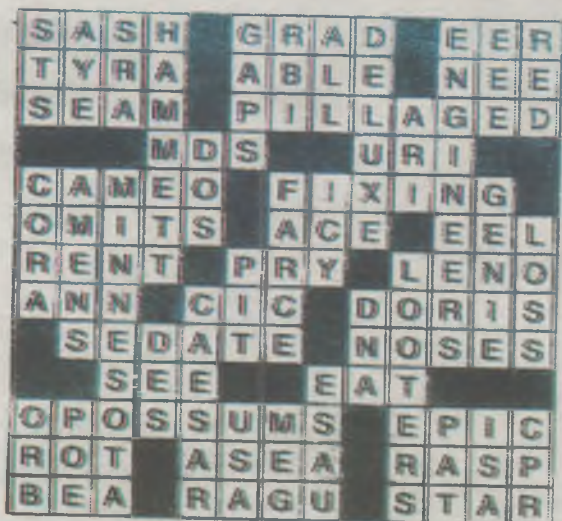
43



- DOWN**
- 1. Switch settings
 - 2. Eden _____
 - 3. Football field
 - 4. Ease up
 - 5. Satisfy fully
 - 6. California's time (abbr.)
 - 7. Man's title
 - 8. Singing
 - 9. Glance
 - 10. Shells
 - 13. Boat rooms
 - 17. Packer's pursuer
 - 19. Fifth of Madison (abbr.)
 - 21. Least bit
 - 22. General's helper
 - 23. Drink deeply
 - 24. Misadventure
 - 26. Pseudo man
 - 27. Three-sided figure
 - 28. Underground growth
 - 29. Assumed attitudes
 - 31. Anna, Charlotte, or Emily
 - 35. Dory's vessel
 - 36. Director
 - 37. Small flutes
 - 38. Alumnus, for short
 - 39. Benefit of Hollywood
 - 40. _____ pie
 - 41. Experienced auctions
 - 43. Dracula, at times
 - 44. Personality
 - 46. Top soccer scorer
 - 47. Middle (abbr.)

Solution to Easy Crosswords

42



SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given"- these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

55

			7	6			8		
8			1					5	
						1	9	7	
	4			3			9	6	1
3				9					8
6	9	8		1					3
7	2	6							
9						3			4
	1			2	5				

Solution to Sudoku 54

4	7	3	5	9	1	2	8	6
9	2	5	4	8	6	1	3	7
6	1	8	3	2	7	5	4	9
3	4	1	6	5	2	7	9	8
5	8	9	7	1	3	6	2	4
2	6	7	9	4	8	3	1	5
1	9	6	2	7	4	8	5	3
7	5	2	8	3	9	5	6	1
3	5	6	1	2	7	8	4	9

Welcome to 2010 Stay connected

Speak loud and clear

Be heard worldwide

Shatter old barriers

Expand to new horizons

Enjoy limitless possibilities

As we wish all
Nigerians a year of
towering achievements.

Rule your world





On behalf of Kaduna state chapter of the Association of Local Governments Of Nigeria (ALGON), the state chairman **Hon Shehu Ahmed Giant** and his Deputy **Hon Abdullahi Ahmed** wish the Executive Governor of Kaduna state, **Architect Mohammed Namadi Sambo**, the Deputy Governor, **Mr Patrick Yakowa** and the good people of the state a happy and prosperous new year. May 2010 bring more dividends of democracy to Kaduna state in line with His Excellency's 11 point agenda.

His Excellency,
Mohammed Namadi Sambo, FNA
Executive Governor, Kaduna State

His Excellency,
Mr. Patrick Yakowa
Deputy Governor, Kaduna State



Hon. Shehu Ahmed Giant
Chairman Kaduna North LG



Hon. Hamza Ishaq Danmahani
Chairman Gwoza LG



Hon. Comfort Amwe
Chairman Sanga LG



Hon. Patrick Maigari
Chairman Kajuru LG



Hon. Abdullahi Ahmed
Chairman Kudan LG



Hon. Paul Wani
Chairman Kaura LG



Hon. Kawu Ibrahim
Chairman Soba LG



Hon. John Saidu Audu
Chairman Kachia LG



Hon. Gambo Lawal
Chairman Ikara LG



Alb. Abubakar Kwarau
Chairman Igabi LG



Hon. Kambal Jonathan Timmy
Chairman Zangon Kataf LG



Hon. Sani Mohd Aminu
Chairman Kaduna south LG



Hon. Yau Musa Nakaka
Chairman B/Gwari LG



Hon. Musa Yahaya Suleiman
Chairman Jaba LG



Hon. Kasimu Lawal Abubakar
Chairman Sabon Gari LG



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Hon. Abdul Bala
Chairman Makarfi LG



Hon. Gideon Y. Morik
Chairman Jema'a LG

News Extra

Terror suspect's religious zeal deepened in London—friend



UMAR Farouk Abdul Mutallab

Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, the 23-year-old Nigerian national who allegedly attempted to bomb a U.S. airliner over Michigan Christmas day, became more devout about his Muslim faith while attending university in London, according to a former friend. "In London he isolated himself from some of his former friends," Kwesi Brako told CNN. "He became much more serious about his religion."

Brako, a Christian, was in the same year as Abdul Mutallab at the English boarding school they attended in Togo and said they were close friends. In the fall of 2005, he moved to England at the same time as Abdul Mutallab to start university. But the two friends, who attended different schools, lost touch while in London.

Abdul Mutallab became increasingly involved in the Islamic Society of University College London (UCL) -- one of Britain's premier universities -- quickly becoming its vice president and threw all his energies into this new role, Brako said. Brako kept up with Abdul Mutallab through mutual friends in the British capital. In June 2006,

Abdul Mutallab became president of the UCL Islamic Society, CNN learned.

"He started wearing traditional Muslim robes with trousers rolled up around the ankles," said Brako. "Even in the winter he wore sandals."

In Britain, this style of dress is often associated with Muslims espousing a hardline-fundamentalist form of Islam. At high school in Togo, Brako recalls that Abdul Mutallab usually wore jeans and a T-shirt.

Abdul Mutallab never bragged about his family's wealth which stood out even among the other well-to-do families who sent their children there. "He was very humble," Brako recalled.

Abdul Mutallab was very athletic and loved playing basketball and soccer, according to Brako.

"Umar was sociable," Brako said, "but it depended on whether he was in the mood for talking."

Asked about Abdul Mutallab's blog references about being lonely, Brako said that he would not have thought his friend was lonely at boarding school where he said friends formed a tight-knit community.

At high school, Abdul

Mutallab already stood out for his strong religious views, praying five times a day, Brako recalled.

"We nicknamed him the Pope," Brako said, "because he was so religious."

At first Abdul Mutallab did not like the nickname, but in time he came to accept it, said Brako.

Another nickname given to Abdul Mutallab was "Alpha" -- a reference to the phrase "the Alpha and the Omega" in the Bible.

"He was the guy that never broke the rules," Brako recalled. "We all looked to him as our moral compass."

Abdul Mutallab was a very cheerful person, said Brako, who did not remember him being angry.

He, however, was troubled by the American invasion of Iraq in 2003.

"Umar's view was that innocent people were suffering through no fault of their own," Brako said.

Brako remembered Abdul Mutallab defending the Taliban during a classroom discussion.

"He didn't like it when others associated them with terrorism," Brako said. "What I thought he was trying to do was to stand up for his fellow Muslims. He was trying to save face for his religion."

... Invited 'jihad' cleric to address British students

The Christmas Day airline bomber invited a radical cleric who has advocated dying while 'fighting jihad' to address British students.

While president of the Islamic Society at University College London, Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab helped arrange for Abdur Raheem Green to speak.

The cleric, who converted to Islam from Catholicism, has written that conflict between Islam and the West is 'ordered in the Koran', and that Muslims and Westerners 'cannot live peaceably together'.

He has also claimed: 'Dying while fighting jihad is one of the surest ways to paradise and Allah's good pleasure'.

In 2005, shortly before Abdul Mutallab arranged for him to address UCL, Green was barred from entering Australia after opposition leader Kim Beazley accused him of 'spreading hate'.

The revelation adds weight to the belief that Abdul Mutallab

was radicalised during his time studying in London, where he read mechanical engineering and business at UCL between 2005 and 2008.

The 23-year-old spent most of his spare time with the university's Islamic Society, for which he served as president between 2006 and 2007.

He organised a week-long conference under the banner War on Terror Week in January 2007 with advertised speakers including former Guantanamo Bay detainees.

Security sources are concerned that the picture emerging of his undergraduate years suggests that he was recruited by Al Qaeda in London. They added that Islamic radicalisation was rife on university campuses, especially in London.

But Qasim Rafiq, a close friend who was president of the UCL Islamic Society the year before Abdul Mutallab, insists his radicalisation did not happen until after he left university.

"There was nothing to suggest he would do what he has done when I knew him," said Mr Rafiq. "He was not quick to anger and didn't discuss politics. It came as a complete surprise to me when I heard what he had done."

He added: "He was very religious. He prayed regularly, usually five times a day, and didn't have a girlfriend, drink or go to nightclubs."

Mr Rafiq, who is now studying for a PhD, said Abdul Mutallab, the son of a millionaire Nigerian banker, never spoke about his family background while at university. After university Abdul Mutallab 'vanished'.

Green, 44, was born Anthony Green, the son of a colonial administrator in Tanzania. He was brought up a Roman Catholic but converted to Islam in 1987.

He works at the London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre as the Visits and English Dawa Co-ordinator.

In 2005, Green was prevented from boarding a flight with a



RADICAL cleric Abdur Raheem Green

stopover in Brisbane because he appeared on an Australian government 'movement alert list' due to his inflammatory comments.

In an interview with Austral-

ian radio afterwards, Green said he had long renounced the extremist views, adding that he has consistently condemned terrorist acts and the killing of women and children.

News Extra

World welcomes 2010

Islands across the Pacific were the first to welcome in the New Year, with celebrations to mark the start of 2010 beginning in the tiny nation of Kiribati at 10am GMT yesterday when most Nigerians were busy at work, followed by the Chatham Islands, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand and Australia.

Under explosive bursts of crimson, purple and blue, more than one million New Year revellers in Sydney got one of the world's biggest parties started yesterday - bidding farewell to the tough year that was 2009 and welcoming a new decade.

Below are some of the scenes.



FIREWORKS explode at midnight above Sydney harbour and the Sydney Harbour Bridge to celebrate the New Year in Australia at 1300 GMT.



THE iconic Sydney Opera House was silhouetted against a sky ablaze with fireworks at midnight yesterday



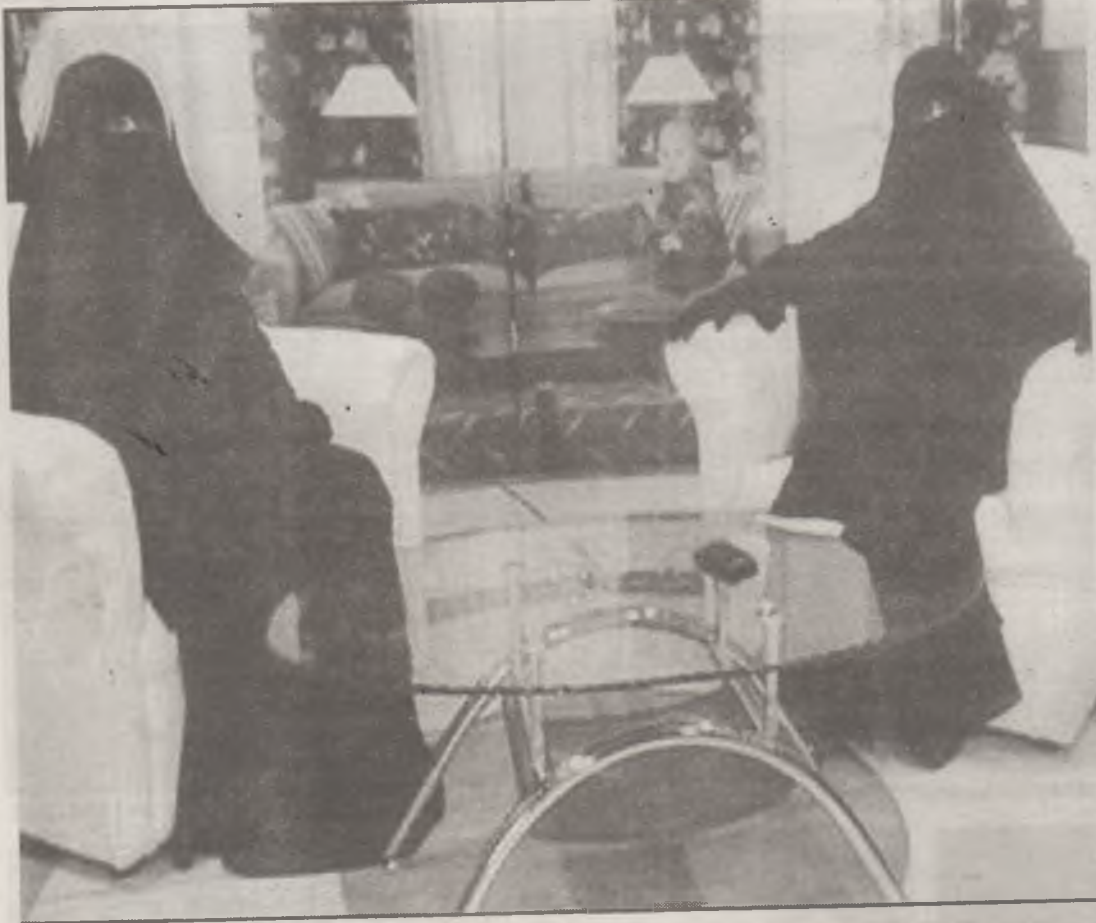
SKATERS in Shimla, India, welcome in the New Year



SPECTATORS gather early on the shorelines of Sydney Harbour to secure the best possible view

Trust Islamic Forum

In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. We testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammed (peace be upon him) is His prophet and messenger. May the benediction and blessings of Allah be on Prophet Muhammed who is the noblest of mankind, his household, his companions and those who follow their foot steps till the day of resurrection.



FEMALE presenters on the Saudi channel Awtan TV

Saudi TV presenters break new ground by wearing niqab

UNTIL recently you would never have seen women presenting television programmes dressed from head to toe in the niqab or burqa. But on the Saudi religious channel Awtan TV it has now become the norm.

Female broadcasters at the station are draped in the all-enveloping dresses, which are usually black and also cover their faces.

The work environment too is very different. Male technical assistants do not enter the studio while the women are presenting.

There are more than 60 religious channels across the Middle East. Some allow women to present programmes without being fully covered or dressed in black.

Others have no women presenters at all.

Relationship

Awtan TV decided to take a unique approach. The station was launched in 2008, and last month it set a precedent by allowing women to present, but only on the condition that they wear the niqab.

Ola al-Barqi anchors a breakfast show, as well as a quiz show for girls called Mosabqat Banat.

A key element of the programme is the relationship built between presenter, contestants and the audience - something that might be more difficult if the presenter is totally covered up.

"The face is not the only way to build a relationship," explains Ms Barqi, speaking to BBC Arabic.

"We're always receiving calls from viewers in various countries encouraging us to keep doing what we do."

And, as Ms Barqi points out, women are not just confined to the studio at Awtan TV.

"We report from the field in the niqab and it does not stop us from doing anything."

'Restrictive'

Wahhabism, the strain of Sunni Islam that is officially practised in Saudi Arabia, is considered one of the religion's most conservative forms.

Some critics say that Awtan TV is restricting women's freedom by making it compulsory to wear the niqab if they want to be presenters.

The issue recently returned to prominence when a leading Egyptian cleric, Sheikh Mohamed Tantawi, said he would issue an edict stating that the niqab

was a "custom that has nothing to do with Islam".

Many Muslim scholars take the position that the niqab is not obligatory.

But Ms Barqi says nobody "forced the niqab" on her and she does not intend to force it on her three daughters, who watch their mother on television and feel proud of her.

However, the presenter thinks that when the time comes, her girls will want to wear the niqab because that is how they were brought up and it is, she argues, part of Shariah - Islamic law.

Advantages

Ms Barqi says there are other good reasons why she wears the niqab.

It helps her to concentrate more on her work rather than anything else, and what she looks like is irrelevant.

"We don't introduce ourselves as beautiful women who put on layers of make-up. Our audience is focusing on what we present to them, our ideas and our discourse."

Ms Barqi believes some people work in the media to become famous. But that is not why she became a presenter.

"We don't need fame," she explains. Culled from BBC

ASK YOUR IMAM

I am a Muslim from a Gulf state and am married to an American man. He declared his Islam when we married, but now he does not pray and he does not want to talk about anything that has to do with Islam. I have four children and I have taught them a little, but he does not care about anything and he has committed zina. He tells me that I do not mean anything to him at all and he no longer comes close to me. I teach my children the Qur'aan and how to pray, but they asked me: Why do we pray and our father does not pray? One day we sat with my daughter's husband and my husband, and I found out that my husband does not believe that Allah is the one who created the heavens and the earth. I am very afraid to take the decision to divorce because I do not work. My family said to me: You are the one who made this choice, so live your life and decide what is best for you. I have tried a great deal to advise my husband, but he refuses to respond. I have been trying for a year. I know that you will say to me: What have you decided now? Because I am very worried about the anger of my Lord. I hope you can help me. I weep night and day. I want guidance and the pleasure of my Lord. Please help me.

We ask Allah to make things easy for you and to give you a way out of hardship and relief from distress. It is not permissible for a Muslim woman to remain married to a kaafir, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "O you who believe! When believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them; Allaah knows best as to their Faith, then if you ascertain that they are true believers send them not back to the disbelievers. They are not lawful (wives) for the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful (husbands) for them" [al-Mumtahanah 60:10].

Although the scholars differed as to whether the one who does not pray is a kaafir or not, they did not differ as to whether the one who denies that Allah created the heavens and the earth is a kaafir.

If a Muslim apostatises, his marriage to his Muslim wife is rendered null and void. If he comes back to Islam, then their marriage is reinstated, but if her 'iddah ends and he is still insisting on apostasy, then she is now in charge of her own affairs and may marry someone else if she wishes. Based on that, if your husband persists in his ways, then the marriage between you is annulled according to shareeah and you are no longer his wife.

You have to strive to get out of this marriage by whatever means, either by talaq or khula' or something else. Beware of making the children a barrier between you and leaving this man.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Many women -- Allah forbid -- are prevented by the presence of children from seeking annulment of marriage. This is a serious matter. It should be said: Annul the marriage; it is not permissible you to stay with this kaafir who does not pray. Your children will never leave you so long as their father is like this. He has no guardianship over them, because the kaafir can have guardianship over a believer. "And never will Allaah grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers" [al-Nisa' 4:141]. So you and your children cannot be separated. As for this husband, there is nothing good in him. You should forsake this kaafir husband and it is haraam to let him be intimate with you; this is a great evil. Al-Sharh al-Mumtani' ala Zaad al-Mustaqni', 12/250

We advise you to take your case to the Islamic centres in your country and to the Muslims, and ask them for help. They know better than us how to deal with this problem, as they are present in that country.

We criticise your family's attitude towards you. We understand from your question that you chose this husband and chose to live with him without your family's approval. This was a great mistake on your part, and you have paid the price for that, but that does not mean that your family should abandon you. Keep getting in touch with them and ask good and wise people among your relatives to mediate between you and them so that they will help you and stand beside you during this difficult time.

You should understand that what is happening to you now is the result of previous mistakes, among the greatest of which were getting married and travelling without your family's approval, then choosing to reside in a kaafir state rather than living in a Muslim land.

This is the price for living in that doomed land. You have to try to leave that country without delay, and go back to your family and your country; take the children with you and bring them up in Islam, teach them to memorise the Book of Allah, instead of them seeing the bad example that prevents them from following the true path.

Hence it is right that you should weep night and day for how you have ended up. But weeping does not achieve any benefit. So hasten to do something and strive to change this situation, by annulling the marriage contract and not letting him be intimate with you, and by returning to your family and your country.

We ask Allah to make things easy for you and to protect your religious commitment and to make your children righteous.

And Allah knows best. Islam Q & A

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News about your capital city

Driver, others rewarded at DTCA

By Abubakar Yakubu

A driver, Linus D. Sarki and other staff members of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA), who distinguished themselves in their duties, were yesterday rewarded with gifts and certificates by the organisation's management at its annual merit award event in Abuja.

DTCA's Director-General, Engr. Sule Yakubu Bassi, said the award instituted four years ago is meant to reward staff and others that have given technical support to the DTCA for their hard work and dedication.

He said celebrating excellence is a Nigerian culture that is practised even in rural areas, where farmers celebrate successful farming seasons, adding that the organisation's merit awards was divided into departmental awards, director-general's awards, technical support to DTCA's awards, meritorious awards and special awards.

The director-general however prayed for the speedy recovery of President Umaru Yar' adua and lamented the death of Hajia Mariam Babangida.

He condemned the action of 23-year-old Yusuf Mutallib, whom he accused causing embarrassment to Nigeria instead of using his intellect to contribute to the country's development.

Also speaking, the Minister of State II for Foreign Affairs, Amb. Bagudu M. Hirse, commended the



FROM left, Mary Rienru, a staff of DTCA receiving the director-general's prize for hardwork yesterday

approach used by DTCA in rewarding her staff and advised that it should be encouraged in all government establishments and the Nigerian society.

"We must move away from the culture of posthumous recognition

and awards, by learning to appreciate as well as celebrate the contributions of people while they are alive," the minister postulated.

The minister, who was represented by Ambassador Anthony Adeyemi Sekudo, reasoned that by

so doing, Nigerians can be better galvanized, mobilized and encouraged to effectively serve their fatherland.

Among the recipients were Theodore O.P. Sefia, Mary Rienru, Dr Dan Ogun, Sen George Akume,

Peter, K. Odebunmi, Amb. Joe Keshi, Amb B. Owoseni, Dr Ijeoma Unaogu, Prof Olubunmi A. Bamiro, Sir Reuben O. Urefe, Mr Wakil Adamu, Mr Gad Onyeonu, Mohammed A. Nayako, Kevin Yilme, Kemi Ajewole and Esther Zakka.

Two jailed for Indian hemp possession

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

TWO persons were yesterday sentenced to five months imprisonment by an Abuja Area Court for being in possession of dried leaves suspected to be Indian hemp, while the third was granted bail.

The two accused persons were however asked to pay N2000 as fine options each.

Ibrahim Usman, Adam Tanko and Tochi David were arranged for the offences punishable under Sections 79, 199 and 319 of the Panel Code Law.

Prosecutor Philips told the court that one Sergeant Air Tar reported to the police that while they were on crime prevention patrol within the vicinity of Millennium Park, Abuja, the accused persons were apprehended while disturbing people

who went to the park for relaxation on December 27.

"The police discovered some raps of dried leaves suspected to be cannabis during searches on the accused persons, which was confiscated.

When the charges were read to the accused persons, Ibrahim Usman and Adam Tanko pleaded guilty, while Tochi David denied them.

Judge Umar Kagarko sentenced the first two accused persons and granted the third accused bail in the sum of N100,000 with a surety, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

Hearing in the case for the third accused person was adjourned to March 13, 2010.

In another case, one Ibrahim Umar was arraigned for allegedly being in possession of four

different handsets.

Prosecutor Philips told the court that the accused person was apprehended by the police with two Nokia, one Starcoms and Visafone handsets, adding that he could not give evidence of their ownership when questioned.

According to the prosecutor, during police investigation, it was discovered that the four handsets were stolen from different unidentified individuals by the accused person.

The accused pleaded not guilty to the charge read to him and Judge Umar Kagarko granted him bail in the sum of N100,000 with a surety, who must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to March 17, 2010 for hearing.

NURTW wants proper checks on associations' registration

By Sunday Williams

THE National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Masaka branch Chairman, Salisu Adamu, has appealed to both the state and local government authorities to always ascertain the line of business of associations before issuing them licenses in order to discourage touting.

He said many associations that obtained licenses as business ventures, now parade themselves as road transport union workers with the permits granted them, adding that they harass genuine transport workers on the roads.

"Once such groups go to register, they don't disclose their line of business and government will grant them the license with the good intention that they will

become cooperatives," he added.

Adamu, who also doubles as the assistant auditor of NURTW Nasarawa State, said whenever union officials accost such transporters, they show their association's registration receipts as claimed to their existence.

"Most of them claim that government has mandated them to collect money from drivers that ply federal and state roads and they charge N100 per driver with receipts that does not have any government security," he said.

According to him, NURTW's receipt are printed by the Nigerian Security, Printing and Minting company and the union's national secretariat distributes them to states that sell to branches at N30.

DRTS to use robots in detecting fake documents

By Usman A. Bello & Lami Sadiq

THE Directorate of Road Traffic Service (DRTS) will as from January next year use e-enforcement scheme that involves the use of an electronic device, where a robot is used to detect motorists driving with fake and expired documents.

The Directorate's Director, retired Major Adamu Arugugu, who disclosed this yesterday at a press briefing in Abuja, said with the electronic device, traffic congestion that normally occur

as a result of motorists being intercepted by traffic officers will be reduced.

"Only defaulters plying the roads will be detected and apprehended, while the innovation would also improve our operational efficiency as well as effectiveness by eliminating queuing or delays, associated with manual handling of activities," he said.

He added further that a special trade license will be given to spare parts dealers in Abuja to ensure that only genuine spare

parts are sold in the market, saying that DRTS is expected to oversee and regulate the activities of motor mechanics, mechanic workshops and spare part dealers to reduce sales of sub-standard parts.

Arugugu also disclosed that DRTS in collaboration with the Agency for Mass Education has designed a school's curriculum for operators of driving schools in the territory, who are required to obtain an operator's license that will enable them to run fleet of vehicles.

He informed that as from January next year, commercial buses and 'Keke Napep' tricycles are required to have side numbers on their vehicles, adding that the measure is to provide security for those boarding such vehicles and to check excesses of the operators.

The director explained that a total of 48,498 vehicles were registered by the directorate in the year 2009, comprising of 40,508 private, 7,990 commercials and 738 motorcycles.

He said about 2,742 driver's license applications were received and 2,484 approved.

"Also 276 vehicles were involved in accidents, out of which 88 persons received injuries, while 59 died," he said

Arugugu lamented that shortage of officers and equipment are some of the challenges faced by the directorate in the discharge of their duties and he called on corporate bodies to contribute towards ensuring safety on the road by donating working equipment.



ACCESS Bank staff with children of Abuja Children's Home yesterday

Access Bank donates items to orphanage

By Romoke W. Ahmad

As part of her annual corporate social responsibility, the Abuja branch of Access Bank yesterday donated items worth thousands of naira to the Abuja Children's Home.

Speaking during the presentation, Mr. Ezech Onuoha, leader of the bank's team, said the bank reaches out to people, especially the less privilege every year in order to make them have sense of belonging.

"The items we presented today are the bank's contribu-

tion to the welfare of the children of the home, so that they have sense of belonging and feel the spirit of being loved and cared for during this festive season," Ezech said.

Officials of the bank, who were present, expressed happiness in reaching out to the less privilege and vowed to do more.

Receiving the items, Mal. Umar Sulaiman, the home's administrator, thanked the bank's staff for bringing the items during the festive period.

The administrator, who was represented by Mr. Bouazo Jean

Marc, also assured the bankers that the items will be used judiciously for the benefit of the children.

He then called on other philanthropists to emulate Access Bank by showing love and concern to the needy, adding that the home will appreciate if donors can contact them first so that the home gives lists of what they need in order to avoid abundant goods that get expired when not used on time.

Items donated included bags of rice, groundnut oil, beverages, cornflakes, Dettol disin-

fectants and soft drinks, among other things.

"The items we presented today are the bank's contribution to the welfare of the children of the home, so that they have sense of belonging and feel the spirit of being loved and cared for during this festive season"

Vigilantes avert fight at Jikwoyi

By Tosin Omoniye & Bunmi Omolehin

VIGILANTES stationed at Phase 2 Jikwoyi yesterday stopped a battle between some Gwari youths and some persons.

An eyewitness said the Gwari youths were protesting the stabbing of a water vendor in the area by a man, who was angry for being sold unhygienic water and demanded a refund.

"When the seller rebuffed his customer, it degenerated into a heated confrontation that led to the customer stabbing the seller on the stomach with a sharp object."

Our reporters, observed a large number of Gwari youths searching for the culprit for several hours without success until they were stopped by vigilantes and elders, who appealed for calm and assured them that the culprit will be apprehended and handed over to the police.

Yesterday morning, several mini tribal meetings were held to find solutions to the tension caused by the incident.

It was also gathered that the injured youth has been taken to a hospital and is responding to treatment.

At the Jikwoyi Police Station, a policeman said the police will swing into action as soon as the case is reported.

"Nobody has the right to cause grievous hurt on another and as soon as we apprehend the suspect, he will face the law," the policeman stated.

PROPERTY

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2009: FG's Shylock approach to housing

By Nasir Imam

THERE is a general consensus that a major crisis is imminent in the housing sector owing to soaring rent, coupled with recurring policy inconsistencies by government on the housing needs of Nigerians.

A recent survey of Nigeria's housing market indicates that only 20-25% of Nigerians are homeowners while housing deficit is estimated at 12-16 million units or N30 billion.

In 1991, Nigeria responded to this world-wide interest in housing matters when it inaugurated the National Housing Policy (NHP) aimed at providing 700,000 housing units annually, leading to a target of 8 million housing units by the year 2000. Yet, since the formulation of the National Housing Policy, the housing situation in Nigeria has, ironically, become more precarious.

Shelter or housing is one of the most basic of human needs. In most developed countries of the world, the governments spend a very large proportion of their budget on provision of housing to their people, either directly or through public-private financing. In most third world countries, the responsibility for housing is supposed to lie with the various governments, due to the very nature of the mode of governance, socio-economic considerations and in part, the tradition of the people themselves.

A survey showed that most residents of such cities as Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Enugu are groaning under the squeeze of estate agents managing the few available housing units.

In Kaduna State, the cost of rent has been rising lately. In the Kaduna metropolis a two-bedroom apartment goes for not less than N200,000, while in Barnawa and Narayi High the cost is higher because of the high concentration of people in these places.

According to Lagos-Nigeria-Real Estate.com, a luxury three bedroom flat at Omole phase 2 goes for between N900,000 and N1.2m per annum. In nearby Ogba, it goes for between N400,000 and N500,000 per annum. At Magodo GRA, a three bedroom flat goes for between N1.1m and N1.2m per annum. In Ikeja, a three bedroom flat goes for between N950,000 and N1.5m.

In the slum areas of Ajegunle,

Okokomaiko, Agbado Ijaiye, standard three bedroom flats can go for between N90,000 and N180,000 per annum. It is also in these places that one can get single rooms and room and parlour for rent for prices that range between N18,000 and N70,000 per annum.

In Enugu metropolis specifically, depending on the area, a two-bedroom flat at Independence Layout goes for between N200,000 and N250,000 per annum, while the same apartment attracts from N240,000 to N300,000 at New Haven, the heartbeat of the city.

The daily influx of people from all parts of the country, the extensive demolition and eviction carried out in the Federal Capital Territory during the Obasanjo era and the continued relevance of Abuja as a political hub are among the strongest reasons driving the city's real estate values upwards.

Experts say the country requires at least N400bn yearly to fund the housing needs of the citizenry.

The amount is for an estimated 400,000 housing units at a mere conservative N1m apiece.

The President Umaru Yar'Adua housing policy is to build 400,000 housing units annually (10,000 housing units in each of the 36 states and 40,000 in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja).

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) have also said that it has set a target to deliver over 100,000 housing units by 2013 against the backdrop of the 12,000 houses in its eight estates in Abuja.

In a report published by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) in the early days of the Obasanjo Administration, the Government of Nigeria was accused of being consistently one of the worst violators of housing rights in the world, with over two million people forcibly evicted from their homes in different parts of the country since 2000. The then Minister for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai was implicated, especially for the forced evictions in Abuja.

While virtually all governments in Nigeria since independence have highlighted housing as a major priority, Nigeria is yet to develop a vibrant housing and mortgage market, social and affordable housing policies, and



housing continues to be provided through tortuous traditional methods of buying land and building over some years, which could be an individual's entire lifetime.

Currently, and fortuitously, Housing seems to be a priority for the Federal Government of Nigeria, and this is captured in President Yar'Adua's 2020 Agenda, where the president attaches the highest priority to affordable housing for the masses.

An Abuja resident, Azubuike Onowu, said one of the reasons is because landlords peg unreasonably high rent on the houses which people can hardly afford.

Investigations by our correspondent shows that the cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment within the city centre goes for between N800,000 and N2m per annum, depending on the location and the quality of the interior and exterior decorations.

Without doubt, this rate is way beyond the affordable range of the average Abuja middle class resident who lives within his legitimate income. To make matters worse, new tenants are expected to pay two years rent and between 5 to 10 per cent as agency fees.

In 2009, the Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS) reviewed

astronomically the rates charged on land in the FCT by over nine hundred per cent.

Accordingly, land fees in high-brow areas with full infrastructure, which include Asokoro, Maitama, and Wuse II, have gone up from N2,000 to N18,000 per square meter.

Similarly, premium for land in Garki I & II, Wuse I, and Jabi, which also has full infrastructure, is now N15,000 per square meter, while land in Katampe extension, Gudu, Mabushi, Durumi and Gwarinpa will attract N12,000 per square meter.

Unable to afford exorbitant rents, most Abuja residents who are predominantly civil servants, businessmen and petty traders either move out of the city to the suburbs, or relocate to other states to ply their trade. Consequently, several houses within the city remain unoccupied for as long as eight to ten years.

However, a top flight housing agent in Abuja, Mr. Autsin Ugeh holds a contrary opinion. He explained that the reason landlords and developers insisted on what they consider as 'appropriate rents' was because of the need to quickly repay the loans they took to construct the houses. According to him, the acquisition of some parcels of land in certain parts of Abuja could

cost between N20m to N500m. He added that after spending millions to build houses on expensive lands, it would be foolhardy to charge peanuts as rents.

Despite all these, the optimism is still very high. The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) that recently came out with a new campaign breaks, says it will be in a strong stead to meet its strategic objectives which include: issuing mortgage bonds based on the bank's financial strength or government guarantee or both.

Also, it will be bringing in three off-shore financiers to provide \$500-\$600 million for the provision of loans through the secondary mortgage market which will go a long way to help reduce the 14-16 million housing deficit in Nigeria.

Already, the bank has said it signed a \$1.6 billion partnership agreement with HSBC, UK's biggest bank.

So as we enter 2010, like the proverbial case of water which is available everywhere, and yet not accessible for people to drink, Abuja residents and Nigerians in general may continue to face accommodation challenges despite the existence of thousands of empty houses.

FCDA seals off Presidency's information office

By Mustapha Suleiman

OFFICIALS of Development Control of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) yesterday sealed off the premises of Galaxy Backbone Limited, located in Wuse 2, which hosts the information technology, Office of the Presidency, for contravening the FCT land use regulations.

Director of Development Control Yahaya Yusuf frowned

at the increasing rate of violation of FCT land use, threatening to seal up all the affected premises including government owned establishments and private enterprises who defaults to pay the contravention charges.

"I'm aware that the Galaxy Backbone has a site at the central business area but I'm not aware of the relationship of the Wuse premises. They don't have approval for the Wuse office,

even their office in Central Business District is having some problems but we can understand that, so that is why we are not taking any action against them for now. Where they are occupying is just an office, so they are not supposed to be there. I'm fully aware of the exercise, I fully take responsibility for whatever happens, things have to be done in proper way and since Galaxy backbone is a government establishment makes it

necessary for the company to do the right thing."

In a swift reaction, Ibrahim Waziri, Special Assistant to Managing Director of Galaxy Backbone Limited who earlier pleaded for extension of time, insisted that the leader of the enforcement team must sign an undertaking before sealing off the premises.

Also speaking, David Lanre Lekan, Company Secretary in a

chat with newsmen lamented that the sealing off of the Galaxy backbone facility will cripple critical network of various government establishments as it serves as the vital network for the Presidency, all the MDAs located within the Federal Secretariat Complex as well as security agencies such as SSS, Defence headquarters, Nigeria Immigration Service, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) among others.

PROPERTY

Jabi Motor Park remains open — FCTA

By Usman A. Bello, Romoke W. Ahmad & Lami Sadiq

AGAINST wide spread speculations that the Jabi Motor Park, Abuja, will be closed down for a week from next Tuesday, the FCT

Administration (FCTA) has said that no such closure will take place.

Newspaper reports had earlier said that the park will be closed down by the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) in con-

junction with the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) from January 5 to 12.

Reasons for the close up include renovation exercise which include construction of public toilets,

proper parking spaces and a market where food and recharge cards will be sold to commuters.

But Director, FCT Abuja Environment Protection Board (AEPB), Engr. Abubakar Yabo, who spoke to

Daily Trust, said that though the closure of the park is a laudable objective, it will continue to remain open until the FCT Minister gives approval for the closure.

Also, Ibrahim Gaji, of the NURTW, Jabi Motor Park,

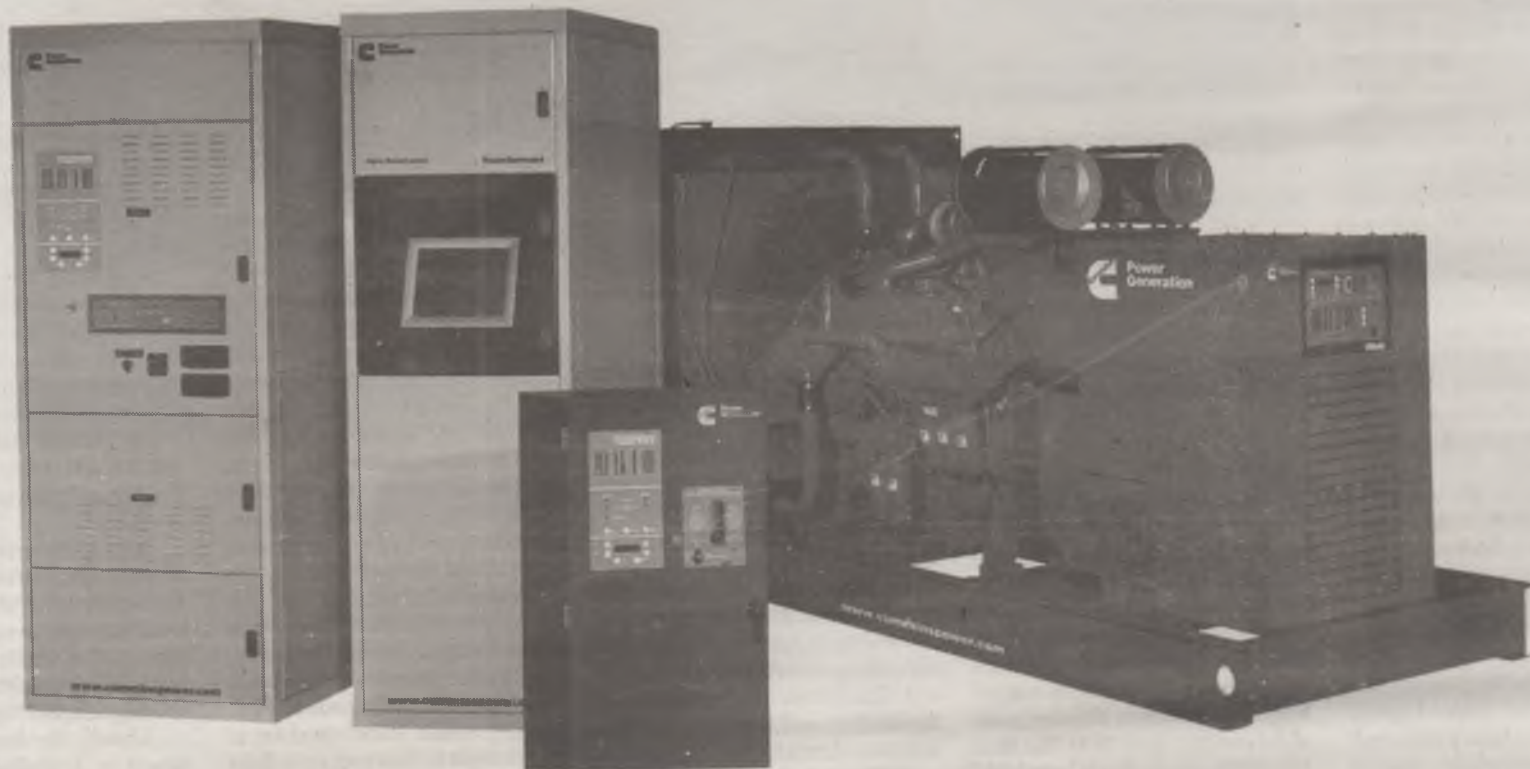
told our correspondents that the union went to AMAC three days ago and were told to disregard the publication.

He said the name of the AMAC representative in the report was false as no such person exist in the council.

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Inside Politics

Seven parties drag Jigawa SIEC to court

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

A Magistrate Court sitting in Gumel, Jigawa State, yesterday fixed 7th January 2010 for continuation of hearing in a case involving seven political parties led by the Alliance for Democracy AD and the Jigawa State Independent Electoral Commission (JSIEC).

Presiding Judge, Ahmad Isah Gumel ruled that the court will continue the case on the 7th day of January 2010 following a prayer made by counsel of the electoral body.

When the case came up yesterday for mentioning, counsel to the commission Barrister Baffa Alhassan prayed the court to adjourn the case on ground that the commission was not able to review the charges' documents as it received them December ending, hence the need for enough time to review them.

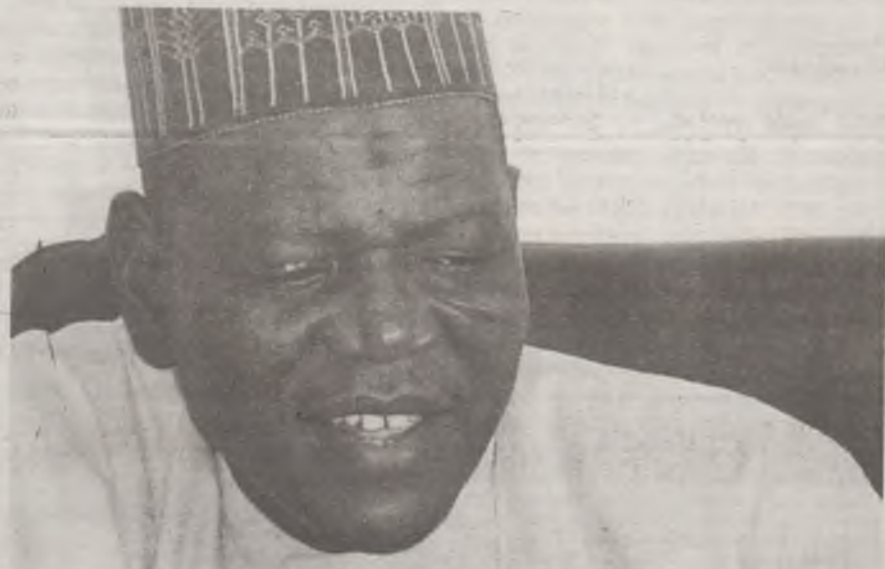
Speaking to *Daily Trust* on the issue,

the chairman of the commission, Dr. Alili Galadima said the commission rejected the forms because the parties failed to meet the deadline for submission of the forms.

Dr. Alili, who spoke through the commission's public relation officer, Mallam Danjummai, explained that, "the seven political parties in question have failed to meet the deadline slated for submission of the contest forms by the commission hence, the commission rejected their forms."

He said further that any political party that fails to submit its form on time would be rejected by the commission, reaffirming that the commission had released timetable for the conduct of the forthcoming local government election.

He however warned that the commission would not allow any political party to temper with the commission's election schedules, stressing that the seven political parties went to the court just to make unnecessary noise on the political stage.



GOVERNOR Sule Lamido

Crisis rocks Plateau legislators' forum

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

THE inauguration of the Plateau State Legislators Forum was yesterday postponed following a controversy that trailed the inaugural meeting. The forum is expected to bring together serving and former legislators.

The controversy started when the embattled Plateau State Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Professor Dakum Shown who happens to be the first Speaker of the state Assembly objected to the nomination of the former Speaker Mr. Simon Bako Lalong as the chairman of the steering committee.

Professor Shown who insisted that there is an existing forum of former legislators, accused the last set of legislators in the state of being

controversial. He said it was during the last regime that the state witnessed impeachment of the then governor.

Reacting to Shown's observation, former Speaker Lalong said that controversy is part of politics and "as politicians when you come out of it, you become a better politician."

He stressed, however, that what should bind them together under this forum is the interest of state, adding that for them to achieve what they aspire to achieve in the forum, they must do away with sentiments.

Lalong who was one time chairman of the Forum of Nigerian speakers, said denied the existence of any forum of former and current legislators as claimed by Professor Shown.

He said the forum is being formed to create

a platform for the legislators to dialogue in the interest of the state as whole.

"Politics is about agreeing and disagreeing. We disagree to agree and so I am emphasizing this fact that we should not start this with sentiments, in all we are coming here with the interest Plateau State," Lalong said.

In his remarks, incumbent Speaker of the Assembly, Mr. Istifanus Mwansat, said the greatest challenge they are going to face is in the area of sustaining the forum. He therefore said that: "because of the break in communication" it has become an issue. I would want to suggest and plead that the coordination of this meeting shall be from the office of the Honorable Speaker of Plateau State House of Assembly."

2011: Plateau lawmaker roots for Goje

By Andrew Agbese, Jos

IN case President Umaru Yar'adua is not interested in running for a second term in 2011, the Gombe State governor, Danjuma Goje, should be elected by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to replace him, Deputy Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Ibrahim Baba Hassan has suggested.

Hassan told out correspondent in an interview in Jos that Goje's record of achievements in Gombe State is unrivalled, stressing that he has so far given a good account of himself.

He contended that if the north looking for a worthy Presidential material in 2011, it has got one in Goje because his records put him in a better position to continue from where Yar'adua will stop.

The lawmaker said he was overwhelmed by the way Gombe state has been transformed by the Goje administration in the last six and a half years, saying if that much can be achieved with little resources, then one can imagine what he would do if he is president of the country.

"Personally, I feel leaders who have given a good account of themselves like the governor of Gombe State should be given the opportunity to spread the achievements on a larger scale. So I don't feel it is a bad idea if Goje is allowed to continue in case Yar'adua is not interested," he stated.

Resolve APGA substitution issue now, LP advises INEC

BY Muideen Olaniyi

LABOUR Party (LP) has advised the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to address the issue surrounding the plan to substitute Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State by the Chekwes Okorie led faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) with immediate effect.

The faction had earlier written to INEC asking the commission to substitute Obi with Chief George Ozodilodi as APGA's candidate for the February 6 governorship election in Anambra State. The faction subsequently headed for the Federal High Court Abuja to seek for an order of mandamus which will compel INEC to act on the request.

The case, which will see Chief Victor Umeh-led faction defending the choice of Obi as candidate, has been fixed for hearing on Janu-

ary 12 before Justice Garba Umar.

Following the development, Labour Party which has Dr. Andy Uba as its gubernatorial candidate in a letter dated December 29 and signed by its National Chairman Chief Dan Nwanyanwu, warned that failure to settle the issue could invalidate the forthcoming poll.

The letter addressed to INEC Chairman, Prof. Maurice Iwu, told the commission that a successful challenge in court of the willful exclusion will result in the nullification of the entire exercise, citing a similar case which the Labour Party had with the commission in 2008.

Nwanyanwu said no party that is sponsoring candidates for the election will want to engage in an expensive but futile electioneering campaign that may be declared a nullity at the end of the day.

Opposition alive in Kogi – PPA

From Isiaka Wakili, Lokoja

THE opposition is alive and vibrant in Kogi State, the state chairman of the Peoples Progressive Alliance (PPA), Dr Simeon Ojonugwa, has said.

Speaking to our correspondent yesterday in Lokoja, Ojonugwa said the perceived death of the opposition in the state was not unconnected to "our resolve to play cool to avoid continuous trouble in the state."

The party chieftain expressed optimism that in future elections, the opposition would prove stronger than the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the state.

"For people to know that the opposition is not dead in Kogi, two months ago, about 110 youths from Koton Karfe Local Government Area defected to PPA from PDP. As part of our strategies to win 2011 elections, our great party, the PPA, has opened campaign

offices in 17 out of the 21 local governments in the state," he noted.

Reacting to the recent advocacy for power shift by Governor Ibrahim Idris, Ojonugwa said credibility should not be compromised.

"Power can shift to any part of the state. The issue is to whom are we giving

the power? We are not talking of power shift alone. We need credible candidates that know the plight of the masses. It doesn't matter where the governor comes from. Our agitation is that in the next general elections, we need a governor that will deliver the dividends of democracy to the electorate," he said.



GOVERNOR Ibrahim Idris

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The Protocol Officer, USG HIV/AIDS Foundation, No.4, Lafia Road, P.O.Box 8346, Kawo Kaduna, Kaduna State.

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Signed: Management.

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Grail Centre Madalla, Madalla Suleja Road
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CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS AMARACHI ELEMBA**, now wish to be known as **MRS AMARACHI CHIAGOZIEM**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as **MISS ASHEADZI UMAR ABENE** now wish to be known as **MRS ASHEADZI THOMAS TANKO**. All documents remain valid. Hospitals Management Board, Nassarawa State and general public to please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS NGOZI MARY-ANN OBOGBOLU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS NGOZI MARY-ANN OKOYE**. All former documents remain valid. The general public particularly **NNAMD I AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY AWKA** should please take note.

I, formerly known as **MARY EKO**, now wish to be called **MARY OYEDEJI BOLA**. All former documents remain valid. Police and general public take note.

I, formerly known as **MISS BASIRAT ABUBAKAR** now wish to be known as **MRS BASIRAT ATAHIRU**. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as **YIMA MALHERBE**, now wish to be addressed as **MRS YIMA SAMUEL OTOKPA**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly **DR. FATIMA IBRAHIM HUDU**, now wish to be called and address as **DR. MRS FATIMA IBRAHIM UMAR**. All former Documents remain valid. General public should take note

I, formerly known as **MISS KHADIJA OLAJUMOKE GAMBARI**, now wish to be called **MRS KHADIJA OLAJUMOKE GAMBARI-BOLAJOKO**. All former Documents remain valid. General public take note.

I formerly known as **MRS. ODIA EDITH AMAKACHINELO** now wish to be called **MISS EBOKA EDITH AMAKA**. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SUDAN CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC AND GENERAL STUDIES KONTAGORA

This is to inform the General Public that the above named Association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

TRUSTEES ARE:

1. MALLAM HARUNA A. KAWO
2. ABDULLAHI SARKIN BAUCHI USMAN
3. MAL. ALIYU ADARAWA
4. ALH. AHMADU NAMASKA
5. MAL. SHEHU GALADIMA
6. MUHAMMAD DANLAMI GWARI
7. GARBA DANLADI AJUNA
8. MUHAMMAD LAWL BARRISTER

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To propagate Islam
2. To educate youth and the less privileged through free education and giving of scholarship.

Any objection(s) to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent, off Aguiyi Ironsi street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days from the date of this publication.

Signed: **A.R. GIDADO ESQ**
AGR DANMALLAM BORGU & CO
08038498744

SAUKIN! AUCTION!! AUCTION!!!

This is to invite the general public to participate in the auction sales of unserviceable items. Fire extinguishers, vehicles, generator, auto spare parts and typewriter ABM etc, under pipelines and products marketing ABM company Limited. Venue: Mosimi Area Office Warehouses, A/Cove, Satellite, H/Annex, Ibadan and Ilorin. Date: 6th January 2010. Time: 10am prompt. For further details contact Auctioneer, Mujibs General Ent. Tel:08037277025.

ASSOCIATION OF HANDNEAT DESIGNER KWARA STATE

The General Public is hereby notified that the above named Association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for registration under Part "C" of the Companies and Allied Matters act, 1990.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1-Mr. Anafi Ganiyu Olobi
- 2-Justice Alhaji Issa Yahaya.
- 3-Mr. Tayo Sadat.
- 4-Ajia Safu Folorunsho.
- 5-Murtala Ajinkirun.
- 6-Elijah Adewale.
- 7-Malam Yisa Alabi Olorun-Oje.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE

- 1-To promote Nigerian image through creativities and research on Handneat design
 - 2-To encourage and empower youths on self-reliance through Nigerian Handneat design.
 - 3-To ensure fairness between males and females in our society by visual of treating them equally through our profession.
- Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the solicitor general Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Wuse zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.
Signed:Mr. Anafi Ganiyu Olobi

PUBLIC NOTICE THE LIGHT CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY

This is to notify the general public that the above mentioned Ministry has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission, for Registration under part "C" of the Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap 59 Law of the Federal of Nigeria 1990.

The Trustees are:

1. Rev. Prophet Michael Olukayode Idomu
2. Pastor Prophetess Adedamilo Idomu
3. Pastor Tosin Adeyemi Johnson
4. Pastor Samson Adeboyo

The Aims and Objectives:

- 1) Empowerment with the word of God.
- 2) To establish churches wherever converts are made so that they can be taught in the world of God unto maturity.
- 3) To establish Bible colleges, school of Ministry for the training of gospel Ministers and church workers within the outside the church.

Any objection(s) to the above registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, plot 420, Tigris-Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days from the date of this publication.

Signed by:
Rev. Prophet Michael Olukayode Idomu
Chairman

INTERNATIONAL FACILITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ABUJA CHAPTER

This is to inform the General Public that the above named Association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

The Trustees are:

1. Engr. Samson Opaluyah
2. Alhaji Ahmed Abubakar
3. Mr. Collins Osayemegh

Aims and Objectives

1. To promote the profession of facility management in Nigeria.
2. To train and retrain professional facility managers
3. To establish & promote facility

Any objection(s) to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent, off Aguiyi Ironsi street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days from the date of this publication.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS GLORIA KOKOMA ONWIONOKO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS GLORIA KOKOMA STYLES**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I formerly known as **MISS ENIOLA MARY KOMOLAFE**, now wish to be called **MRS. FEMI AYANFE EGBOWON**. All former document remain valid, general public to note.

I, formerly **MISS LAMI YUSUF** now to be called **MRS LAMI EZEKIEL**. Former documents valid. Nigeria Police Force please note.

I, formerly known as **MISS ASIMAU OHUNENE OZIGIS** now wish to be addressed as **MRS PRECIOUS O. ANATAKU**. Former documents remain valid. GTBBANK and general public to take note.

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SPORT

Ferguson: We don't miss Ronaldo

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We are tired of bronze - Odemwingie

From Abiodun Jimoh, Lagos

AHEAD of the crucial African Nations Cup (Afcon) slated to kick off in January 10 in Angola, Super Eagles striker Osaze Odemwingie has revealed that they are tired of winning bronze medal at the event.

Osaze who was full of confidence while chatting with sports writers at the departure hall of the Murtala Muhammad International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja Lagos enroute South Africa on Wednesday night affirmed this that trophy is their only target at this period of the event.

He remarked that having won bronze on three consecutive occasions called for urgent need to lift the trophy this time around as they have resolved to make it priority in their desires.

"We are tired of winning bronze at all the editions of the soccer events, it is becoming too much on our part been booted out in the semifinal encounter against our fellow counterparts that we were even better than in the game only to lose out when it matter most,"

"This period, we are going to advance to the final of the competition and eventually win the trophy after sixteen years that the country lifted it last in Tunisia under the tutelage of Coach Clemence Westerhof. We are not destined for bronze, but gold," he said.

While responding on maybe the team have charisma to lift the trophy against all other teams such as Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon and the Egyptians who happen to be the defending champion, he remarked that big names do not play football this time around, but determination and dedication on the part of the players is the yardstick to win any tournament.

Furthermore, he noted that all the players invited for the competition are capable of proving their quality and the resilience to win the trophy for their fatherland when the chips are down, adding that he believed that with the kind of seriousness exhibited by his colleagues during the qualifiers, they would go places and make the country proud at the end of the event.

"We are not afraid of big names when it comes to the aspect of playing competitive matches. We have quality players who withstand any heat when the game is getting tough and we will not relent in our efforts to show the whole world that we are capable of beating any team at any time of the day," he boasts.

It will be recalled that Nigeria won bronze at the Mali 2002 Nations Cup after beating Mali 1-0 in the third place battle while same was the case at Tunisia 2004 and Egypt 2006 outing respectively



SUPER Eagles striker Osaze Odemwingie said they are tired of the bronze medal at the African Cup of Nations.

Amodu optimistic as Eagles land in S/Africa

SHUAIBU Amodu, Super Eagles Chief Coach, beamed with enthusiasm as the team arrived in Johannesburg yesterday to a warm reception by South Africa-based Nigerians.

Amodu said the reception accorded the delegation set the tone for a good outing at the Orange Africa Cup of Nations kicking off on Jan. 10 in Angola.

The team landed at the OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, enroute Durban to begin preparations for the continental championship.

"We arrived to a warm

reception and the next thing is to set for the camp and give our best in the competition," said Amodu.

The coach did not talk much just as he said they would get down to business when they arrived in Durban.

Assuring Nigerians that they hoped to do the country proud in Angola, he said: "We are only transiting here."

Mr Peterside Idah, the team's spokesman, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that 16 players arrived in South Africa, while six were expected from their bases in Europe on Jan. 1, 2010.

"We are all optimistic and hope to win the trophy which is why we are going to Angola."

"We have some 16 players here, expecting six more to join the team from England tomorrow. We also have some eight officials here," Idah said.

He said the team hoped to play two friendlies against local teams during their stay in Durban before leaving for Angola.

"We are to play on Sunday and then on Tuesday in Durban before we travel on the Jan. 7th, 2010," he said.

Idah said there was no cause for

alarm with the late arrival of the Europe-based players.

"Some played yesterday. Kanu played last night, they are all going to be in Durban tomorrow," he assured Nigerians.

He confirmed that the team would still keep a closed camp in Durban as they required to concentrate on the task ahead without distraction.

"It's still a closed camp because we are coming for a tournament and we have to be in a position where we can concentrate."

"Nigerians will not forgive us if we don't do well in Angola. We need

all the concentration," he added.

Mr Emmanuel Attah, the team's coordinator, said the Eagles had their sight on the trophy.

Attah said only fit players would make the final list for the championship.

"Injury won't deter us. It is only fit players we are coming to play with. Any injured player will definitely stay behind, I assure you," he said.

The team, which arrived aboard South Africa Airways yesterday morning, later connected a flight to 8.20 a.m.

Wenger faces transfer dilemma

ARSENAL manager Arsene Wenger faces a dilemma about whether to sign a new striker when the January transfer window opens on Friday.

Wenger said last month he could try to find a replacement for long-term injury absentee Robin Van Persie. Injuries have also deprived him of strikers Nicklas Bendtner and Theo Walcott.

However, Arsenal, who took their December goals tally to 15 with their 4-1 win at Portsmouth on Wednesday, are the Premier League's top scorers with 51 goals and Wenger told the club's website (www.arsenal.com) he was considering his options.

Football is not completely rational. The superficial rationality is not the real one sometimes

"Football is not completely rational. The superficial rationality is not the real one sometimes," he said on Thursday.

"It's true that we have problems with our strikers. Even I say that. Everybody tells me to buy strikers, but when I look at the League nobody has scored more goals than us.

"We have players who move the ball well and everybody gets in dangerous positions. And that's why, with the confidence high, everyone can score goals. But we are still in the market."

While Wenger considers his options, France international midfielder Abou Diaby has signed a new, long-term contract with the club, Arsenal confirmed on Thursday.

Diaby, 23, who joined the Gunners from Auxerre in January 2006, has been outstanding for the club and scored his sixth goal of the season in Arsenal's 3-0 win over Aston Villa on Sunday.

"This shows my long-term commitment to Arsenal and I am very happy here, which is why I am so pleased to extend my contract," said Diaby.

"It's a great thing for me and hopefully there will be some good years ahead for me here."

Wenger said: "Abou is a great player with huge presence on the football pitch and he has the potential to be an extremely influential part of Arsenal for many years to come."

Ferguson: We don't miss Ronaldo

MANCHESTER United boss Sir Alex Ferguson has reiterated his belief that the club are coping well without the presence of former Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo, who joined boyhood club Real Madrid in a staggering £80 million transfer last summer.

Critics claimed the absence of Ronaldo, who has wowed crowds in Spain's Primera Division due to his 13 goals in 12 games in all competitions, would hamper United's title tilt this season.

Ferguson, though, has proved the doubters wrong as the reigning Premier League champions have amassed a point tally almost identical in total to the one accumulated at the same stage last year.

The Scotsman reasoned on the club's official website that: "It's a bit of a media thing. Most of the media are saying losing Ronaldo is crucial, but we're only one point worse off than last season."

Despite the influx of a world record sum arriving in United's bank, Ferguson was calm over spending the windfall. The free transfer of Michael Owen was supplemented only with a £3m deal for Girondins de Bordeaux winger Gabriel Obertan and the Antonio Valencia coup.

"Obviously Cristiano Ronaldo was an unbelievable player and it was inevitable that he was going to leave at some point, but I think we've adjusted fairly well to it."

As well as the sale of Ronaldo, United also lost the services of tireless forward Carlos Tevez. Both of whom were responsible for a collective 102 goals in two seasons, the lion's share of goals, however, arrived from the fleet-footed Portuguese trickster.

"You can't go into a season, having lost the number of goals Ronaldo scored for us last season,



ALEX Ferguson insists Manchester United is not missing star player Cristiano Ronaldo, who joined Real Madrid last summer.

thinking you can improve that. We knew it would be an issue for us, and we made the point early in the season that the midfield had to chip in with a few. So we've done reasonably well that way."

He continued: "Valencia has done very well, his development is very good. He's a different type

of player to Ronaldo, but he's done very well, so we've replaced that position reasonably well.

"He's a quiet, shy boy. In a personality sense I don't think he's interested in matching Ronaldo. But on a performance level he has been unaffected by the position he's playing in - he enjoys it there.

"He can play other positions - we've not tested that yet. I know he can play center-midfield because I've watched him play there, we know he can play through the middle. But we think he's important to the way we always try to play - with width in the team. And he's doing that very well."

Ribery not going anywhere, Bayern boss says

BAYERN Munich's president denied on Thursday press reports that the German giants' French international Franck Ribery was going to move to Real Madrid in a 55-million-euro deal next summer.

"There are no offers at the moment, no options and no talks at all either about him or with him," Uli Hoeness told the Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily.

German specialist website ran.de had reported on Wednesday

that the 26-year-old winger's move was hammered out in August between Bayern and the Spanish club at the time of Dutch star Arjen Robben's transfer to Munich.

Bayern did not pay Real the agreed 25-million-euro price tag for the Dutch winger, instead sitting on the cash in anticipation of the Ribery deal, said ran.de, which is owned by German private broadcaster Sat.1.

But Hoeness, club manager at

Bayern for 30 years who replaced Germany legend Franz Beckenbauer as president in November, said this was wide of the mark.

"There is no deal with Real. We paid for Robben quite normally."

He also said that the club wanted Ribery to stay once his contract expires in 2011: "That is our first option. Only if we see no chance of this will we start talking to other clubs."

Ribery, who has been out of

action through injury for over two months, has made no secret in the past of his desire to join Real.

"I would really like to win the Champions League, but our team doesn't have the necessary firepower right now," the winger told the Bild daily recently.

"At the moment, we can't compete with Barcelona, Real Madrid, Arsenal and Inter."

Other recent reports have linked him with a move to Chelsea.

Real Madrid rule out January transfers

REAL Madrid director general Jorge Valdano and football director Miguel Pardeza will be in Valdebebas yesterday for the team's final training session of 2009.

According to Spanish paper AS, Valdano's visit will be to wish

all the players and the staff a happy New Year's day, but most of all to reveal the club's plans for the January transfer window.

It is suggested that the Argentine will tell the squad that the club board has no intention of making

any new signings next month.

Valdano's reassurances will be particularly aimed towards Raul Albiol, Christoph Metzelder and Ezequiel Garay, the three centre-backs that will be in contention to fill the void left by Portuguese

international Pepe who will be out for the remainder of the season after suffering knee ligament damage.

Valdano is also expected to enquire after the recovery schedule of injured trio Kaka, Guti and Ruud van Nistelrooy.

Mourinho: Italy coaches focus on survival, not innovation

SERIE A coaches are more concerned about keeping their jobs than developing new tactics, said Inter Milan boss Jose Mourinho on Thursday.

"When after a third of the Italian championship nine coaches have lost their jobs, who is the coach that wants to innovate?", Mourinho told the weekly paper Espresso.

"The Serie A coach does not want to innovate, he wants to survive."

The former Chelsea and Porto coach, who on Monday said he was keen to return to England in the future, said conditions were better in the Premier League.

Mourinho cited Manchester United's Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger of Arsenal and Liver-

pool's Rafa Benitez as coaches who had been given time to innovate and develop their tactics.

"(In England) coaches go way beyond their first contract, even beyond the second and the third one and continue developing their work," he said.

"Italy is much more results-oriented. Those who win, continue, while those who don't, get

out."

The Portuguese coach said the same happens at the big Spanish clubs like Real Madrid, Valencia and Atletico Madrid although Barcelona were an exception.

Inter, eight points clear at the top of Serie A, will meet Premier League leaders Chelsea in the Champions League first knock-out round in February.



MOURINHO

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THE FRIDAY COLUMN

Adamu Adamu

adamuadamu@dailytrust.com

The Tragedy of the Mutallabs

Perhaps there is no consolation in the tragedy of the attempted Delta Airline Flight 253 blow-up; and if there is, it is only this: that it has not happened. But for Alhaji Umaru Mutallab, it already has. That which is feared has come to pass.

In addition to his original anguish and grief of having lost a son to some dark forces in the uncharted vastness of Arabia's Empty Quarter, the Mutallab family has now to contend with the predicament and prospect of having to accept and live with the fact that the sweet kid who will not hurt a fly has now attempted to kill hundreds of innocent people. One can only imagine the pain and sorrow that this family is braving right now as it tries to come to terms with the tragic incident.

The world shares in Umaru Mutallab's sorrow and salutes his great courage in doing what he did. A humble, decent, private man of easy manners and peaceful mien, Mutallab, ever meticulous in life as in banking, has handled the affair well and with remarkable foresight. If he had not reported the issue of Farouk to the relevant authorities, only God knows what would have happened to him, to his family and what would have befallen the fortunes of the Islamic Development Bank and the local Ja'iz Bank, both of which he chairs and the First Bank of Nigeria from which he recently retired.

Though he is personally a religious man, he is as laissez-faire in his dealings with people as he is in his business—just the type this tragedy shouldn't be happening to. For those who know his life, Mutallab is just the type of person who can't in any way be linked to any acts of extremism; and, therefore, how distressing the involvement of his son must be to him. His foray into Islamic banking is more the result of sound commercial business consideration and the demands of the time than any religion-inspired revulsion against conventional interest-bearing banking in which he made his name and mark and with which he has continued to deal.

As a businessman, Mutallab is the epitome of hard work and civility. For a person who inherited his capital and set about making his money, he is of the cast of those with original money; and, though modern in his business outlook, he is an entrepreneur of the old school who believes in sweating it out to earn an honest day's living. He therefore earned every kobo that he owns; and, today, it can be said that he is one of the few rich men in the country with legitimate wealth untainted with the graft that is modern contract or the corruption that is the civil service. And at home he is a strong believer in family values and a strict disciplinarian.

Farouk Mutallab is the product of this home—sheltered, fully cared and provided for and educated in the best schools available. And, so, why should a child reared under such circumstances end up in such untoward actions? The truth nowadays is that while homes propose, it is often schools that dispose as far as the development of the character of students is concerned. Whether your child turns out well, whether he becomes a drug addict, a religious recluse or an emotional wreck depends not only on which school he attends but whose company he keeps while there.

Of course there is nothing wrong with taking to religion while in school; indeed, there is everything wrong with not doing so. Religion is not the problem; the problem is its absence—or its debasement at the hands of manipulators. If Farouk had not gone to Yemen, for instance, he would probably have gone on to become a model engineer or, more likely, a model businessman like his father, and himself a father and a role model for future generations.

Despite his taking to religion or, in this case perhaps, because of it, his view of the world becomes, in common with most of those with similar experiences, a series of disconnected banalities. This is the point when a person becomes most vulnerable and desperately seeking for meaning of and for himself and of the world. By the nature of the spiritual life, once it is undertaken without an anchor, it almost always leads to fanaticism and being more Catholic than the Pope; and religion becomes a burden and a problem. A fanatic has been defined as someone who redoubles his effort after he has forgotten his aim; and in the nihilism

created by the preaching of hatred—self-hatred and hatred of others—and indoctrination, aim is forgotten and every effort is redoubled. And self-deprecation is often the first step in the path to misanthropy. That is when they get caught.

The profile of those susceptible to it embraces the bracket of high-achieving, discriminating, perceptive youths; and, if at school, those studying the technical and mathematical sciences in whom the scientific spirit of free inquiry and everyday involvement with the need for mathematical precision have created a more thoroughgoing rationalist attitude that becomes almost incompatible with certain dimensions of Islam. Those accustomed to and expecting to always see an equivalence in all phenomenon, for instance, that one plus one must always equal two may be good mathematicians, but they will soon enough discover that they have lost their way in religion. They will end up taking the shell and rejecting the kernel of the faith.

On a spiritual level, this leads to a denial of the esoteric dimensions and transcendental aspects of Islam and to the disparagement of every kind of divinely-bestowed merit and the disavowal of every status-related prestige and distinction. But this esoteric aspect is what provides anchor and inner strength to the Islamic belief system; and once it is repudiated, everything else snaps. On the practical level, it leads to a loosening of all the ties that bind. And, perhaps for the first time, Farouk can disobey his father's orders and finally even cut off communication.

At this stage, there is no more hierarchy to worry about, no particular body of knowledge to have to master and, above all, no distinctions to have to respect. In this mechanical theologizing, every apprentice scholar overnight becomes an expert—and everyone can give *fatwa* to self and others on the most complex theological issues.

It was not the tendency to this that was picked up in Britain or Yemen; it was the will to do what he did—the *tabula rasa* on which the Yemeni masterminds wrote their lethal script would have been cleaned and readied anywhere. The combination of *tabula rasa* and this script produced a mindset that sincerely believes in the infallibility of its own certainties; and always sees its own tunnel vision as the only way to salvation, and all other ways merely highways to damnation.

As he stepped on to that plane, Farouk would not have been conscious of the consequences of the action he was about to take as he would have been of its effect; and he was not worried about his personal fate, he was only concerned about his final destination in an eternal abode where this action was supposed to take him.

His face a picture of innocence, his visage pleasant, his temple that of a devotee, his mind, unfortunately, turned into that of a deviant, Farouk is clearly someone who has gone beyond the pale. And for parents this is a fact that is too unpalatable in its painfulness. What pain can be greater for them than watching with helpless horror as a beloved child self-destructs, obsessed and all wrapped up in his little certainties, and is slowly ensnared and finally consumed by an intricate wave that to him must have looked safe and almost sacred.

A tragic figure, yet so full of promise and capable of getting the best of both worlds almost even without trying, Farouk fit the bill of the masterminds: he is intelligent, he is a high achiever, he is technically biased with some measure of care-freedom and the kind of credulity that leads untutored faith to undertake desperate and destructive measures with good conscience. He has now been cut down in the prime of his life by purveyors of a theology on the fringe. Many were there, like Farouk, who sincerely wanted to do Islamic work but were led down this road to ruin.

To the world, Farouk has gone from being a lovely kid to a terrorist and a would-be killer; but to the Mutallabs, he is still and always will be a son, a child on whom love has been showered and is still being showered—in prayer and in desperate hope.

And for the first time, here is someone who has committed a crime, has not denied it, doesn't look like a criminal—and probably is not.



The truth nowadays is that while homes propose, it is often schools that dispose as far as the development of the character of students is concerned



DROPPED... Adefemi Olubayo

Olubayo shocked over exclusion

Super Eagles defender, Adefemi Olubayo has expressed shock over his exclusion from the 24-man squad coach Shuaibu Amodu picked for the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations.

The France-based defender said he did not expect to be dropped from the Nations Cup party.

"I was shocked because I did not expect to be dropped from the team. I was looking forward to the preparation

in Durban, South Africa when the news came to me," says the former Bendel United star.

"But despite that, I have no hard feeling for the coaches and any of the players picked for the Nations Cup. I am a Nigerian and I still remain committed to the national team."

"The fact that I am not part of the Nations Cup now does not mean I would not be called upon in future, so I just want to leave everything in the hands of God."



SANI Kaita

Kaita expects tough run in Angola

With Nigeria's buildup to the Nations Cup starting with the Super Eagles departure to Durban, South Africa tomorrow, Lokomotiv Moscow of Russia midfielder, Sani Kaita says all the players know the task that awaits them in Angola.

The former Kano Pillars skipper stated in an interview with *brilafm.net* that the Eagles will always remember the tough qualifiers they went through and said the 2010 Nations Cup will not be any different.

"Back there, the matches are really tough and, as we saw in the qualification, we can expect more of that."

"I thank God that we have qualified already and we are looking forward to be in South Africa 2010."

"We all know no match will be easy and, now, we are fully ready to face every country we meet in Angola," he declared.

