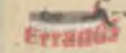


Q: What is the wisest means of Mail Delivery in Abuja and Federal Capital Territory?



NEWS
I executed 6064 projects in Kano

- Kwankwaso

Page 3

A: **Errands**
Efficient. Prompt. Unmatched-Value For Money.
Plot 272/273 UAC Commercial Complex,
Central Business District, Garki, Abuja-Nigeria.
Tel: 09-5234058, 08035069998, 08034679016,
08023415125
E-mail: cityerrands@skannet.com, apata@skannet.com
Revolution in Mail Delivery
Inter-City Service available in Lagos, Ibadan, PH and other Major Cities.

PDP NEC may scrap NWC today

● **Senator Ahmadu Ali to emerge chairman**

The National Executive Committee (NEC), the apex decision making body of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), may dissolve the party's National Working Committee (NWC) today.

The PDP NEC, which is billed to meet today to take major decisions in line with the resolve to radically reform the party ahead of 2007 elections is expected to formally endorse the scrapping of the NWC and assign its function to the NEC now to be headed by a chairman who may also be appointed today.

A member of the NWC who preferred to remain anonymous, disclosed this to

By **Hammed M. Bello,**
Senior Political Reporter

Daily Trust, saying the dissolution had the approval of the presidency.

According to the source who also confirmed that Senator Ahmadu Ali would today emerge as the national chairman of the party to succeed Chief Audu Ogbeh, the dissolution of the NWC is part of the alleged grand plan by a section of the party's membership to seize the machinery of the party to achieve their personal interest without opposition.

The NWC is headed by the party's national chairman and

Contd. on Pg 2



R-L: Professor Awwalu Yadudu Kano State delegate, HRH, Alhaji Najib H. Adamu Emir of Kazaure, Jigawa State delegate, Chief Aziggy Azike, delegate Imo State delegate and others discussing during the sitting of the national political reform conference held in Abuja... yesterday.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

NO-GO AREAS

You can't gag us

- Delegates tell Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo's address at the inauguration of the National Political Reform Conference came under heavy criticisms yesterday as participants vowed not to respect the 'no go' areas listed in the speech.

They contended that if the areas designated by the

By **Habeeb I. Pindiga,**
Political Reporter

president as 'given' were free from reproach, there would not have been the need for the conference.

Obasanjo had listed eight areas which he said should be considered as given. They are the oneness of Nigeria,

federalism and federal system of government, presidentialism, multi-religiosity, federal character, popular participation, the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy and separation of powers. He also warned the conference from tampering with the nation's unity.

But majority of leaders of delegations of 23 states at the conference who were stating the positions of their states on the president's speech, argued that for the conference to have any meaning, all matters without exception must be considered.

Many of them suggested that wishing away problems could not proffer solutions. They, however, restated their commitment to the unity and indivisibility of Nigeria.

Launching the first attack on the confinement of the agenda, leader of Anambra delegates, Dr. Chukwuemeka

Ezeife, said the president appeared to be inconsistent in his speech when after listing the 'given' areas he went on to ask delegates to feel free to consider anything that

would address the nation's woes.

He said if the system was working, convening such a conference won't be necessary.

"If the federal character is good for example, we won't be here. So we should do away with all these inconsistencies by discussing anything that is discussable." Ezeife said.

Contd. on Pg 2

Borno canvasses parliamentary system

The Borno State delegation to the National Political Reform Conference has canvassed for a return to the parliamentary system of government as opposed to the presidential system currently in use in Nigeria.

Contributing to the debate on the president's inaugural address on the floor of the conference yesterday, leader of the Borno delegation, Alhaji Ibrahim A. Dancida, submitted that the current Nigerian constitution was the most expensive ever operated in the country.

He said as a child of the constitution, the presidential system we are now using was prone to corruption and abuse adding that it also encourages dictatorship.

Speaking with passion, the former federal super per-

By **Abdu Labaran,** Group
Political Editor

manent secretary maintained that despite the nation's huge earnings, the presidential system has kept the country pauperised because of the huge capital required to service it as well as the attendant corruption that is fuelled by the system.

He asserted that over 80 percent of the nation's earn-

ing was spent on servicing overhead expenditure at the expense of capital projects.

"When the president travels, he goes with about 700 people on his entourage when the governor travels, he goes with about 100 people on his entourage. Even the local government chairman carries a lot of people along when he travels," he declared,

Contd. on Pg 2

Late Haruna Abubakar buried in Lafia

Lafia, the capital of Nasarawa State, wore a sad look yesterday as a large number of people from across the nation gathered for the burial of the former deputy senate president, Haruna Abubakar, who died in a London hospital on Sunday after a protracted illness.

The body of the deceased was accompanied to Lafia by the deputy senate president, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, who

By **Isa Sanusi & Zainab Alimi,** Political Reporters

also lead the senate delegation to the burial that was also attended by the former head of state, retired General Ibrahim Babangida, former senate president, Anyim Pius Anyim and the governors of Bauchi State, Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu and that of Plateau State, Joshua Chibi Dariye.

Also in Lafia were, the

Contd. on Pg 2

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

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

News

No go areas *Contd. from Pg 1*

Prof. Kimse Okoko from Bayelsa state also spoke along this line, saying that the conference should not accept the de-listed areas as sacrosanct.

According to him, though the nation was united, nobody should take indivisibility for granted as there was need to ensure justice across board.

Others who agreed with the view that anything should be discussed besides the indivisibility of Nigeria, include Ime Udom (Akwa Ibom), Bello Kirfi (Bauchi), Victor Malu (Benue), Gamaliel Onosode (Delta), Martin Elechi (Ebonyi), Mike Akhigbe (Edo), Mathias Offoboche (Cross River), S. K. Babalola (Ekiti), Adams Oshiomhole (Nigeria Labour Congress), Umaru Dikko (Kaduna), David Jemibewon (Kogi) and Albert Ogunshola (Kwara).



Justice Niki Tobi

has the secretary, the treasurer, auditor, national publicity secretary, youth and women leaders among others as members and it handles the daily running of the party and serves as proxy to NEC, especially in crisis situations and matters of discipline.

The plan to scrap the NWC has been on since the former national chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh, recently wrote a letter to President Obasanjo on the state of the nation. The source said that members fought to frustrate the moves then because it was felt to be vindictive and not based on any genuine reason.

The source disclosed that the plan to dislodge the NWC was because it was perceived to be a major instrument used by the party's national chairman to exert some pressures on the government and when scrapped, anyone who emerges as party chairman would have been stripped of such powers and incapacitated from any major influence on the party and government by extension.

According to the source, Senator Ahmadu Ali has been tipped by the presidency as successor to Audu Ogbeh, although he said former Plateau State governor, Ambassador Fidelis Tapgun, was one of those preferred to Ali by some interests in the presidency but that the choice of Ali was from the top.

Senator Ahmadu Ali is a retired Colonel who contested the PDP chairmanship

But Kirfi had suggested that issues bordering on religion should not be tabled because of their sensitive nature.

Oshiomhole, on his part, said all these areas could be refined to suit the nation's needs.

Most delegates also called for the devolution of powers to the states and local governments, arguing that the federal government is too powerful and that the third tier has been consumed by the states.

They also sought the refinement of the presidential system to cut costs and whittle down the overbearing influence of the central government.

Some delegates also canvassed resource control and wealth redistribution, with Oshiomhole saying that poverty was the greatest challenge facing the country.

Presenting the Imo state

position, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu said his state was not in favour of parliamentary system as canvassed by some delegates, saying that presidentialism could be managed to be affordable to Nigeria.

Senator Uba Ahmed (Gombe) and many others also faulted advocates of system change, saying that what the nation needed was attitudinal change from leaders.

Earlier, there were contentions on how best to go about debating the president's speech. While many delegates preferred the state-by-state approach, others suggested that all those interested should be given a chance to speak.

Following a motion moved by Chief Don Etiebet, the conference agreed to take one person from each state and interest groups.

Consideration of the president's speech continues today.



President Olusegun Obasanjo receiving the committee report of the Nigerian Society of Engineers from its national chairman and the minister of state transport, Engineer Musa Mohammed during the presentation ceremony held at the state House Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Joe Oroye.

World Bank doubts N25bn capitalisation

There are strong indications that the World Bank is doubting the feasibility of the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) determination to make the nation's banks meet the N25 billion capitalisation by end of December this year.

As a pointer to this, the World Bank last week sent a team comprising some of its lead financial economists in Africa and consultants to sample views of key stake-

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor &
Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

holders on the reliability or otherwise of the apex bank's policy.

The team led by one of its financial economists in the Africa regional office last week Monday met separately with members of both the Senate and House of Representatives committees on bank-

ing and currency behind closed doors.

One of the lawmakers confided in *Daily Trust* last week that, "the World Bank's fears, according to members of the team who came and interacted with us, was informed by two key reasons - the complaints by many banks and financial analysts in the country that the 18 months deadline given by the CBN for the N25 billion recapitalisation was too short a time, as well as the senate's amendment to the CBN Act which provided for categorisation of banks."

According to the lawmakers, "the World Bank team tried to gauge our sincere

views with regards to the recapitalisation policy and we told them." The lawmaker did not tell *Daily Trust* what the lawmakers "sincere" position on the policy was, saying that "the team pleaded with us not to make public the opinions we expressed and promised not to make public whatever we told them."

Our reporter who got contacts of some members of the team sent an e-mail last Tuesday to one of the World Bank's lead financial economists trying to find out what informed the bank's pessimism about the Central Bank of Nigeria recapitalisation

policy.

Till today, however, no response came to our reporter's mail. When contacted on the issue last week Thursday, Mr. Obadiah Tohomdet of the external communications unit of the World Bank group's country office in Abuja, said our reporter's e-mail was forwarded to him for advise, but he has no comments on the matter.

But when contacted for the CBN's response to the seeming apathy of the World Bank, the deputy director and head of corporate affairs of the apex bank, Mr. Tony Ede, said while he doubts "the World Bank will take the position, "it does not run the Nigerian economy and cannot dictate for our country what we should do."

Mr. Ede said "the World Bank has been very supportive of our (recapitalisation) policy right from day one and we know their position on that. I don't think they will doubt it."

"But even if it does, it does not run our economy. The good news I have for you is that so far, we have over 15 groups of banks that have agreed to merge apart from several that have met the N25 billion capital base. Besides, I'm sure you've read in the news that Union Bank is even planning a N100 billion capitalisation which is good for our economy," he added.

The CBN spokesman said the whole essence of the recapitalisation, as Soludo harped repeatedly, is to enable Nigerian banks fund productive activity in the real sector of the economy. "How can foreign banks be funding even exploration activities in the petroleum sector? What are our banks doing?" he queried.

Mr. Ede said further that, "let me remind you that when Soludo came in as governor (of the CBN), about 11 banks were about to be liquidated. But he said no, let's allow them to be acquired by other bigger banks so that we can save their customers the trouble of having to be paid only some part of their savings after these banks were liquidated."

PDP NEC *Contd. from Pg 1*

with Gemade and Sunday Awoniyi, and already, there are public protests against the alleged militarization of the PDP or the manipulation of the party by retired military officers.

The membership of NEC of the PDP consists of the president and vice president, the leadership of the National Assembly and PDP state governors and the principal

officers of the national secretariat, including the national chairman and secretary among others.

When contacted on phone for comments, the national publicity secretary, Barr. Venatins Ikem, said he could not speak and efforts to reach the national secretary, Chief Vincent Ogbulafor, failed but an aide in his office said it was mere speculation.

Late Haruna *Contd. from Pg 1*

Senate President Adolphus Wabara, Speaker House of Representatives Aminu Bello Masari, Senate Majority Leader, Dalhatu Sarki Tafida and senators who also paid condolence visit to the governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Adamu and the family of the deceased.

At government house Lafia, Senate president, Adolphus Wabara, said the life of late Haruna Abubakar is an example of commitment to move the nation forward, saying that the deceased was a man that could not be forgotten easily in the nation's politics.

Wabara also condoled the widow, Hajiya Maryam Haruna Abubakar, while assuring the bereaved that the senate will readily assist the family in whatever way.

The funeral prayer was performed at the palace of the Emir of Lafia, Alhaji Isa Mustapha Agwai, by the Chief Imam of Lafia, Malam Muhammad Yusuf Maimakurdi.

The senate early in the

day, suspended plenary session in honour of the late senator who also contested for the governorship of Nasarawa State under the platform of the National Democratic Party (NDP), in the 2003 general elections.

Similarly, the House of Representatives yesterday adjourned sitting in honour of late Senator Haruna Abubakar, a former Deputy Senate President in the National Assembly.

Late Senator Haruna Abubakar died over the weekend in a hospital in London after a protracted illness.

Borno *Contd. from Pg 1*

asserting that at our stage of economic development, it is a system we can ill afford to operate.

Alhaji Damcida also said the system encouraged dictatorship because it bestowed too much powers on the executive leading to the emasculation of the other two arms of government, the legislature and the judiciary thereby giving way to the emergence of dictatorship.

FG appoints new DG for VON

The federal Government yesterday approved the appointment of Mallam Abubakar Jijiwa as the new Director-General of the Voice of Nigeria (VON).

This was contained in a

Communicating news of his death to members yesterday, Hon. Aminu Bello Masari led the House in prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased and adjourned sitting till tomorrow "to mourn the loss of a cherished colleague."

The adjournment will also enable some members of the House attend the burial of the deceased held yesterday in Lafia Nasarawa State.

News of the death of the former senator threw the House in a sober mood just as condolence messages continue to trail the late senator's death.

According to him, Nigeria will be better off if it reverted to the parliamentary system which he believes to be cheaper to operate and less prone to manipulations and abuse noting that under the parliamentary system, the Prime Minister, who is also a member of the parliament, is only first among equals and therefore does not have the awesome powers to wax dictatorial.

press statement made available to the News Agency Of Nigeria (NAN) by the Ministry of Information and National Orientation.

Jijiwa, until his appointment was the acting DG of VON, and also the director of administration and finance.

Born on March 15, 1961, in Adamawa state, Jijiwa graduated from the University of Maiduguri in 1983 and attended various courses in broadcasting and management.

He served as commissioner for Finance, Economic Planning and Budget in Adamawa State between 1995 to 1999.

Jijiwa also served as general manager of the Gongola Broadcasting Corporation from 1989 to 1991, and as Director-General of Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation from 1991 to 1992.

He further served as an assistant general manager at the News Agency of Nigeria between 1988 to 1993.

Jijiwa, who joined the services of VON as director, finance and supplies in 1993, had been acting as DG since August 2004 following the retirement of Chief Taiwo Alimi.

NAN reports that the VON is the only external broadcast network of the country.

News

I executed 6064 projects in Kano - Kwankwaso

The Minister of Defence and former governor of Kano State, Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, yesterday said that out of the 6064 projects executed during his tenure as governor of Kano State, the state is questioning only three.

In an interactive session with newsmen, Kwankwaso said, "it is an achievement since out of 6064 projects only three is being indicted," adding that the Kano state government is only doing so to embarrass and tarnish his image.

Kwankwaso explained that the three projects in question include the ecological funds allocated from

By Ruby Rabi'u, Defence Reporter

1999 to 2003 amounting to N1.4bn to tackle ecological problems.

He continued, "we used six agencies to execute the project. To facilitate a speedy progress, a committee was inaugurated and in its wisdom, decided to use two agencies for the job."

He admitted that the committee had expended N600m, so the Kano state government is presently questioning the sum of N800m which they believe has not been accounted for, "but we have documents to show how all the monies were spent," he added.

He pointed out that the next project being indicted is the N97 million spent on security agencies to facilitate smooth elections in the state.

He revealed that these monies were given to the armed forces, police and various security agencies who were mandated to ensure the safety of lives and property in the state during the election and also for logistics support.

"At the end of the whole exercise, I did not win the election but I am asked to pay back the money," he lamented

Kwankwaso said the last project was the scholarship fund amounting to N62 million. He said all students who won the scholarship were paid the monies, "but the board is still insisting we remit the money back to the government," he said.

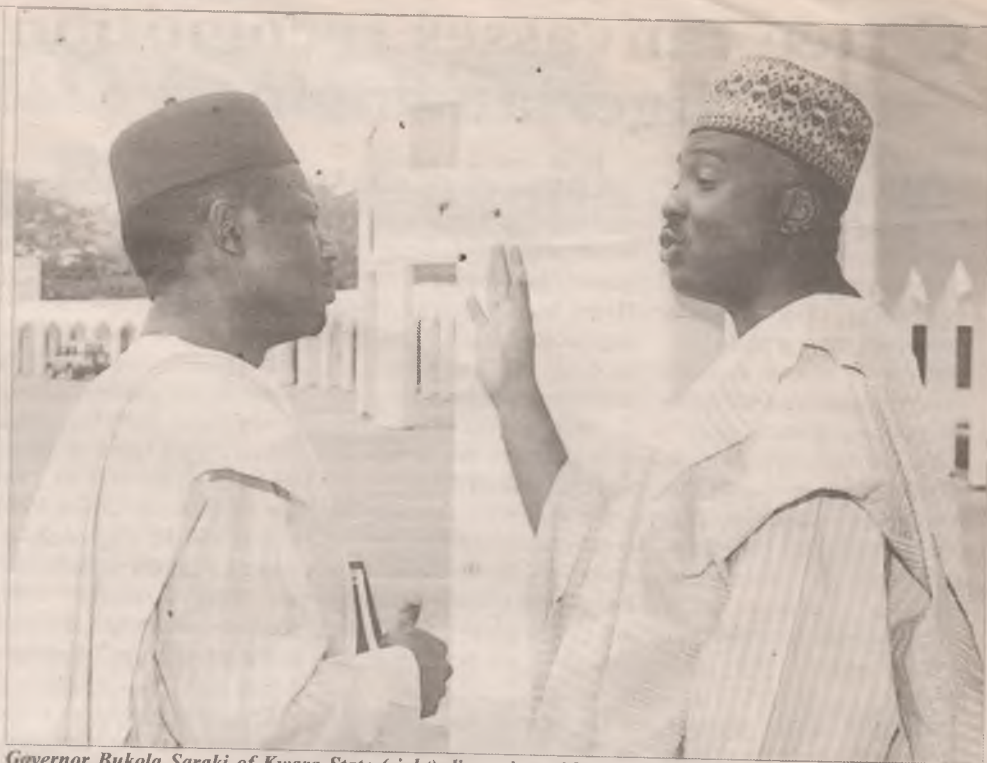
According to him, the secretary of the scholarship board appeared before the panel with all the necessary documents where all these facts were written but they refused to acknowledge the documents.

The defence minister added that the case is before the court and when the appropriate time comes, the documents will be tendered in court to prove his case.

It would be recalled that sometimes in December, the Kano state government had released a white paper indicting the minister of defence and his commissioner of finance, Dr. Hafiru Abubakar, for alleged gross misappropriation of funds.

The judicial commission of inquiry which released the white paper was set up to probe major contracts and projects executed from May 1999 to May 2003.

The defence minister and his commissioner of finance were ordered to refund N1 billion to the state's coffers



Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State (right) discussing with Information Minister, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu during their working visit to President Obasanjo at the State House Abuja...yesterday Pix: Joe Oroye

FG dissolves MFCT as el-Rufai heads FCDA board

President Olusegun Obasanjo has given approval for the dissolution of the ministry of the federal capital territory (MFCT) and the completion of its consequential winding-up on or before the 31st of March, 2005.

With this development, the FCT Minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, appointed by Mr. President under section 302 of the constitution, is therefore a minister in the President's office and the chairman of the board of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) as provided for in section 18 a of the Federal Capital Territory Act.

A press statement from the office of the FCT minister, said President Obasanjo exercised his powers as the governor of the federal capital territory under section 299 and 302 of the constitution and issued the regulation envisaged by sections 14 and 18(b) of the FCT Act.

The statement said that the presidential order reverts the legal and administrative structure of the FCT to the status quo ante, and be fully compliant with the intention and meaning of the FCT Act of 1976 which created the FCT and the FCDA as its sole development and management agency.

This means, the statement added, that the FCDA, its sister agencies (like the water board, AEPB etc) and the secretariat are the principal developers, managers and providers of municipal services within the FCT as con-

By Nasir Imam, Property and Environment Editor

tained in the FCT Act. "The chief executive of the FCDA - now referred to as executive secretary, as in the Act, shall be the principal adviser to the minister in the development and management of the FCT, while the heads of the secretariats shall be referred to simply as department secretaries of their respective departments," the statement said.

In order to ensure compliance with paragraph 6 of the order, the statement said the minister hereby constitutes a winding-up committee under the lead-

ership of the permanent secretary of the ministry to enable orderly winding up and transition.

Other members of the committee include the executive secretary, FCDA, who would serve as vice-chairman, while the minister's chief of staff, the Satellite Town Development Agency (STDA), the directors of finance and accounts and legal services would serve as members.

The FCDA director of administration who is also a member of the winding-up committee will serve as secretary.

The committee has up to 31st March, 2005 to complete its assignment and submit its report to Mr. President through the minister.

Reps c'ttee indicts member over unethical conduct

The House of Representatives Committee on Ethics and Privileges has in its report to the House accused a member, Hon. Foster Okoto, of unethical behaviour in pursuit of accommodation and urged the House to take measures to restrain the erring lawmaker.

A memo dated February 24, 2005 addressed to the Speaker, Aminu Bello Masari, which was documented in yesterday's votes and proceedings with the title: "Gross Abuse of Privileges and Ethical Misconduct," and signed by the Ethics Committee chairman, Hon. Bello Mutawalle, accused Hon. Okoto of, among other things, abusing his privi-

By Hammeed M Bello, Senior Political Reporter

leges as a lawmaker and bringing the House to public ridicule.

The memo informed the House that Hon. Okoto, who succeeds Hon. Ere Ekekeme, following the tribunal judgement in his (Okoto) favour resorted to forceful ejection of Ekekeme from his apartment, Block B3, Flat 1 at the Apo legislators quarters, including the use of stones to smash the doors and windows.

Both members represent the Southern Ijaw federal constituency of Bayelsa state and according to the memo, "there seems to have been an apparent mix up with the residential accommodation allocated to both Hon. Okoto and Hon. Ekekeme. Both of them appear to have allocation papers for the same house..."

The memo said instead of Hon. Okoto to adopt peaceful means to resolve the crisis, he, with the aid of thugs and policemen, physically ejected the properties of Ekekeme "constituting a disturbance to the life and convenience" of other occupants in the quarters.

"He is furthermore reported to have engaged some diabolical effects as he came in with some juju-like artefacts to the residents of the house in question, in order to further vent his anger and curse on his perceived enemy," the memo said.

Describing the action as embarrassing to the House, the Ethics and Privileges Committee called on the House to call Hon. Okoto to order pending completion of investigations into the matter.

Gombe to spend N1bn on airport construction

The Gombe state government is to spend close to N1 billion (one billion naira) for the construction of an airport in the state.

Briefing newsmen after the state's executive council meeting yesterday, the commissioner for works and housing, Alhaji Tanko Ishiyaku Gwamna, said the project which has a completion period of ten months is to commence immediately.

He explained that the contract was divided into three parts with Triacta (Nig) Ltd taking the lion share of N732m for constructing roads and other civil activities.

Contract for the construction of administrative offices and other buildings in the airport went to Eagle Construction (Nig) Ltd for N189m while Konslech Project was to provide lightning and water at the cost of over N40m.

The commissioner said when completed, the airport will open up the state to investors who may wish to tap from the abundant natural resources in the area.

He said the project is a fulfilment of the state governor's campaign promise of providing befitting facilities to the north-east centre of commerce.

From Mohammed Abubakar, Stringer (Gombe)

The airport is to be sited at the outskirts of the state capital near Lawanti village along Gombe - Bauchi road.

The construction of this airport will bring to end years of travel difficulties for government officials and businessmen who had to contend with Heipang airport in Jos or the company airport of the neighbouring Ashaka cement company.

Club owners to recall Galadima, three others

Crisis looms in the Nigeria football house as club owners have begun the process of recalling four of their representatives currently serving on the board of Nigeria Football Association (NFA).

The football club proprietors, under the auspices of Nigeria Club Owners Association have accused the quartet of Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima (NFA Chairman), Chief Gabriel Chukwuma (First Vice Chairman), Dickson Adejube and Suleiman David of working against the interests of the clubs.

Speaking with sports reporters in Abuja yesterday, the Executive Secretary of the club owners association, Mr. Kwame Arthur said that Galadima and the three other members have failed to protect the interest of the clubs.

By AbdulRaheem Aodu, Sports Reporter

According to the club owners, the four members have been working for their own personal interests and refused to interact with their constituencies as well as depriving the clubs of their entitlements.

Kwame said that the club owners will convene a congress next week Thursday to deliberate on the continued membership of the four members on the NFA board.

"Sequel to the demand of one-third of the members, the club owners association would next week Thursday convene a congress to deliberate on the continued membership of our four members on the board of the NFA," he declared, noting that the recent happening has shown

that the foursome are no longer serving the interest of the professional clubs.

"They have been found to work against the interest of the clubs which they are expected to protect, and they have also colluded with Mike Itemuagbor, NFA Marketing agent to short change the clubs in all marketing and sponsorship deals over the years," he added.

The club owners admonished the League Board not to transact any business with Mr. Itemuagbor and advertise for the job of new marketing consultant.

If the Club Owners congress decide to recall and expel the four NFA board members that will in turn throw Nigeria football leadership in disarray as the quartet will lose their seat in the board.

NNPC redeploys 51 mgt staff

By Hamisu Muhammad Reporter (Business)

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), has announced the transfer and redeployment of 51 of the top management staff as part of the restructuring exercise embarked upon by the corporation's new management.

It would be recalled that late last year the corporation embarked on a reshufflement of its employees and disengaged over 2,500 of its junior workers from the corporation.

According to the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Engr. Funsho Kupolokun, the exercise is in line with the corporation's ambition to ensure that NNPC is strengthened to face the challenges posed by a highly dynamic competitive world oil and gas industry.

A statement from NNPC signed by the general manager, group public affairs department, Dr Levi Ajuonuma, said the former managing director of Nigeria Gas Company (NGC), has now been redeployed to LNG and power as a group general manager while his position was taken over by Mr C. O. Ogiemwonyi, former managing director, Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC).

Other management staff involved in the redeployment exercise include Mr. Barkindo as deputy managing director, Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG), Mr G. Osahon as a new MD NPDC, and Fisoye Delano as group general manager, CPDD.

Dr. S. M. Kewa will now take over as group general manager (GGM), investment, C. Onouha, as GGM, ISD, S. O. Alabi GGM, research and development among others.

News

C'ttee canvasses recognition for Nigerian engineers

A committee set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo has canvassed more recognition and patronage for Nigerian engineers even as it canvassed recognition for craftsmen whom it said should be placed at par with university graduates.

The committee which submitted its report to the president yesterday, took a critical look at the engineering profession in the country and made recommendations which it says pointed "the way forward."

Briefing State House correspondents on the details of the committee's recommendations, committee

From Reuben Yunana, Senior Reporter, State House
chairman and minister of transport (state), Engineer Inuwa Musa, said the report "tries to categorise what engineering is all about. We looked at the issue of craftsmen who have not gone to the universities, the polytechnics, the technical colleges and all these."

He said, "for anybody to come and say that an engineer must only be someone who has passed out of university and can be given a role in the system is not the way to go about it."

He opined that the stand of the committee is informed by the fact that foreign craftsmen come into the

country and are categorised and employed as engineers.

"We looked at the issue of foreign engineers, people coming in under the guise of being engineers. In reality, we don't even have their curriculum vitae. COREN which is the regulatory body doesn't even know they exist. These are the types of things we must get away from. "We see a craftsman coming from Europe to be engineers in Nigeria while our engineers are on the streets. We recommended the way forward to the government," Engineer Inuwa said.

Presenting the report to the president earlier, Engineer Inuwa said, "sustainable nation building has eluded us so far largely due to the apparent neglect of our Nigerian engineering sector, adding, "the Nigerian engineering landscape has been dominated by foreign engineering firms. As a nation, we have depended too much for too long on foreign or imported technological solutions to most of our local problems to the detriment of developing our engineering capacity."

In his response, President Obasanjo defined the engineering profession as the foundation of development, saying all efforts must be made to develop the sector.

Emir accuses police of abetting crime

The Emir of Birnin Gwari, Kaduna State, Mallam Jibrin Maigwari II, has accused the police of abetting crime in his domain.

The Emir made the allegation on Monday in Kaduna when he paid a courtesy visit on the state governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi.

He lamented that suspected armed robbers who were initially apprehended and handed over to the police by vigilante groups were later released on bail by the police without proper investigations.

He said when released, the suspects would in turn, continue to harass and intimidate people they suspected to have engineered their arrest.

Maigwari called on the Kaduna State Security Council to, as a matter of urgency, address the problem to restore the confidence of the people of the area in the police.

He also appealed to the

state government to solve the acute water problem facing Birnin Gwari and its environs.

Responding, the governor pledged to address the problem of the police at the weekly security meetings of the state government.

Makarfi also promised that the state's water board would look into the problem of water shortage in Birnin Gwari.

Security Breach: Court rules on Al-Mustapha's application March 18

A federal high court in Lagos presided over by Justice Dan Abutu, has fixed March 18, this year for ruling on the application of Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, seeking relief to compel the authority of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), to release certain documents/materials in their custody in order to expedite action on the on-going security breach trial.

From Mohammed Shasanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

The embattled former Chief Security Officer (CSO), to late General Sani Abacha who alongside Major Muhammadu Adeka and one Mr. Onwuchekwa Okorie, were on October 22 last year, slammed with two count charges of conspiracy and treason against the federal government had urged the court to compel the DMI to release the statement they made during their interrogation by the Main and Special Investigation Tribunal.

Also sought are the video recording of the entire proceedings before the SIP and the lists of civilian and army officials arrested and interrogated along with them.

Last December, lead prosecuting counsel, Alhaji Abdul Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), had told the court that the accused's application are premature and ill-timed, stressing that it is only during trial that the issue could be addressed while also urging the court to dismiss it.

But when the matter came up on Monday for the counsel to the three accused persons to reply on points of law, Al-Mustapha's lawyer, Barrister Olalekan Ojo, urged the court to discountenance the opposition of the prosecution to his application as this is the only avenue to show that there is no prima facie case against his client.

we need to do is to adjust," he said.

On the level of compliance by millers, the chairman said he could not say much because there has not been any official letter notifying the bakers or the general public about the change.

He said the bakers are not able to know from merely looking at a bag of flour whether the new formula has been complied with by the millers or not.

"We only feel the change after mixing the dough because it is always a bit heavier than when we use whole wheat flour," Adamu said.

He therefore advised bakers that once they notice a change, they should adjust their recipe when mixing the flour for their bread.

"If you were using 150 grammes of yeast before, you can increase it to 180 grammes to make the dough lighter," he said.

Scarcity of bread likely if — Adamu

The Master Bakers Association has warned that there might be scarcity of bread if the Cassava Growers Association (CGA) could not supply enough cassava to the 19 flour mills in the country.

The chairman of the association, Alhaji Abdul Adamu, gave the warning in an interview with News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja.

The federal government has directed flour mills in the country to incorporate 10 per cent cassava into their flour with effect from Jan. 1, 2005.

Adamu said that flour mills would have problems if the cassava growers were not able to meet their demands.

"Bakers don't have problems of compliance because we are just the end users and we will use what is produced for us. All

M-Tel now has 921,000 subscribers

M-tel one of the GSM service providers says it now has over 921,000 active subscribers on its network. This was disclosed at the 26th Kaduna International Trade Fair by the company's chief marketing officer, Prince A.B. Apampa.

He said the company which was a subsidiary

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

of the Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL), is the only operator with eleven switching centres spread across the country.

"There is no gain-saying that M-tel is a customer-friendly company being the first GSM operator to introduce affordable tariffs and recharge vouchers which have encouraged low income earners to access the network," Prince Apampa added.

He said to enable customers enjoy value for money invested in the network, M-tel is currently running a promo tagged, "talk more for less," campaign which gives customers additional 10 percent to every recharge card.

The M-tel CMO said from March this year, the company will spice up the value of customers' satisfaction with the unveiling of its GPRS to enable them access the internet, send data and pictures as well as e-mails.



Chief Conelius Adebayo

FUT Minna reopens March 14

The Senate of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, has approved Monday, March 14, to

Saturday, March 19, as resumption dates for its students.

A statement by the institution in Minna said the resumption dates were for remedial, 100 level and all fresh students, 200 level direct as well as post-graduate students.

The statement said the new dates were part of the out-come of a recent meeting of the institution's Senate.

It announced Monday, March 21, to Saturday, March 26, as registration

dates for levels 200, 300, 400 and 500 students.

It said the university's Senate has also fixed Monday, March 28, for the commencement of lectures, while matriculation of fresh students has been slated for April 7.

According to the statement, first semester examinations for all levels and remedial students will begin on June 27 and end on July 9, before a two-weeks semester break from July 11 to July 23.

Also approved by the Senate was the second semester commencement and completion between Monday July 25 and Nov. 19.

NIGERIA'S MOST RELIABLE SUPPLIERS OF POWER GENERATORS AND SERVICE COMPANIES

Power generation and distribution in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate to meet the electricity supply requirements, despite the huge investment and attention by the authorities to revive the sector.

As a result, the epileptic and erratic power supply has forced several organisations to source for alternative power. Giving its critical role to the nation's industrial and economic growth, the participation of the private sector has become imperative and desirable.

Recognising the contributions of the private sector in this troubled sector. **Media Trust Limited**, the publishers of *Daily and Weekly Trust Newspapers* will publish a special supplement on the major dealers/marketers and servicing companies of power generating sets and accessories in Nigeria. The focus is to sensitize the public on their contributions / achievements to the nation's economy, promote their image and identify challenges facing the sector.

The publication date is **Tuesday, March 15, 2005**. For further enquiries and participation, interested companies are requested to call the **Special Projects Department** on any of the following nos: **08028494170, 08037038663, 08042145839, or 09-6720346**.

Congratulations to Governor Kure @ 49



The Members of
Federal House of Representatives
from Niger State,
Congratulate
His Excellency ,
the Executive Governor of
Niger State,
ENGR. ABULKADIR ABDULLAHI KURE, FNSE
on the occasion of his 49th birthday
marked last Saturday 26/2/005.

May you live long as you
continue to achieve
excellence in serving
the people of Niger State in
particular and
the country in general



Signed:

1. Hon. (Dr.) Musa Ibeto
2. Hon. (Dr.) Abubakar Bawa Bwari
3. Hon. Peter Jiya
4. Hon. Baba Shehu
5. Hon. Shehu bn Ibrahim
6. Hon. Mohammed Bello
7. Hon. Capt. James Baitaci (Rtd)
8. Hon. Mohammed Jibbo
9. Hon. Isa Saidu
10. Hon. Abdullahi Mahmud



His Excellency,
ENGR. A. A. KURE
Executive Governor, Niger State

NEWS

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

Media must ensure success — Gana

Special Adviser to the President on Political Affairs, Prof. Jerry Gana, yesterday in Abuja urged the media to ensure the success of the ongoing national conference.

Speaking at a public forum on "Broadcasting and the Sustenance of democracy", organised by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Gana called on the media to promote the conference by adequately informing Nigerians.

He said that there was a link between broadcasting and democracy, noting that the media "forms and manages public opinion" and also relay the activities of government to the people. Gana, who said that the broadcast media plays a central role in the democratic process, added that it also monitors the performance of leaders and governance.

"The heart of democracy is the electoral process which people are well informed through broadcasting. It is the function of broadcasters to highlight and focus on the performance of government," he said. Declaring the forum open, Information and National Orientation minister, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu, said that the occasion was timely and in line with the ongoing political

dialogue.

Chikelu, who was represented by the acting permanent secretary, Alh. Abdu Gidado, said that broadcasters have a crucial role to play in public enlightenment and issues of national importance.

He urged broadcasters to exercise moral and political responsibility as cardinal values in the conduct of their operations and enjoined stakeholders to evaluate the performance of the broadcast media in the sustenance of democracy.

Also speaking, the Director-General of the Voice of Nigeria (VON), Mallam Abubakar Jijiwa, said that broadcasting remains the widest agent of mass mobilisation and mass action in Nigeria. He, however, expressed regret that the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), had no representation at the national conference in spite of its having the largest membership of media houses.

Jijiwa said that the history of Nigeria's current political landscape would be incomplete without mentioning the role played by the broadcast industry in the enthronement of democracy.

Participants at the forum were stakeholders in the industry and the general public.

Bola Ajibola heads confab c'ttee on rules of procedure

Former minister of justice and attorney general of the federation, Prince Bola Ajibola yesterday became the first delegate to be assigned the chair of a committee when he was saddled with the job of heading the conference committee to fine tune the draft standing orders (rules of procedure).

Following a suggestion he made the one time judge of the International Court of Justice, Hague was asked by the conference chairman, Justice Niki Tobi to head the committee and nominate its members to fine tune the draft standing order for the conference.

But many delegates, while endorsing the chairman's choice of Prince Ajibola to head the committee however, faulted his decision to delegate Prince Ajibola to nominate members of the committee.

Thereafter delegates nominated some of their fellow delegates with legal background to join Prince Ajibola on the committee as members.

Those on the committee along side Prince Ajibola are Professor Auwalu Yadudu, Professor Itse Sagay, Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN), Afe Babalola (SAN), Barris-

ter Leke, barrister Nkyo and Barrister Nwakem.

Meanwhile, one of the delegations from the north has submitted a proposal on the draft standing orders (rules of procedure) for the consideration of the conference at plenary.

While accepting the retention of orders one and two of the draft circulated to members the northern group however, recommended amendment for orders three to eight.

On order III, it recommends that the quorum of the conference from 25% (1/4) to 60% (3/5) of all delegates, on order IV, it recommends the removal of item 4.1 (iii) which recommends, deciding issues by voting and instead, suggested the adoption of "more viable and amicable modes of deciding issues."

The delegation also expressed reservation about the provisions contained in 6.1 (1-t) in orders VI and VII "which are tailored to cater for the resolution of issues by voting and the dilatory procedure of amendments" saying it is not necessary. Similarly, it said that the entire order VIII was neither desirable nor necessary and should therefore be deleted in its entirety.



L-R: Nike Akinbola, Ondo, State Mr. Yinka Ibrahim Ogun State and Danlani Bashiru Taraba State representing the physically challenged at the National Conference. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodi

Address Nigeria's debt burden, Ganduje urges confab

One of the elder statesmen at the ongoing national political reforms conference, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, has urged the confab to de-liberate and find ways out of Nigeria's foreign debt burden.

Ganduje, who is a former deputy governor of Kano state, said in a statement in Abuja yesterday that President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural speech had failed to mention the issues of Nigeria's huge debt profile as part of what the delegates should consider and called on the conference to ponder on how to authenticate and defray the debts.

He said though the nation's economy has been put on a firm footing, the issue of debt must be addressed to consolidate the gains recorded.

"Within a short period of time, these reforms have

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

started yielding positive results. In essence, our external reserves have risen sharply and this is a testimony to the success of these reforms. However, Mr. President's speech did not highlight our foreign debt profile which is a source of concern to the growth of the nation's economy.

"But I must congratulate Mr. President for championing the cause of debt relief not only for Nigeria but for other sister African states. However, all these notwithstanding, the issue of unemployment, poverty and inflation are still very much with us," he said.

Ganduje also commended the recapitalization policy for commercial banks introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), adding, however, that there must be caution to avoid mass staff

lay off.

He also urged the federal government to incorporate in its cassava policy, the resuscitation of cash crops like groundnut, cotton, soya

beans, beniseed, cashew, etc.

Urging his fellow delegates not to bring up issues that would touch on sensibilities of sections of the country, Ganduje called for consensus building among the participants to the confab.

Procedure for Obasanjo's inaugural speech causes stir

Procedure to be adopted in debating President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural speech at the national conference today dominated the confab's session.

The chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi, who introduced the topic, said members should advise the leadership on the procedure to be followed in discussing the speech pending the ratification of the conference standing orders.

The conference was virtually divided into two camps with each side advancing reasons for its submissions.

Leading those in favour of discussing the president's speech according to the discretion of the chairman not based on state or interest groups was the presidential adviser on Ethics and Good Governance, Mr kanu Agabi.

Agabi said the problems of the country originated from ethnicity and statism, adding that the purpose of the conference was to unite Nigerians irrespective of their tribe, race or religion.

He said the chairman of the conference should be free to call on anybody who wished to contribute to the debate on the president's inaugural speech irrespective

of his background or representation.

But NLC president, Mr Adams Oshiomhole, argued that nomination to the conference was based on states and interest groups, adding that it would be of no use pretending to "hide our identity at this conference".

Oshiomhole stressed that such procedure would also assist the conference to follow a particular order in such a way that no state or groups would be left out.

When the conference could not agree on a particular format, its chairman called for a motion which was moved by Chief Don Etiebet, ANPP chairman, in favour of Oshiomhole position.

A counter motion that was moved by Mr Oladosu Oladipo from Osun that everybody should be allowed to express himself for between three and five minutes was also taken.

At the end of the debate, the conference was divided and those in support of the main motion had 129 votes while those against got 30.

Tobi ruled that the conference would debate the president address on state by state basis with a delegate per state, followed by the interest groups and any other individual for between three and five minutes.

Delegates get Globacom lines

One of the operators of the Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM), Globacom Nigeria has distributed free lines and handsets to all the delegates to the national political reform conference.

The company has sent to each of the delegates; one Subscriber Integrated Module (SIM) card and one LG flip hand set G7120 model.

Delegates were seen collecting their sets in a Glo polyethylene bag yesterday from officials.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political reporter

It was not known how much each of the handsets costs, but a Glo mobile line is sold at about N900.



Niki Tobi, Confab Chairman

News

NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB

Muslim delegates'll promote Muslim interest -Adegbite

The Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Dr. Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, has said that the Muslim delegates to the on going national confab would conscientiously promote Muslim interests at the confab.

Dr. Adegbite gave the assurance over the weekend at the ceremony held at Ayete, in Ibarapa area of Oyo

From Kayode Ajibola, Correspondent (Lagos)

State to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Ibarapa joint Muslim organisation, a member of NAJOMO.

He said notwithstanding the gross under representation of Muslims at the national political reforms conference, what is paramount is that Muslim

delegates would promote Muslim interests at the confab.

Dr. Adegbite said that the Muslims would certainly call for the protection of the nation's diversities in the context of a united Nigeria under a federal structure.

Adegbite who is also the president general of NAJOMO, said Muslims in the country would insist on the entrenchment of the freedom of religion that would make it possible for every Nigerian to practice his or her religion to the fullest including the due observance of the laws peculiar to that religion.

It would be recalled that a cross-section of some Muslims in the country complained that the chairman of the political reforms conference and his secretary are Christians, while women have also complained of marginalisation.



The minister of labour and productivity, Alhaji Mohammed Hassan Lawan (centre) briefing the state house journalists on their courtesy visit to President Obasanjo at the presidential vialla Tuesday. Others are, the chief executive of Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund Alhaji Ahmed Rufai Mohammed (left) and Chief Oseni Elamah Insurance Trust Fund. Pix: Joe Oroye

Saraki, Igbinedion support no-go areas

Kwara state governor, Bukola Saraki and his Edo state counterpart Lucky Igbinedion, yesterday threw their weight behind President Olusegun Obasanjo and the issue of "no go areas" for delegates at the national political reform conference.

By Reuben Yunana, State House Correspondent

strong country. Let us look rather for things that unite us."

He said delegates from Edo state were mandated to canvass resource control and regional governance.

Kaduna state governor, Ahmed Makarfi, whose committee prepared the background paper for the conference said Monday in Kaduna that his committee did not propose "no go areas" for the conference.

But Saraki and Igbinedion after separate meetings with President Obasanjo at the state house said the president was right in placing embargo on the discussion of certain issues by conference delegates.

They insisted that the issue of the corporate existence of Nigeria remained non-negotiable.

First to speak was Kwara state governor, Bukola Saraki, who said certain issues are better left untouched since the entire conference was aimed at making the country a better place.

"I agree that there should be no-go areas. To now sit down and begin to question the existence of the country, I don't think it is the right thing to do at this time. We are who we are and I think what we should do is to see how best we can improve on what we are."

On the mandate given to delegates from his state, Saraki said, "they cannot have a mandate in isolation. We told them to conform to the other groups in the country to be able to discuss and come to something that is acceptable to all."

Igbinedion said he believes "the issue of Nigeria being one is a no go area, adding "I think we should maintain that Nigeria should remain one. We should look for areas of common interest where we can have a firm and

Confab may be extended

The ongoing national conference on political reforms may be extended from its present three months to a longer period.

Some delegates who spoke yesterday at the morning session indicated that the time period allotted the confab might not be sufficient to fully articulate the various issues.

Debates on the issues continued when Mike Ozeokhome, a delegate representing the civil society, said that the loss of a week from the given time has reduced the total period in which the confab is expected to finish its task. He said that there was confusion on when the conference is said to have commenced.

Justice Niki Tobi however, clarified the matter by saying that the conference officially started with the inauguration by President Obasanjo on the

By Emmanuel Bello, Reporter (Abuja)

21st of February 2005.

General IBM Haruna (rtd) from Adamawa state also noted that with the three months time limit, the whole proceedings and its scope of reference have been "circumscribed." He observed that by this, the confab may not have "a free hand" in handling the issues.

Reacting to the various submissions by conferees who shared the view that the time was not sufficient, the secretary of the conference, Rev. Fr. Mathew Hassan Kukah, said that there was no use in delegates bothering themselves with the allocated time, noting that if there is need for more time, they could be given. He said that experience in the past shows that events of the confab's nature got more time. "The

Delegates urged to revisit local govt system

Delegates to the ongoing constitutional reform conference have been enjoined to revisit the issue of local government

From Lawal Ibrahim Katsina, Correspondent (Katsina)

system in the country and address it based on cultural parcularities and the ethical norms of various communities throughout the country.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in Katsina, former commissioner for commerce in the state, Alhaji Shehu Kaikai, traced the problems encountered in local government administration to the implementation of a formula that is unworkable because of the differences in religion, culture as well as traditional norms and values.

The former commissioner who enjoined the delegates to propose a constitutional amendment in that regard,

said it's only the reflection of there variables in the treatment of grassroots issues that this country will have a stable system of local government that will stand the test of time.

Said he, "the former Native Authority (NA), system succeeded because of its appreciation of both religious, cultural and traditional values as such outside the communist world the NA system emerged the best system of administration ever.

He opined that decentralizing the system with effective measures of control and supervision, society remains the only alternative towards a transparent and responsive local government administration that will satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of respective communities and state.

...reject no-go areas

Some delegates, have objected to the "no go" areas prescribed by President Olusegun Obasanjo in his inaugural address last week.

Some delegates representing Adamawa, Abia, Benue, Bayelsa, Borno, Delta and I bonyi states who made their position, known while speaking on the Hausa service of the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC), monitored in Abuja yesterday, said that they do not support the issue of "no go" areas.

General Victor Malu (rtd), from Benue state said that he does not see any reason for attending the conference if some important issues were untouchable.

He said "I don't see any reason for coming here if there are matters that are not touchable."

Hajiya Zainab Maina representing women group said "if it is true that this

conference is organized for people to express their views, I see no reason for "no go" areas."

According to her, everybody should be allowed to express his mind for the benefit of the entire people of the country, and argued that nobody has been praying for the disunity of the country because according to her, no section could survive without the other.

But according to Shehu Sani who is a delegate representing human rights activists he did not see any reason or gain in wasting time deliberating on the president's speech.

Shehu Sani, a civil society delegate said, "we should have concentrated on vital issues of national interest rather than wasting our time deliberating the president's speech, or who will start talking what to eat or drink."



L-R: Peter Adeyemi, Salihu Lukman, Emma Ugboaja all NLC delegates discussing during the sitting of the National Political Reform Conference held in Abuja yesterday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Our Branch Network continues to **GROW** to serve you better



We are now in **Gombe** and **Kantin Kwari (Kano)**.



Intercity Bank Plc

1, Intercity Bank Street, Plot C 20, Mogadishu City Centre, Off Ahmadu Bello Way,
P. M. B. 2392, Tel: +234 62 240344-7 (4 lines), Fax: +234 62 240348,
E-mail: info@intercitybank.com. Website: www.intercity.com.

BRANCHES:

- * ABUJA (MAITAMA) * ABUJA (MUSE) * ABUJA (NASS) * APAPA * BALOGUN * BAUCHI * BIDA * GOMBE * GUSAU * IKARA * KADUNA MAIN
- * KADUNA SOUTH * KANO * KANTIN KWARI * KATSINA * MAIDUGURI * MINNA * PORT HARCOURT * SOKOTO * VICTORIA ISLAND * YABA * ZARIA

- Totaly At Your Service!

Soliloquy

WITH
A. B. Ahmed
dahmedia@canada.com

Opinion

ANPP's travails

Now that we have become fed up with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), to opt for its complete annihilation in order to clear the national building site for the purpose of establishing a fresh foundation to erect our new democracy upon, the obvious next challenge is to identify and anoint one of our existing registered political parties, to bestow the mantle of new ruling party on it in 2007. Sounds simple and straightforward enough doesn't it? Alas, there are many small and major obstacles on the way to the realisation of even such a simple goal.

The natural choice for this mantle of new ruling party is as obvious and as plain to see as the noses on our faces. Even before the PDP showed its monstrous hidden face in the 2003 general elections, all of us knew that there was one political party and one only in the nation, which could conceivably challenge the rampaging PDP effectively, and stand between us and a one-party dictatorship hiding in the garb of a democratic tree and fair player. The All Nigeria Peoples Party (then known simply as the All Peoples Party-APP) had not only won enough votes in the 1999 elections to seize firm control of nine states, all of them reassuringly in the conservative North, but also to offer unspoken but nonetheless solid reassurance to all Nigerians that no mob of over-ambitious and greedy adventurers could suddenly impose a radical yet real one-party state on us, constitutionally, right under the nose of a reasonably powerful opposition party whose roots are firmly entrenched in Northern Nigeria.

Alas, and to everybody's surprise however, our supposed defense against one-party dictatorship not only turned out to be completely satisfied to remain in its secondary and subordinate position in national power sharing, but

to become gradually more fixated on just being led by the nose by its nine state governors in hand at that time [who had become its own internal dictators by virtue of their access to power and material resources], than in making any determined move to snatch national power from the increasingly lawless PDP, as the 2003 elections approached. Apparently becoming hopelessly disorganised and shorn of all future national aspiration and ambition to ever confront the PDP in open electoral battle for national power in 2003 or ever after, since it was in no way bound by the PDP's power-shift internal arrangement and could therefore broaden its national presence and appeal in any way it saw fit, including shrewdly adopting the power-shift option itself, the entire ANPP as a political party suddenly shrank back into its regional core enclave in the North, from which redoubt it desperately fought a defensive battle in 2003, in which, far from struggling for national power with the PDP, it only sought to cling to the nine states which it already held. To nobody's surprise, it only managed to emerge severely bruised and with a loss of two states (Kogi and Kwara) from that coward's token resistance to PDP hegemony.

Yet, not only was it grateful to have escaped almost complete demolition (like its other regional but also totally tribal counterpart, the Alliance for Democracy-AD- in Yorubaland which lost all but one of its six states to the PDP tsunami), it began a futile and face-saving legal battle with the PDP in the election petition tribunals which nobody really regarded as a serious challenge to the PDP's *de facto* electoral rout and rape of Nigeria in 2003. Even those of its governors who survived the PDP deluge were not too publicly vociferous or enthusiastic about opposing the triumphant ruling juggernaut, and the job of loyal opposition to what had

become a virtual one-party state in the nation fell inexorably on Nigerian labour and the Nigerian press.

Now, one thing which has perpetually puzzled me about the inexplicable shyness of the ANPP in the struggle for national political power since 1999 is the question: exactly what kind of political pedigree do these ANPP leaders and governors think that they represent and stand for in today's Nigeria? Can this jejune and spineless handful of ANPP leaders and state governors truly see itself as representing that legendary fighting spirit of the political founding fathers of Northern Nigeria whose courage, savvy and dogged political determination won and retained national power so firmly for the North that it was all the other regions and tribes which trembled with sudden malaria when they came face to face with the North in the political arena, back in the not so distant days of yore? Or are these spineless and self-centered ANPP governors actually the miscegenated offspring of a new North which has become a true parasite, without any strength beyond what its regional military officers can forcefully shoot their way into obtaining for the North in military *coups d'etat*?

Has the easy fare of unearned booty which the northern military provided so cheaply for the so-called political leaders of Northern Nigeria for three decades so much turned our political leaders into softies and *ajebotas* that they are no longer capable of leading us to battle in a political arena whose only requirements are the deployment of ideas in free, open and fair competition for our own legitimate share of the national cake?

This is the reason why the ANPP cannot metamorphose into a winning national party, even by astute political negotiation at this juncture, unless it jettisons its albatrosses like Buhari who, though they may be useful for regional appeal, are of absolutely no use in weaving a fabric strong enough to hold a national political load. If the ANPP doubts me, let them convince Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida to be their presidential candidate in 2007 and see what kind of magic a smart, charismatic, and powerful leader can contribute to the national acceptability of a party, especially in this season of *anomie* when all hope seems to be lost in the urgent search for a leader strong enough to both destroy the PDP monster for us, as well as provide us with credible leadership for a virile and new national ruling party.

Dismantling business bottlenecks?

The National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) on which the current economic reform agenda anchors, aims at building a new Nigeria of sustainable economic development, poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. NEEDS calls forth the imperative for public-private sectors collaboration under the aegis of Better Business Initiative (BBI) in dismantling various obstacles to business efficiency. It aims at positioning the private sector as the engine of economic growth and development by generating competitiveness roadmaps and removing business bottlenecks.

Nigerian business environment has become a paradox akin to the biblical parable of evil vineyard with choicest vines but which bore thorns and sour grapes. Nigeria has all it takes (human and material resources) to become the largest and strongest economy in Africa, nay, one of the leading economies in the world, but unfortunately, it is one of the world's weakest economies with lost decades of development. There has been slow economic growth. Manufacturing sector has been stagnant and so there are few jobs for the fast growing urban population. Central to the failure of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria is the bottlenecks that characterise its operation. There are the constraints of multiple taxation, poor access to and high cost of funds, poor infrastructure, inadequate physical security, weak enforcement of contracts

By Ignatius Orisewezie

etc. These factors and many others deter foreign investments and induced many indigenous investors to take their money and skills abroad. Our hostile business environment has indeed resulted in the nation's over dependence on oil and emphasis on traditional sector such as Agriculture and trading.

If the NEEDS' ambitious projection of seven million jobs to be created in 2007, is to be appreciated beyond the realm of rhetorics, there is also the need to make it easier for the private enterprises to operate. We need to research into the complex procedures that constitute fundamental obstacles and hindrances to businesses and vibrant economy. We need to go all out to dismantle every form of impediments to business efficiency and growth. This is the objective of the Better Business Initiative two day confab scheduled for April 19-20, at the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

Better Business Initiative is a network of Nigerian private sector and civil society working group partnering with the Nigerian Investments promotion Commission to undertake evidence/research-based economic policy advocacy, to remove hindrances to business operations and to improve corporate competitiveness. The working group consists of the African Institute of Applied Economics (secretariat of BBI), Lagos Business School, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Nigerian Economic Summit Group and Human Rights Law Services in collaboration with the Nigerian Investments Promotion Commission.

As the group come together to showcase their

research findings on how to dismantle business bottlenecks and best business practices, participants will be availed of new innovations methodology that would add value to the productive sector. They will also be availed of business bottlenecks removal strategy. All these will make our business environment more enabling for corporate prosperity.

The Better Business Initiative confab which is expected to attract the high and the mighty in public and private sectors, including the Minister of Finance, the Senate President, the CBN Governor, the Economic Adviser to the President, Senior Special Assistant on Due Process, stands to provide a veritable platform for private sector operators to chart their competitiveness roadmaps. They will use the opportunity to point out to the nation's economic team, their constraints to business efficiency for adoption by government.

Hopefully, at the end of the dialogue, government will find it imperative to simplify business procedures and make commercial transactions less daunting. It will find it imperative to reform obsolete laws that govern business operations and modify the ways government works to enhance public service delivery. The Business Dialogue is therefore a wonderful initiative with a golden opportunity which every private sector operator must not allow to slip by and should be supported by all and sundry in this moment of quest to break out of poverty trap.

Orisewezie, a Public Affairs Analyst, writes from Abuja.

"It will find it imperative to reform obsolete laws that govern business operations and modify the ways government works, to enhance public service delivery."

"If the ANPP doubts me, let them convince Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida to be their presidential candidate in 2007 and see what kind of magic a smart, charismatic, and powerful leader can contribute to the national acceptability of a party."



YOUR LETTERS

Gombe: Goje's critics misfired

For sometime now, I have been reading with dismay, critics of Governor Danjuma Goje in some of our national dailies.

I am not a government official or a relation of the governor but rather I am a bonafide citizen of Gombe and an admirer of the indefatigable chief executive based on his antecedents and numerous achievements so far recorded within this short period of his assumption of office.

I don't want to mention names. There are those who are against the establishment of university in the state. They argued that what Goje should have done was to revive all the secondary and primary schools in the state.

These people have forgotten the monumental development the university will bring to the state.

It is right now on record that, Goje since assumption of power has done better than all the previous governors of the state put together.

For those who do not know, Goje has repaired all township roads, awarded contract for the construction of Tunfure Liji road Phase I and the renovation of hospitals, including the famous specialist hospital in Gombe. Still on healthcare, a school of health and midwifery has been

established coupled with the facts that all clinics and dispensaries have been given a face-lift by the Goje administration. To fight crime, a number of vehicles were given to the police in the state recently.

He knows the importance of traditional rulers, the royal fathers across the state were given very expensive limousines to enhance their prestige.

To solve the perennial water problem, water tankers were provided in the metropolis while efforts are being made to make Dadin Kowa water project come alive very soon.

At present negotiations

are going on over the establishment of airport for the state. To ease the petrol problem of the inhabitants a NNPC mega station will also be set up in the state.

One will continue to rollout a catalogue of achievements of Governor Goje but for the constraint of space here.

In a nutshell all detractors of the Governor should abandon their myopic tendencies and join hands with the governor to make Gombe great.

I believe any right thinking person will agree that the governor has done tremendously well.

I therefore doff my hat for the action governor and urged him to carry on the good job.

Inuwa Abubakar,
No 29 Mafaras Street,
Trikania Kaduna.

Open letter to Comptroller of Customs

Let me use this medium to call on Customs Comptroller General, Jacob Jang Buba to please rectify the badges of rank of Nigerian Customs Service.

These ranks were tempered with during the tenure of past management of Customs under Alhaji A. A. Mustapha. Historically, the Nigeria Customs Service always had badges of ranks similar to other sister para military organizations and sometimes the Nigeria police.

But the whole thing was tempered with, after some changes were made to some ranks. Example of such ranks is that of Inspector of Customs who when promoted to the next rank, needs to wear superintendent II.

But what they now wear is old generation of rank of Senior Inspector of Customs (SIC).

This development has made the officer who attains the ranks of Inspector to be looked down by his equivalent in other security outfit. The officer of rank of Inspector to wear the rank of superintendent II with degree as qualification does not Augur well to officer who stay for some years in that rank.

Its in this direction, one needs to appeal to present management of Customs under the leadership of Comptroller General Jacob Jang Buba to do something about this distortion in badges of rank of officers.

Also level playing ground should be made for officers to continue in furthering

their studies to meet the needs of present digitilise Customs Service for enhanced performance in economic development of Nigeria.

We do hope that early release promotion of officers would be another incentive, just like what the C. G. Customs is doing to the department.

We believe officers would live up to the expectation of the C. G. Blue print of transforming the present Customs which he has promised Nigerians of dedicated, loyal, committed and hardworking Customs that the society would be proud to associate, and support in achieving the set objective of service deliverance.

Bala Nayashi
Yashi Road, Lokoja

Gov Ibrahim, dissolve this cabinet

When the present government of Alhaji Ibrahim Idris came into office, the people of the State believe that past mistakes would be redress by the administration and allow for about dividend of democracy.

Governor Ibrahim Idris did not waste time in constituting the present cabinet to help him articulate his laudable programme to move the State forward like other state that have made

The present cabinet as constituted has not met the expectation of the generality of the people of state, hence allowing the State Chief Executive doubling in other area as Commissioner.

Mention could be made with few of the Commissioners who are making impact, in their respective ministries but majority of them did not know and are not keeping pace with the accelerated moves of Governor Ibrahim Idris. Its on record that most of the

Commissioners did not know their responsibility to the people of the State.

Recently one of the Commissioner was caught with student scholarship meant for their welfare. Hence the need for quick dissolution of the State Cabinet to inject fresh blood that would keep pace with yearning and aspiration of the State Governor Alh. Ibrahim Idris.

The people of the State would not fold their hands and see some inept people

saddled with the responsibility of moving the State forward found wanting and remain mute. Although the bulk stops at Governors table, we would continue to point out areas of concentration that needs urgent attention of the Governor.

Its in this direction that we are calling on the State Governor Alh. Ibrahim Idris to hasten in rising up to occasion by dissolving the entire cabinet to ensure speedy development progress of State, we rest our case.

Nma Baba Eggan,
Lokoja, Kogi State.

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



**MINISTRY OF FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) UNIT
MINISTER'S OFFICE**

MFCT Secretariat, Kapital Road, Area 11, PMB 24, Garki, Abuja Nigeria.
Tel: (09) 314 1295, 314 2371, Fax: (09) 314 3859

**LIST OF PREQUALIFIED COMPANIES FOR THE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)**

To ensure rapid development of plots in the Central Business District, the MFCT sought and obtained approval from the President to get the private sector involved in an Accelerated Development Scheme. This Scheme is to be operated within the recently approved policy of granting approvals for development of structures of six to twenty five (6 – 25) floors in accordance with the Master Plan and in strict adherence to originally designated land use and development control guidelines.

The Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) placed adverts in the newspapers for developers to express interest in this development. The following list enumerates the shortlisted and prequalified Companies that have paid the ₦1million (one million) development lease levy for this scheme:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. MEDITERRANEAN SUITES AND RESTAURANTS | 42. DABO MOTORS LIMITED |
| 2. EWEKE RESOURCES LIMITED | 43. NEMMACOL NIGERIA LTD |
| 3. ALVITA NIGERIA LIMITED | 44. TECHNOPLUS GLOBAL RESOURCES LIMITED |
| 4. BROWNSTONE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED | 45. SAK RESOURCES LIMITED |
| 5. MGSL MORTGAGE BANKERS | 46. THE HEIRLOOM HOTEL AND RESORT LIMITED |
| 6. INTERTECH DESIGN AFFILIATES LIMITED | 47. PROPERTIES AND ESTATE LIMITED |
| 7. STANDARD CONSTRUCTION LIMITED | 48. NORTHGATE LIMITED |
| 8. KADAL CONSOLIDATED COMPANY LIMITED | 49. MATTERSON PROPERTIES LIMITED |
| 9. STANDARD REALTY LIMITED | 50. UNITS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES |
| 10. KANHANZ NIGERIA LIMITED | 51. SHAP HOMES LIMITED |
| 11. PURE TECHNICAL SERVICES LIMITED | 52. LOWE LINTAS |
| 12. INFODATA 2000 PLUS LIMITED | 53. SIGMA ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED |
| 13. CADENCE PROPERTIES LIMITED | 54. HEZABOL NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 14. ESTATE DEAL NIGERIA LIMITED | 55. PRO-LINE W.A LTD |
| 15. ERUDITE CONSULTING AND INVESTMENT NIG. LIMITED | 56. JOHNSON PROPERTIES LIMITED |
| 16. CHACHANGI AIRLINE LIMITED | 57. P&P CONSTRUCTION & COMMERCIAL CO. LIMITED |
| 17. HOUSING ALLIANCE LIMITED | 58. COSCHARIS MOTORS LIMITED |
| 18. VIENDUBOND CONTRACTEURS NIGERIA LIMITED | 59. PINNACLE INVESTMENTS LIMITED |
| 19. DIPLOMAT INVESTMENT LIMITED | 60. MAGNUM MINING COMPANY LIMITED |
| 20. SCC NIGERIA LIMITED | 61. YMCA CONSULTANTS |
| 21. KALILA NIGERIA LIMITED | 62. COULSON PROPERTIES LIMITED |
| 22. CANAL INVESTMENT LIMITED | 63. AMSALCO INDUSTRY LIMITED |
| 23. WAECO LIMITED | 64. MENDS SPECIALIST HOSPITAL |
| 24. ASCON OIL COMPANY LIMITED | 65. IMANI AND SONS LIMITED |
| 25. OCEANVIEW PLAZA DEVELOPMENT LIMITED | 66. MASHAD GLOBAL SERVICES LIMITED |
| 26. RDI NIGERIA WEST AFRICA LIMITED | 67. PYRAMID ESTATES LIMITED |
| 27. SALMAD LIMITED | 68. SHELTER CONCEPTS NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 28. MAITUTA NIGERIA LIMITED | 69. RABSODIQ VENTURES NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 29. SAFMUR INVESTMENT LIMITED | 70. MOGABS NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 30. INTERGLOBAL LIMITED | 71. MG PROPERTIES NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 31. A.S.A.NAGERO AND SONS | 72. MERCURY INVESTMENT INTERNATIONAL LIMITED |
| 32. CORPORATE IDEALS INSURERS LIMITED | 73. SANBELL INVESTMENT LIMITED |
| 33. PARTICIPANT PROPERTIES LIMITED | 74. LAIS CONSULT NIGERIA LIMITED |
| 34. HAMMOUD AND SAIDI INTERNATIONAL NIG. LTD. | 75. FIRST ATLANTIC REALTY COMPANY LIMITED |
| 35. PML NIGERIA LIMITED | 76. ASADA GROUP LIMITED |
| 36. SYSTEM PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM LTD | 77. DANTATA AND SAWOE |
| 37. IRS AIRLINES | 78. HERITAGE PRESS LIMITED |
| 38. D&B LIMITED | 79. NASARA INTEGRATED VENTURES LIMITED |
| 39. SAMFEL GLOBAL NETWORK LIMITED | 80. EM-N (NIG.) LIMITED |
| 40. MILLER CARONI INVESTMENT LIMITED | 81. GAREWA RESOURCES (NIG) LIMITED |
| 41. INTERLAND SKILLS LIMITED | 82. MAZ LIMITED |

The Companies above will be informed in due course when to collect their accelerated development agreements from the Ministry. If you have questions, please address them to:
Mr. Mohammed Aliyu
PPP Unit
Minister's Office
Room 335
MFCT

News

Police arrest 6 over farmers, normads clash in Kogi

Six people have been arrested in Kogi state by the police following a clash between the Normads and farmers in Ibaji local government area of the state in which about two hundred cows were reportedly killed.

The police public relations officer, Mr. Ambrose Igbokwe, confirmed to *Daily Trust* that the suspects were arrested at Ibaji and brought to the state C.I.D in Lokoja on the orders of the state commissioner of police, Mr. Barnide Thomas.

According to Mr. Igbokwe, investigation into their case is still in progress.

Briefing newsmen on the incident, the state chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, Alhaji Abubakar Ibrahim Jalido, said reports reaching him indicated that the farmers were aggrieved by the destruction of their farm corps by cows. He said the farmers, who were the host community in turn took the laws into their hands by mobilising themselves to embark on indiscriminate killing of cows in about five Fulani settlements in the area.

Alhaji Abubakar who described the case of the affected cattle rearers as pathetic, said more than two hundred cows were reported butchered or shot to death

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe,
Correspondent Lokoja

by the farmers whose wives and children allegedly carried the meet to their respective houses. He said some of the dead cows were left to rot, while many of the victims fled Abaji to Idah for safety of their lives and property.

The chairman, Abuja

chapter of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Alhaji Mohammed Dodo Oroji, visited some of the Fulani victims at Idah on Monday to commiserate with them.

He urged the state government to find a lasting solution to the frequent clashes between the Nomads and farmers, especially in the local government area. And also appealed to the two communities to strive to live peacefully together for mutual benefits.

Dariye: PLHA urged to investigate allegations

*Groups condemn warrants of arrest

The Plateau state House of Assembly has again been urged to conduct thorough investigation into the alleged offences of Governor Joshua Dariye.

The Civil Liberties Organisation and Christian Foundation for Social Justice equally made the call in a statement jointly signed by Steve Aluko Daniel and Joseph Sangosanya.

"We hold that the recent international warrant of arrest which declared him wanted, guaranteed his arrest and mandates all law officers to arrest him only points to the fact that Chief Dariye must clear himself of all these allegations."

The organisations noted that this was the time for the state Assembly to clear many of its perceived differences from the beginning of the crisis as it bordered on morale, integrity and legal competence

From Rakiya A. Muhammad,
Correspondent Jos

of Chief Dariye to continue as governor of the state.

They noted that a thorough investigation by the house would either clear the governor or indict him of the alleged offences. "This we believe is the only way the House can be seen to be playing its constitutional role as authentic representatives of the people of the state and upholding their cherished oaths of office, but to do otherwise will amount to contempt of the mandate given by the people of the state.

Meanwhile two organisations, the Global Network for Freedom and Good Governance as well as the Youth Movement for Democracy, have condemned the

The national President of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Bayer Dzeremo has said that local governments in Nigeria failed to perform according to expectations of the people because they receive 'shoddy' treatment from the state and federal government and are discriminated upon by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Dzeremo made this assertion at a press briefing organised by the office of

Why LGs fail to perform

-ALGON president

By Anas Galadima, Reporter

the special adviser to the president on ethnics, good governance and human rights, as part of the awareness campaign for the upcoming seminar on leadership for local government councils.

According to him, the local government, despite being the direct link to the people, is still unable to deliver good governance to the people because of the limited resources appropriated for them each year.

He said despite the fact that the local governments get the least budgetary allocation among the three tiers of government, the actual amount that reaches them still falls short of what was appropriated.

This, according to him, limits the ability of the local governments to deliver the dividends of democracy to the people in the grass-roots.

In other parts of the world, he said the local governments play an important role in the development of their countries.

"I was in China last year and I went to one of their lo-

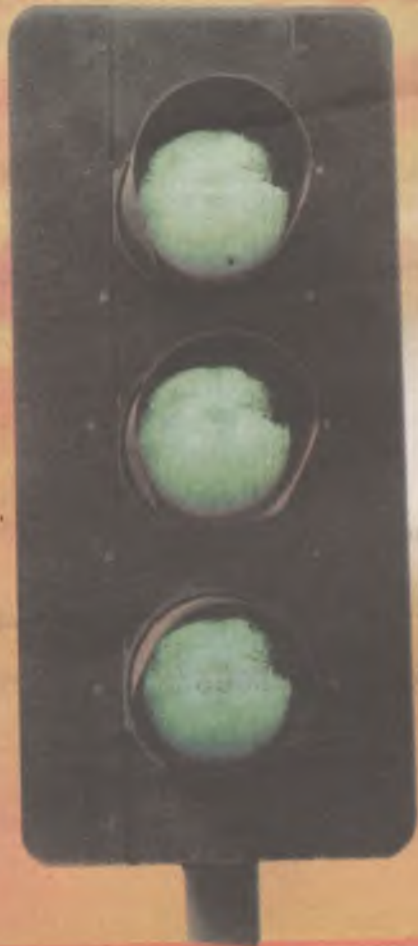
cal governments. In one local government (Nantong) in China, they have a budget of over \$6 billion. They are entrenched in the constitution and are given full power in the constitution but that is not the case in Nigeria", he said.

He emphasised that the National Assembly has a very important role to play in determining the rightful place of the local governments. And further criticised the operation of joint accounts for local governments and state governments, saying it does not favour the local government.

Also, speaking at the press briefing, the director general of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC, Mr. Emmanuel Akomaye, said the EFCC decided to participate in the seminar because it is an effort aimed at preventing corruption.

According to him, although the EFCC is a crime fighting commission, it considers it important to participate in this seminar as a crime prevention effort.

www.inlandbank.com



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

GO ahead! Be our Partner!

We've just one **Goal**; to serve you better.

That's the legacy of Inland Bank.



RC 112876

Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.

Totally Devoted to You.

Corporate Head Office: Plot 19/23 Isa Yuguda House, Jos Road, PMB 050, Bauchi, Nigeria. Tel +234(0)77-542701, 542586, 542000, 541076, Fax +234(0)77-543401

Abuja, Abuja CBD, Abuja, Asokoro, Asokoro Road (PH), Asokoro, Asokoro Wharf, ATBU, Azara, Bauchi, Benin, Bridgehead, Birnin-Kebbi, Boko, Boko, Calabar, Damaturu, Dutse, Gboko, Gombe, Ibrahim Tafwa (Kano), Ikoru, Ikoru-Abasi, Ilesha, Jos, Kaduna, Kaduna South, Kalahe, Kalahe, Kogi, Lagos, Lafia, Maiduguri, Marikawa, Maitama Way (Kano), Monday Market (Maiduguri), Namdi Adilwe International Airport, Opebi, Owerri, Onitsha, Potiskum, Ramonni (PH), Sabon Gari, TinCan Island, Uyo, Victoria Island, Warri.

With

INTERCELLULAR

Bounti

CARDS

GSM calls as low as

Available in 3 denominations

N12.00 /min.



Bounti Tariff Table/ Validity

BOUNTI 4000	N18/min for 30 days
BOUNTI 6000	N15/min for 30 days
BOUNTI 8000	N12/min for 30 days

AVAILABILITY

Denominations of the Bounti Card are available in all Intercellular offices and dealership outlets.

intercellular[®]
you and i

Opinion

Gov Mu'azu and human owls!

A writer once accurately observed that, if critics were exportable commodity, Nigeria would take the document position in world trade. This observation, though too hyperbolically harsh, appears to be gaining increasing accuracy. There are people in this country who take habitual pleasure in excoriating others just for the sake of playing to the gallery, but not because they have practicable superior ideas to move our country forward. Even more ridiculous, this class of armchair critics takes the moral high ground and imposes on themselves the task of speaking for the people or the masses.

One recent example of criticism for the sake of cheap popularity was a column by Mallam Adamu Adamu of the *Daily Trust* Newspaper, who thinks he is more intelligent than the people of Bauchi State in assessing the achievements of the Government of Adamu Mu'azu. Although Governor Mu'azu's record of achievement finds no comparison in the country, Mallam Adamu Adamu believes that the majority opinion, which hails the Governor's performance, can go to hell. Wearing the apparel of superior morality and wisdom, the columnist spared no effort in attacking Governor Mu'azu's impressive record with incredible cynical energy. Admittedly,

By Jabirus Bilyaminu

Adamu Adamu is a citizen of Bauchi State, but that does not give him the license to take the Mu'azu administration to the cleaners on the grounds of sentiments.

As a respected columnist of, Mallam Adamu Adamu should lead the way in the moral argument to judge your fellow men fairly. But willfully using his column to wantonly reduce Governor Mu'azu's achievements to nonsense is inconsistent with the ethical standard a man of his religiosity and seeming superior morally and knowledge. His arguments are as unconvincing as they are preposterous.

For example, he largely limited his attacks to the "excessive" costs of the projects the Mu'azu administration has executed to promote the social, economic and material progress of the people of Bauchi State. What, however, the cleric-cum-columnist failed to understand is that quality comes with price. If you want to execute projects of standard, you have to be ready to spend good money. Unfortunately for Mallam Adamu Adamu, his motives easily come out in the wash. He failed to tell his readers whether the projects he so criticized are relevant or desirable in the promotion of the welfare of the people of Bauchi State.

One would have sympathized

with Adamu Adamu's arguments if he had dismissed the projects executed by the Mu'azu administration as wasteful and irrelevant. It seems he belongs to the class of critics who feel the only way to remain relevant or attract public attention and admiration is to criticize others, regardless of how well they have performed. As far as the columnist is concerned the incredible approval rating of the Government of Mu'azu by the electorate of Bauchi State is irrelevant. It seems Adamu wants to be on popularity contest with the Governor, the only difference being that, while Alhaji Mu'azu uses the ballot box to test his affection, the columnist chooses newspaper pages to solicit for popularity.

Living in the fear of obscurity, Adamu Adamu is now in the habit of courting controversy. And his only effective way, perhaps, of wriggling out of obscurity, is to look for someone to attack in his regular column. This time Governor Adamu Mu'azu was the target of his literary aggression. Deliberately closing his eyes to the record of outstanding performance by the Mu'azu administration, Mallam Adamu must have thought that even nitpicking could achieve his purpose of pathological addiction of publicity. The ideas that only our own hero is good and that all others deserve no merit is in conflict with objec-

tivity and fair judgment, which Adamu threw to the dogs.

In his zeal to see Bauchi State moves forward rapidly, Governor Adamu Mu'azu also takes over the completion of federal projects, including rural electrification, and later seeks for compensation. Other sluggish leaders would have allowed the bureaucracy in the release of federal funds for projects to slow their states down. His commitment to the development of his state remains incomparable in Nigeria and evidence of his achievements exists incontestably even for the casual observer.

However, it is strange why any true sons of Bauchi State may wish to throw a spanner into the works of Governor Mu'azu's achievements. While millions of people of Bauchi State acknowledge the achievements of Governor Adamu Mu'azu, incurable critics like Adamu Adamu see nothing good in what the Bauchi State administration is doing. Bauchi, under Governor Mu'azu, is a resounding example of where the dividend of democracy finds practical expression.

Condemning Mu'azu's achievements merely because of Adamu's alleged inflation of contract costs is misleading and diversionary and meant to hide his cynical motives. In fact, Adamu Adamu is like the critics who bear hostility towards their targets with an intensity that

admits of no virtue. The *Daily Trust* columnist appears so obsessed by his own conviction of moral superiority over those he seeks to bring down.

In his ego trip of puritanical pretension, Adamu Adamu is not prepared to extol the virtues of others. Instead of contributing positive ideas of how to move Bauchi State forward, he has chosen to take the moral high ground, wantonly attacking the integrity of a governor who is working honestly for the progress of his people. Surely, Governor Mu'azu is a good example of a leader who came into government with the pure motivation to serve and not for pecuniary profits.

Leaders who work hard and honestly to better the lives of their people should be appreciated, and not excoriated for the sake of cheap popularity by those who seek attention and admiration through savage criticisms. There is no suggestion that leaders should not be criticized where they are wrong.

However, criticisms not influenced by fairness and objectivity, are counter-productive to the prosperity of any society. The greatest incentive to producing good leaders is to appreciate their virtue of hard work and selfless service to the people. Probably, Adamu Adamu can equal Governor Mu'azu's

commitment to public welfare, but it unlikely if the columnist can ever surpass it. The ridiculous attempt by the columnist to obscure the positive record of performance formidably established by Government Mu'azu of Bauchi State can never succeed, as the electorates are ever ready to jump to the defence of a man who is proudly serving them.

Governor Adamu Mu'azu should not let himself be diverted by petty criticisms, which purpose is not public interest but self-publicity.

In their ostentatious concern for the masses, most of these armchair critics harbour dark motives. One of the great wise men of the 21st Century, Joseph Hall, aptly captures the true character of cynics, the tribe to which Adamu Adamu rightly belongs. According to Joseph Hall, "cynics are like the human owl, which sees more in dark than in light."

Their mission in this world is to overlook the good side of life and emphasize the dim aspects instead. And anything in the extreme, including pathological cynicism, is harmful to the interest of the society. Another wise man also observed that it is pointless arguing with extremists. In his view, extremists don't hold opinions, instead, their opinions hold them!

Bilyaminu writes from,
No. 11B, Emir road, Bauchi

Nigeria: Elite hegemony and our future

The state of the nation can mildly be put as pathetic and dangerously drifting in a cruising speed to the state of despair and I not addressed to total collapse and disintegration. There were in those years some degree of fairness, justice, public trust, morality and overall economic growth and development. We started as independent nations on the same socio-economic footing with countries like,

Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Iran, these countries now stand far ahead of us. China though quite ahead of Nigeria at independence yet was able to surmount some of the inhibitions to greatness. The Chinese economy has been witnessing unprecedented growth since the late 70's, with an average growth of 9.3 percent. This development translates in other sectors like technology, education, public health and transport. Before 1988 China did not have dual carriage way at all by end of 2004 there exist 25,000 Kilometers of highly qualitative and well constructed dualised highways, which ranks second in the world. In the same vein the rail system in India is so developed that 30 million people patronize the rail system on daily basis. India do manufacture Motor vehicles, have a nuclear capability and developed capacity to manufacture software for export. China in spite of its population ranks first in fixed telephone and second in Internet users. The need to draw such inference is necessitated by the fact that China and India are the most populous nations respectively, and they share some common traits with Nigeria. First the three are heterogeneous societies, two

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, three all the three suffered from colonial bondage and lastly they are all developing nations.

Political dynamics and associated intricacies have further under-developed Nigeria. In this sphere, I am also necessitated to draw another inference with Argentina, Bolivia, Georgia and more recently the Ukrainian experience at democracy, closer to have the Niger Republic 2004 general elections had vindicated the resolve of the people to exercise political choice with fairness. There were very limited cases of electoral malpractices. The April 2003 Nigerian General elections were widely mired by mal practices leading to wide condemnation from local and international monitors and observers. Every discerning mind can test to the gross electoral fraud that permeated the elections.

This attitude and approach to public issues particularly the political and electoral process must change "all powers come from God, I agree but so does every disease and no one forbids us to summon the physician". "Might does not make right and the duty of obedience is owed only to legitimate powers" Rousseau.

Nigerians should collectively reflect deeply on the two quotations. The younger generations should be more concerned with the dirty politics in play on our land, we must all rise against injustice and oppression like what obtained in other places. The major bane of the Nigerian nation is its selfish elite who are bent on wrecking the boat.

The political process; the sum

total of political activities in Nigeria is in total mess and needs to be overhauled. Party system is characterized by unhealthy competition, lack of party ideology suppression of opposition, to make matters worst the polity is fast drifting to a one party state. The electoral institution that is supposed to be ambivalent is embedded with partisanship. The nomination of electoral officials is done by members of the ruling elite without regards to due process and the nominees are card carrying members of the ruling party in both state and federal levels as the case may be. With this arrangement you don't expect a fair deal. The use of thugs and thuggery in politics is the order of the day.

One cannot imagine the use of security forces meant to ensure observance of law and order to rig elections in favour of the ruling party.

In the last 2003 general elections all elected officials had returned to their offices with the exception of few that had fallen out of favour with the powers that be. It is an open secret that electoral offices including a local government counselor are selected in government houses. The people have no input on who represent them.

Some state Assemblies never initiated a single law/policy from 1999 to date. They only wait for whatever the executive sent for their endorsements and in return receive some gratification. The federal legislature is a mere robber stamp. It is no secret that the leadership of the Senate and House of Reps did not win elections. The judiciary has eroded away any semblance of hope from the minds of the

general public. Nigerian legal system has become a haven for promotion of the interest of the establishments. With the nature of our legislative and judicial officials Nigerians are left at the mercy of corrupt, self seeking and merciless executive officials.

Poor, corrupt and insensitive leadership breeds indolent, low morale and crime prone followership. Poverty and illiteracy have taken toll in our society. The educational system especially in the north has collapsed, the cumulative impact of the above translates to upsurge in crime and criminal activities, armed robbery, money laundering, prostitution, drug abuse, murders and assassinations are the order of the day. The state of infrastructure is in shambles. Take the case of NEP A as an example. A comparative study revealed that South Africa with 28 Million populations generate 40,000 megawatts, Iran with 60 Million populations generate 30,000 megawatts, while Nigeria's power generation capacity is 3,000 megawatts with population of over 120 Million. By 1976

Nigeria had same power generation capacity with Iran but the later continued to expand its generation capacity to its present state, while Nigeria remained stagnant purely due to corruption practices. Late last year the I.C.P.C. rated NEP A and the police as the most corrupt. Supply of healthy water to Nigerian cities has remained a mirage, even in highbrow Asokoro and Maitama in Abuja water supply is far from constant. The same situation obtains in our health, agriculture and transport sectors.

Desert encroachment is another serious problem militating against our collective good. The speed at which desert is taking over our fertile lands is alarming. It is estimated that every year 5kilometres of fertile land is taken over by desert. State governments in the far north belt are not doing much to convert the menace. If nothing tangible is done our food security in few years to come will be in crisis. Collective and concerted approach must be adopted for secured future.

The external debt burden seriously retards economic growth and development. Our external debt was less than \$ 1 billion in the 70s rose to \$30billion in the 80s and continue to hover around \$32billion in the last 15 years not withstanding the fact that several billions of dollars have been spent in servicing the debt. Only late last year in his 2005 budget proposal to the joint sessions of the National Assembly, President Obasanjo announced an increase of over \$1 billion to the external debt portfolio from \$32.9 to \$34billion the explanation given cannot be quantifiable neither can stand rigorous analysis. It is contradictory, the more we service our debt the more we sink deeper into bottomless pool of indebtedness, poverty, disease and underdevelopment.

One cannot just dismiss our numerous diversities, but my contention is that our diversities should be our source of strength. The grass roots or rather the common people go to the same market to shop, the inflationary trend and other forms of exploitation of man by man know no ethno-religious bounds. Our problem is our elites who exploit

our diversities for their economic and political ends. If true federalism is put in place scrambling for favours and patronage will mellow down. more practicable revenue allocation formula be agreed upon invariably that would reduce ethno-religious tensions in the country. Agitations for resource control, domination and marginalisation would have been put to rest.

Nigeria really needs reorganization in all facets of life. The country is lacking in the basics that make up national life. There is absence of patriotism, development plan not adhered to, lack of continuity in policies, undue politicking, lack of proper statistics and record keeping, indolent and undisciplined civil service, absence of living wage, the list is endless. We must therefore collectively accept the grim realities and call for a national conference to discuss our problems and the way out. The effigy tagged political reform conference where members of the said conference are selected by the ruling establishment is far from what we need. This charade will only perpetuate the agenda of the ruling class and further fuel division and hostility among ordinary Nigerians. We need a true national conference, window dressing would lurch us into more serious problems. The earlier the authorities decide to host this conference the better for the nation.

The modalities, composition and agenda to be discussed must be in the interest of our collective good taking our diversity into cognisance.

Yakubu Sani Stores, Block 18 Flat 2, F.H.A Asokoro, Abuja

FATİH UNIVERSITY

ISTANBUL TURKEY

"The bright and the young face of Turkey"

ANY ONE OF THESE RESULTS MUST BE SUBMITTED.

- In the SAT 1, a total score of at least 1000
- In the GCE (General Certificate Education). A level certificate (at least in two subjects)
- In the ACT (America College Test) examination, a minimum score of 21
- An International Baccalaureate Diploma with a diploma score of at least 28

For further information visit to following web address.

Web: www.fatih.edu.tr

E-mail: registrar@fatih.edu.tr or info@nticnigeria.com

Application, documents can be submitted in person to the addresses below:

NIGERIAN TURKISH INTERNATIONAL COLLEGES



NIGERIAN TURKISH INTERNATIONAL COLLEGES ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2005-2006

DATE 26th March 2005

TIME: 10 a.m

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION CENTRES

■ **ABUJA**

Nigerian Turkish Int'l College
Wuse II. Tel: 09-4134731

■ **KANO**

Nigerian Turkish Int'l College
Hotoro Tarauni
Tel: 064-315040

■ **KADUNA**

Nigerian Turkish Intl College
Ungwan Rimi GRA
Tel: 0803 318 1711

■ **LAGOS**

Nigerian Turkish Int'l College
Opebi Road, IKEJA
Tel: 01 7749545

■ **SOKOTO**

Attahiru Bafarawa Institute
SOKOTO

■ **PLATEAU**

Plateau Private School
JOS

■ **RIVERS**

Montessori International School,
PortHacourt
Tel: 084-232048

■ **BORNO**

El-Kanemi College
Maiduguri

■ **BAUCHI**

Saadu Zungur Primary School
Bauchi

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Time of examination: 10.00 A.M Prompt
2. Entry form fee: 2000 Naira
3. Deadline for submission of entry forms: 18th March, 2005
4. Nature of examination: Objective type, examination covers primary school curriculum.
5. Eligibility: Entries are open only to primary 5 & 6 pupils
6. For further information:

1) Visit Our

Web Site: www.nticnigeria.com, www.suratnigeria.com

Email: info@nticnigeria.com, info@suratinigeria.com

11) Any branch of Nigeria Turkish International College in Nigeria

111) Head Master/Mistress of your school.

Trust International

Africa

Chief Imam supports BC mosque exhibition

The chief Imam of the National Mosque in Abuja, Sheikh Musa Mohammed, has corrected impression that the British Mosque posters-an initiative of the British Council- are propaganda by the British government.

He made the correction Monday launching of the British Mosque posters which were results of the British council's programme tagged "Commenting Futures".

"If it was a propaganda, we would have received the information earlier or before coming to the launch. I wouldn't have come if it was propaganda," he said.

He commended the British council for the initiative, adding that the gesture goes to show how the British accommodate other religions.

He enjoined Nigerians to learn from the programme, saying that Nigerians should

By Elkanah Chawai, Reporter (foreign Desk)

not fear of other people's religion, but accommodate diverse religions and people.

He added that the launching of the British Mosque posters will bring the British closer to the Nigerian Urmah, disclosing that another initiative of collaboration between the two will soon reveal itself.

In an address, the editor-in-chief of Media Trust newspaper, Mallam Kabiru Yusuf, commended the British council for giving the opportunity for Muslims to connect through "connecting futures", but added that the scope of participation should be made broader for more people other than journalist to participate.



Chairman National Committee on Hajj, 2005, Professor Aliyu Abubakar Gwandu

Stranded pilgrims get refunds soon-DPA

Pilgrims from Borno and Port Harcourt who were unable to make it to

By Jibril Abubakar, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

Saudi Arabia would be refunded soon. The Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA), has said.

Spokesman for the DPA, Alhaji Umar Bala said the pilgrims would get their money immediately.

It would be recalled that IRS, one of the air carriers for the 2005 Hajj suffered delay as a result of its failures to meet the conditions of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority.

"It is unfortunate. This has not happened to us for a long time, that pilgrims would be left behind", Bala said.

Speaking also on cargo, he

said that the 3747 cargo flight of Kabo is yet to conclude its cargo operation for Kano and Kaduna pilgrims, adding that the IRS air carriers still has 16 lorry load of pilgrims luggage in Saudi Arabia.

While expressing satisfaction over the just concluded Hajj operation, the spokesman said the 2006 airlift would begin earlier.

He said that the screening bay allocated to Nigeria by the Saudi authority facilitated the smooth return journey of the Nigerian Pilgrims.

He appealed that pilgrims should endeavour to go, identify and clear their luggages at various Hajj campuses across the country.

Fresh clashes erupt in Cote d'Ivoire

The United Nations has intervened to halt fighting in Ivory Coast between pro-government fighters and rebels in the main cocoa-growing region.

Some 70 people have been arrested and arms and ammunition seized, UN spokesman Hamadoun Toure told the BBC.

A rebel official said their forces were now on maximum alert.

A buffer zone, patrolled by UN and French peacekeepers, has split the rebel held north from the government controlled south since 2002.

These are the first clashes since last November, when loyalist forces bombed rebel positions in their Bouake headquarters.

"We started fighting with the rebels in Logouale this morning," said Felix Maho, an official with the FLGO militia, which has previously fought alongside the loyalist army.

Rebel New Forces spokesman Sidiki Konate said the peace process was now dead and accused loyalist forces of crossing the buffer zone to attack their positions.

"By these acts of war, [President] Laurent Gbagbo has definitively buried all the mediation efforts of the African Union and the international community," he said in a statement.

There are no reports of any casualties.

"The New Forces' armed forces decree a maximum alert in all their zones and are currently carrying out systematic searches," Mr Konate said.

Logouale is in Ivory Coast's cocoa-producing "Wild West", which has seen

some of the fiercest clashes during the conflict.

Fighting there also spilled over the border into Liberia, which has a similar ethnic make-up to western Ivory Coast.

Ivory Coast is the world's largest producer of cocoa.

Earlier this month, the UN expressed its concern about mounting tension in Ivory Coast and called for swift disarmament.

Sudanese govt to withdraw troops from Darfur

Sudanese vice president, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, reaffirmed Khartoum's commitment on Friday to the withdrawal of government forces from the troubled western region of Darfur.

Speaking in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, Taha said his government had already started to pull back its forces as part of an African Union-backed ceasefire agreement, whereby Khartoum agreed to withdraw troops to lines occupied before it launched a major offensive on 8 December.

"We have started," the vice president told journalists after two hours of talks with AU commission chairman, Alpha Oumar Konare.

The move paves the way for the resumption of peace talks between the government and rebels, according to the AU. "The withdrawal will help facilitate the peace talks to resume," the AU spokesman, Assane Ba, told IRIN.

Taha said a date for the talks between rebels and the government would be announced after the Cairo mini summit on 5 March.

The talks are aimed at

ending a conflict that started in February 2003, when rebels began attacking government targets, claiming that the region was being neglected by Khartoum.

Senior AU officials told IRIN the Sudanese delegation also pledged to show restraint in Darfur, following a recent UN report that said the government, and militias allied to it, had killed, tortured and raped civilians.

The officials also pointed out that the security situation in Darfur had improved after months of violations of the peace agreement, which is monitored by the AU.

The AU reported earlier this month that the security situation in North and South Darfur had deteriorated progressively over the past four months, with unacceptable consequences for the safety of civilians.

"While all sides to the conflict in Darfur were responsible for the situation, the worst perpetrators were the Janjawid-armed militia(s)," Baba Gana Kingibe, the special representative of the chairperson of the AU commission in Sudan, said in a statement. The governor of

North Darfur, Osman Kedir, said the Sudanese government had removed all its Antonov planes from Darfur and would not use them in the area. It had previously been accused of using them to bomb villages.

The UN has described the Darfur situation as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. It estimates that 2.3 million people in the region are reliant on aid to survive - more than a third of Darfur's total population. Approximately 1.85 million people have been displaced from their homes, of whom, 200,000 have fled into Chad.

Tens of thousands of villagers have also been killed or have died of famine and disease since the conflict began two years ago when rebels in Darfur took up arms against the government in February 2003, accusing Khartoum of neglect and oppression.

The Sudanese government tried to quash the rebellion with the help of an Arab militia force, known as the Janjawid. The militias are blamed by human-rights watchdog organisations for most of the atrocities in the region.

Zimbabwean media decry newspaper's closure

Media organisations including the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists have reacted angrily to the closure of yet another independent newspaper, *The Weekly Times*, by the government appointed Media and Information Commission on Thursday.

ZUJ secretary general, Foster Dongozi, said the closure of the newspaper would obviously affect the welfare of journalists employed by the publication. "As a union we do not believe that problems are solved by closing down media publications. MIC behaves like a person who sets his house on fire because there is a snake inside. What we find even more puzzling and reprehensible is that at a time when unemployment is on the increase, there is a sustained effort to shut down media organisations and hence increase destitution in the country."

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Chairperson, Thomas Deve, said his organisation was disturbed by the closure of *The Weekly Times*.

"As a result of the closure of *The Weekly Times*, we will once again start campaigning to challenge these draconian laws. What worries us most is the fact that journalists are finding themselves out of employment," Deve said.

In the meantime, he said MISA would provide financial assistance to the weekly.

The *Weekly Times* Chief Executive Officer, Godfrey Ncube, confirmed to *The Standard* on Sunday that the MIC ordered the closure of his newspaper but indicated that he would "go down fighting".

"It's true that *The Weekly*

Times has been shut down but we have initiated legal action against the closure. We are taking up the matter with the Administrative Court on Monday," Ncube said.

The paper's editor, Gibbs Dube, accused Tafataona Mahoso, the MIC chairperson of being a Zanu PF (the ruling party) apologist. "I am prepared to face Mahoso over this issue," he said.

Burundi voters back constitution

Voters in Burundi have overwhelmingly approved a new power-sharing constitution aimed at ending an 11-year civil war that has claimed 300,000 lives, election officials said.

With just over 60% of ballots counted in Monday's referendum, the first national vote since the small central African country was plunged into chaos in 1993, more than 90% were yes votes, officials said.

Vote counting started slowly because of logistical problems after the nationwide referendum on a constitution aimed at bringing an end to an 11-year civil war that has claimed 300,000 lives.

The independent national electoral commission (CENI) said early on Tuesday that the yes camp was ahead with 90.7% against 9.3% for the no supporters.

Turnout in Monday's referendum was over 87%, CENI chief Paul Ngarambe said. "It's a tally that pleases us, because it means that the Burundians have understood what is at stake in the referendum," he added.

W/African envoys meets new Togolese leader

A delegation of West African leaders has arrived in Togo for their first talks with interim leader Abass Bonfoh.

The talks are expected to focus on presidential elections due in April.

Mr Bonfoh was named as Togo's new president after strong international condemnation of the "coup" which led to Faure Gnassingbe succeeding his father.

After West Africa imposed sanctions, Mr. Faure stepped down on Friday but said he would contest the elections as the candidate of the ruling party. Meanwhile, the man who was originally in line to become president after the death of Gnassingbe Eyadema has said he remains "the constitutional president of Togo".

"I have no other ambition than to organise fair, democratic, transparent presi-

dential elections open to all," former parliamentary speaker Fambare Natchaba Ouattara told French radio.

The presidents of Niger and Mali, Tanja Mamadou and Amadou Toumani Toure respectively, are expected to meet the opposition, as well as Mr Bonfoh.

The opposition have organised several protests since the 'coup'. As they arrived, the police were clearing away the debris after hundreds of opposition supporters took to the streets of the capital, Lome.

The police intervened after protesters gathered on main roads close to the Be area, an opposition stronghold.

The protesters, who threw stones and tried to erect barricades, said the constitution was still being violated.

They called for Mr Natchaba to take over as interim president.

Trust International

Middle East and Asia

Bin Laden calls for attacks inside America

Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has suggested to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a leading US foe in Iraq, that he get involved in attacks inside the United States, a US counter-terrorism official said.

The official, who asked not to be identified, confirmed that "it has been suggested to Zarqawi to involve himself in attacks in the US."

The suggestion came from bin Laden, whose followers are suspected to have carried out the September 11, 2001 attacks against New York and Washington, the official said. The official would not comment on how bin Laden and Zarqawi communicated with each other.

"We know that Zarqawi has his hands full in Iraq, but we do know he has struck before, or parts of his network has been active in Jordan and in Europe and what have you," the official told AFP.

A Jordanian, Zarqawi was sentenced to death in Jordan for the 2002 assassination of a US diplomat Laurence Foley in Amman.

He later gained fame in Iraq as the militant behind a

gory campaign of televised beheadings, car bombings and massacres that have taken a toll on US forces and their Iraqi allies.

In December, bin Laden named Zarqawi "emir" of al-Qaeda in Iraq. The United States has placed a 25 million dollar bounty on both men.

Why bin Laden is turning to Zarqawi's network for attacks on the United States at this time is "an interesting question," said the US official, who declined to comment further.

Al-Qaeda is still "intent on finding ways to circumvent US security enhancements to strike Americans in the homeland," CIA director Porter Goss told Congress earlier this month.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also warned Congress this month that Islamic extremists linked to al-Qaeda were planning attacks on the United States and other countries.

Bin Laden and a handful of his closest lieutenants remain at large, possibly hiding in remote tribal areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

But al-Qaeda has carried out no known attacks in the

United States since September 11, 2001.

And the CIA contends that a fierce global campaign waged by US forces, including a US-led offensive that toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, has dealt "serious blows" to the al-Qaeda organization.

US military officials have said intelligence indicates that al-Qaeda's finances, movements and communications are constrained.

Some analysts believe al-Qaeda has been forced to rely more on other likeminded groups to carry on the struggle.

That might explain why bin Laden would suggest that Zarqawi target the United States for attack.



Osama bin Laden

'Lebanon future unclear after PM quits'

Lebanon faces an uncertain future after the dramatic resignation of Prime Minister Umar Karami in the face of mass public protests sparked by the assassination two weeks ago of his predecessor Rafiq al-Hariri.

The anti-Damascus opposition that launched the

campaign against the government hailed the move but vowed it would not stop protests until Syrian troops were out of Lebanon.

Karami announced the resignation of his government during a stormy parliamentary debate over the murder of al-Hariri, which many blame on his government and its political masters in Syria.

"I announce the resignation of the government over which I had the honour of presiding so that it does not pose an obstacle to what is considered by some as the good of the country," he said.

Ghassan bin Jiddu, director of *Aljazeera's* office in Lebanon, said Karami's resignation came as a surprise to everyone.

The prime minister's declaration was greeted with loud applause in the national assembly, where the opposition had been seeking a vote of no confidence in his four-month-old government.

Outside, where people had massed in a sea of red and white Lebanese flags, the news was greeted with cheers as demonstrators set off fireworks and honked car horns.

"Your turn will come, Lahud, and yours, Bashar," the demonstrators chanted, referring to Lebanese President Emile Lahud and

his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Asad.

The crowd, estimated at 60,000, had defied a government ban on demonstrations and massed in the heart of Beirut as parliament held the debate on al-Hariri's murder in a huge 14 February bomb blast.

Since the bombing, international pressure led by the United States has mounted on Syria to end its dominance of Lebanese political affairs and pull out its 14,000 troops stationed in the country.

Damascus-backed Lahud accepted Karami's resignation but asked him to stay on a caretaker basis.

However, the immediate future of the government remains uncertain and it is not known whether legislative elections due to be held by the end of May will go ahead.

Bin Jiddu said talks were continuing between Lebanese and Syrian authorities over this issue, while the opposition is calling for the formation of temporary government to oversee elections.

Al-Hariri's killing raised fears of a return to the sectarian strife that ripped the country apart during the 1975-1990 civil war, but the murder served to unite religious and political groups in their calls for an end to Syria's domination.

Iraqi attack: Death toll now 125

Weeping and beating their chests, hundreds of Iraqis inspected corpses at a hospital morgue in Hillah yesterday, looking for friends and relatives missing in a suicide bombing that killed at least 125 people, the single deadliest attack in the two-year insurgency.

The toll rose as hospital officials said at least five succumbed to wounds overnight. More than 140 others were injured in the blast, which targeted mostly Shiite police and National Guard recruits lined up for physicals at a medical clinic.

French journalist Florence Aubenas of the French daily *Liberation* appeared on a video pleading for help Tuesday, her first appearance since she went missing in Iraq on Jan. 5. The video was dropped at the offices of an international news agency in Baghdad. It was not possible to verify the tape's authenticity or when it was made.

In Baghdad, an Iraqi National Guard major was killed in a roadside bomb blast in the southern Doura neighborhood, Interior Ministry officials said.

Two unidentified corpses — one beheaded, the other with its hands tied — were found floating in the Tigris River in Wasit, 60 miles south of Baghdad, morgue officials in nearby Kut said.

Monday's bombing in Hillah presented the boldest challenge yet to Iraq's efforts to build a security force that can take over from the Americans.

Provincial Governor Walid al-Janabi told reporters in Hillah that no funeral procession would be held in the city due to "security reasons." He did not elaborate, but police said they feared new attacks.

Authorities blocked hospital gates with barbed wire to stave off hundreds of victims' relatives desperate for information on loved ones.

Anxious for news of loved ones, they gathered around lists carrying the names of the dead and injured that were posted on hospital walls, screaming and wailing. They also went through victims' belongings, including identification cards, left in boxes nearby.

Distraught relatives at the hospital morgue placed the dead into coffins and loaded them onto pickup trucks, taking them to city mosques and homes where the bodies will be washed before burial, a Muslim tradition in Iraq.

Many of the corpses, charred or dismembered, were unrecognizable, stuffed into white plastic bags. Other bodies lay on the ground in the open because the overwhelmed morgue had no place to store them.

"We blame Hillah police for this tragedy because they didn't take the necessary measures to protect innocent people," said Hussein Hassoun, who lost two nephews who were standing in line for medical checkups, trying to join the local police force.

Many of the dead were

taken to the holy Shiite city of Najaf for burial yesterday.

The explosion in Hillah, a largely Shiite Muslim town about 60 miles south of Baghdad, was so powerful that the only thing remaining of the bomber's car was the twisted wreckage of the engine block.

The blast littered the area with blood and body parts, damaging the front of the clinic and collapsing the roofs of a nearby market covered with shards of shattered glass.

Some of the victims were shoppers or vendors from a nearby outdoor street market selling produce, sandwiches and other food. But most were recruits waiting outside the clinic.

Nuclear row: America lures Iran with economic incentives

The US is considering offering economic incentives to Iran in exchange for abandoning any plans to develop a nuclear weapon, US officials said.

White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, said President George W Bush was looking at ideas discussed with European leaders last week.

Correspondents said US backing for the European plan would mark a significant shift in Washington's policy.

The EU has tried to negotiate with Iran but the US has urged a tougher stance.

The US accuses Iran of using its civilian nuclear

power programme as a cover to develop nuclear weapons.

Tehran insists its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Late last year, Tehran agreed with the European Union to freeze its uranium enrichment programme - a process which can be used for nuclear power plants or nuclear weapons.

France, the UK and Germany are now trying to persuade Iran to make the freeze permanent in exchange for trade and technology benefits.

"The president is considering ideas that were discussed last week in Europe for moving forward

Hamas gives fresh conditions for peace

Palestinian resistance group Hamas has warned that a ceasefire could collapse if Israel continued to ignore Palestinian concerns, including over the illegality of a separation wall inside the West Bank.

"Israel must realise that this is not an open-ended truce. If Israel continues to grab our land by this evil wall and refuses to free our prisoners, then the ceasefire will die a natural death," said Hasan Yusuf, Hamas' chief spokesman in the West Bank, during a speech at the Polytechnic College in Hebron on Monday.

Hamas rejected Friday's bombing in Tel Aviv, which killed five Israelis and injured many others, calling it a "wrong move".

Yusuf said Hamas was still committed to the ceasefire and not looking for pretexts to breach it. He added, however, that "we can't pretend things are fine when 9000 political detainees and resistance activists are still languishing in Israeli prisons and detention camps".

As for the resistance movement's political future, Yusuf said Hamas was "very likely" to contest the Palestinian parliamentary elections slated for 25 July.

Hamas could seek alliances with "nationalist and other forces" for the purpose of forming a "united Islamic-nationalist front" whose main goal would be to preserve Palestinian nationalist interests, he said.

"I am against Hamas becoming the number one political force at this juncture of our struggle. This is not the most appropriate time for us, we don't want to be in the leadership's seat right now."

Yusuf also denounced "blind violence" against civilians, saying Hamas was forced to attack Israeli civilians only when the Israeli army and paramilitary Jewish settlers killed and maimed thousands of Palestinian civilians.

He insisted any people under a foreign military occupation had an inherent right to resist foreign occupiers by whatever means available.

Yusuf also criticised the upcoming London conference on political and economic reforms in the Palestinian Authority (PA).

He accused British Prime Minister Tony Blair of seeking to "expedite the Israeli agenda" by devoting the conference to political and economic reforms in Palestine while utterly ignoring the "mother of all evils" - an allusion to the Israeli occupation.

"If Blair is genuinely concerned about reforms, let him first pressure Israel to end its occupation. How can real reforms be put in place in the presence of Israeli tanks and roadblocks? he asked.

"Can there be real reforms in the absence of real freedom?" he asked further.

Trust International

Foreign & Diplomacy



US President, George Bush



British PM, Tony Blair



Israeli PM, Ariel Sharon

Nuclear weapons: Can they be stopped?

Nuclear technology is now so widespread that it is only political will which stops many countries from making nuclear weapons.

Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the UN's nuclear regulatory body the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said recently that 40 countries could make the bomb if they wanted to.

The reason for this is that the technology legally used to enrich uranium to make fuel for nuclear power can easily be developed to make material for nuclear weapons.

A country could do this in secret or withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and do it anyway.

This is the Achilles' heel of the NPT - an agreement designed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons while allowing countries access to nuclear power.

But if even only one or two of them go nuclear, or are thought to be doing so, it could bring tension and even war into their regions.

The United States has not ruled out the use of military action to prevent proliferation.

The US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton wrote in the *Financial Times* earlier this month:

"We are determined to use every resource at our disposal - using diplomacy regularly, economic pressure when it makes a difference, active law enforcement when appropriate and military force when we must."

By Paul Reynolds

Such a policy can be expected to continue under a second Bush administration. A President Kerry would probably be more cautious about the use of force.

Take Iran and North Korea, the two countries currently in the frame.

Iran says that it intends to enrich uranium to make fuel, claiming its right to do so. It is defying a demand from the IAEA for it to suspend its plan and await fuller inspections.

The US and others, including Britain, demand that Iran abandon enrichment altogether on the grounds that it cannot be trusted.

If Israel thought that Iran was using its enrichment capability to build a bomb, which Iran says it is not, it might attack Iran's nuclear facilities. Israel will certainly not give Iran the benefit of any doubt.

Only this week, reports emerged that the US was supplying Israel with 500 "bunker-busting" bombs which would be useful in any such attack. Israel has already started a diplomatic and media campaign to publicise its fears of Iranian intentions.

North Korea has withdrawn from the NPT and is said by British Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell, who visited the country recently, to have produced possibly two nuclear devices already. Talks have so far failed to make it change its mind.

North Korea says it needs nuclear weapons to check US aggression.

"A North Korean nuclear weapon could tip Japan and South Korea into making their own," said Dr Gary Samore, Senior Fellow for Non-Proliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and a former official in the Clinton administration.

It would also force a second Bush administration to decide whether to keep talking, to reluctantly accept a nuclear North Korea and impose sanctions, or try to destroy its nuclear plants.

"The first proposal would close the loophole in the Treaty that allows states such as Iran and North Korea to pursue fissile material for nuclear weapons under peaceful cover.

"Enrichment and reprocessing plants would be limited to those states that now possess them," John Bolton told a nuclear conference earlier this year.

Another proposal would prevent the sale of nuclear fuel to countries without a rigorous inspection regime.

However, Washington is not relying on the NPT being made to work more effectively.

Resolution 1540 which insists that member states tighten procedures to try to stop what are called "non state actors" i.e. rogue scientists from selling their wares and expertise.

One such rogue scientist was Dr A Q Khan, the "father" of the Pakistani bomb, who was found to be transferring his expertise, certainly to Libya and possibly to Iran.

Pakistan began its nuclear programme in the 1970s.

An interception of some his equipment on the way to Libya took place last year

They complain that the nuclear powers accepted as such under the NPT (the US, Soviet Union (now Russia), China, Britain and France) have not worked for total nuclear disarmament as they are supposed to and as they re-committed themselves to at the last NPT review meeting in 2000.

This leads to claims that the NPT is a club used by the powerful, especially the US, to keep down the weak.

The other flaw is that a number of nuclear powers are not members of the NPT. These are Israel, India and Pakistan. They are therefore free of restrictions. Iran for one says that this unfair and that Israel should be forced to give up its nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan argue that if the US and others have weapons for defence and proclaim the value of the nuclear deterrence, then so should they.

However, the failure to bring them into the NPT has tempted others to join them outside. North Korea has done so.

However, there have been non-proliferation successes.

South Africa and Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapons. The whole of South America remains nuclear-free.

"The number of countries in the NPT which have pursued nuclear weapons is very small. Libya has given up. North Korea has left. That leaves the question of Iran," said Dr Samore.

BBC

Only this week, reports emerged that the US was supplying Israel with 500 "bunker-busting" bombs which would be useful in any such attack. Israel has already started a diplomatic and media campaign to publicise its fears of Iranian intentions.

The risk of that is great. It could start a general war on the Korean peninsula.

There is a move afoot to tighten the NPT which is reviewed every five years. The next review is in 2005.

Libya is now held up as an example of how a rogue nuclear state can be brought back into the international fold.

The Bush administration has proposed a number of Treaty amendments, the most important of which would stop the spread of enrichment technology.

It has initiated a much more active campaign which it calls "counter-proliferation."

It has formed the "Proliferation Security Initiative" with like-minded countries.

Sometimes called an "action not an organisation", the PSI is aimed at disrupting the sale and shipments of nuclear components, if necessary by interceptions at sea.

The US has also got the Security Council to pass

when a charter ship was diverted to an Italian port.

Libya subsequently renounced its secret nuclear programme and has been rewarded by the lifting of sanctions.

Libya is now held up as an example of how a rogue nuclear state can be brought back into the international fold.

Non-nuclear and strongly anti-nuclear countries like New Zealand point to two further flaws in the NPT.



FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY SPORTS COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MEETING WITH AG. DIRECTOR FCT SPORTS COUNCIL

THE VARIOUS BOARD MEMBERS OF THE FCT SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS WHOSE NAMES ARE LISTED BELOW ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THERE WILL BE A CRUCIAL MEETING WITH THE ACTING DIRECTOR FCT SPORTS COUNCIL AS FOLLOWS:

DATE: 9TH MARCH, 2005

VENUE: AREA COUNCIL SERVICE COMMISSION CONFERENCE HALL AREA 3, ABUJA.

TIME: 10.AM PROMPT

APPROVED LIST OF FCT SPORTS COUNCIL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

FCT ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. A A. Henshaw
2. Lt. Col. YBA Dambo
3. Austin Roggers Nwoke
4. Alh. Isa Inga Dobi
5. Solomon Musa Agegbe
6. Mr. E. M. Gora
7. Dr. (Mrs) Ngozi Achinine
8. Mr. Ben Ahianta
9. J.J. Sambo
10. Yusuf I. Enebe
11. Mrs Lydia A. Anele
12. Grace Charles
13. Patrick Bamidele

FCT BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

1. Yusuf K. Obansa
2. Alh. Mohammed K. Badamasiuy
3. Mr. S.J. Morah
4. Mr. H. A. Angulu
5. Mr. Samuel Gwamma
6. Engr. K. S. Tinko
7. Mr. Yohanna Gado
8. Alh. Usman J. Wowo
9. Alh. Bashir
10. Mrs. Esther J. Audu (JP)
11. Mrs Erdoo Tsumbo
12. Alh. Mustapha Kam-Salem
13. SP. Wale Davis
14. Col. JK Kwasha
15. Engr. M. S. Alhassan – Patron
16. Arc. Shuaibu Idris – Grand Patron
17. Afam Anene

FCT CYCLING ASSOCIATION

1. Enr. Lawrence A. Osho
2. Mrs. Chika Balogun
3. Mr. John K. Okpara
4. Insp. Katanaan Musa
5. Mr. Obi Makinde
6. Engr. Sookie Adum

FCT FIVES ASSOCIATION

1. Alh. Salihu Jega
2. Alh. Samaila Argungu
3. Alh. Gaulma Adamu
4. Alh. Bukhari Umaru Safana
5. Engr. Bashir Kankiya
6. Mohammed Tuga Bawa
7. Aminu Mu'azu Maitazu
8. Danjuma Abbas
9. Alh. Shehu Gusau Mohammed
10. Alh. Aminu Nuhu Alhassan
11. Rabi Yakubu
12. Dr. Aminu Dalsen-ma Ibrahim
13. Alh. Bello Mohammed Abba
14. Alh. Abu Halilu
15. Arc. Bashir Halilu
16. Alh. Abdullahi Barda
17. Salisu Charanchi Yusuf

FCT BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

1. Grace Omono Khua
2. Mr. JSK Kore
3. Dr. Daniel Ayo
4. Mal. Mohammed Suleiman
5. Mal. Yusuf Ishiaku
6. Sddn. Leader Christopher Dola
7. Engr. Samson Abinikwu
8. Mal. Tanko Usman
9. CSP Paul Garga
10. Mr. Augustin A. Iyamah
11. Mr. Gabriel Obiahu
12. Mrs. Glory Emmanuel
13. Barr. Benjamin Wesley Tafida

FCT BOXING ASSOCIATION

1. Chief Angus Nmoh
2. Alh. Sule Gwagwa
3. Alh. Danjuma Mohammed
4. Alh. Yahaya Adamu
5. Godwin Bamigboye
6. Prince Padaly Eze
7. Barr. Mrs. I. Pam
8. Charle Aidaghese
9. Engr. Ark Okoye
10. Hon. Vivian Anazodo
11. Hon. Esther J. Audu (JP)
12. Chief Daniel Kanu
13. Hon. Lumunba Adeh

FCT CHESS ASSOCIATION

1. Engr. Noel Nduka
2. Mr. Matthew Onok
3. Lt. Col. Uwadia (Rtd)
4. Mr. Joe Kyosu
5. Mr. Oyodele Caleb Adekoye
6. Mr. Austin Iyama
7. Mrs. Stella Okhuakhua
8. Col. Alhassan Usman – Patron

FCT GOLF ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Paul Ibeku
2. Mr. Hugo Flinn
3. Chief Rex Onyecabo
4. Gen. CB Ndiomu
5. Alh. MM. Waziri
6. Mr. David Oyegun
7. Mr. Moses Anabui
8. Col. JY Madaki
9. Amb. Babagana Kingibe

FCT GYMNASTICS ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. S. A. Aridegbe
2. Mr. J. Adebayo (CP)
3. AB Momoh
4. Mrs. Funmi Agene
5. Alh. Kayode Musa
6. Mrs. M. A. Daudu
7. Alh. Zenat Ajikolu

FCT HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

1. Alh. Usman Abubakar
2. Mr. Denis Iko
3. Dr. Emmanuel Dubakiri Abdullahi
4. Mr. Timothy A. Maikori
5. Col. YBA Dambo
6. Mr. Stephen Yepwi
7. Dr. Haske Dantani (FRSC)
8. Alh. Wali Modibbo
9. Mr. I. I. Dapak
10. Mrs. Margaret M. Gwamna
11. Mr. Paul Ateh
12. Mr. Bitrus J. Mundi
13. Anthony Adebisi Ojomo

FCT HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

1. Alh. Garba I. Gusau
2. Alh. Jafaru Ango
3. Samson Baba Galami
4. Mr. Mbaogu Theodore Nubisi
5. Alh. Abdul Ningi
6. Matari Adamu
7. Alh. Hussaini Usman Anabo
8. Mal. Garba Lunau
9. Alh. Garba Mohammed
10. Commarade Fajana
11. Felix Obiahu
12. Hamidu Mohammed
13. Alh. N. A. Kalgo

14. Yusuf Ishaku
15. Ahmed Mohammed Mubudi
16. Usman H. Mohammed
17. Dr. P. S. Abdu
18. Alh. Usman H. Mohammed
19. Musa Abdul
20. Lt. Col. George J. Agbabia (Rtd)

FCT WEIGHT-LIFTING ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Nelson Ayewoh
2. Maj. Sam Aleno Wyse (Rtd)
3. E. Okon Bassey (JP)
4. Edward Onwe

FCT WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Udo Samuel Atang
2. Mr. Christopher O. Imomoh
3. Alh. Kamal S. Alkali
4. Alh. Sani Babadoko

FCT JUDO ASSOCIATION

1. Chief E. I. Awodu
2. Mr. O. U. Kalu
3. Rev. N. I. Okpuno
4. Mr. S. Tunde Bello
5. Ms. Amina I. Kukuro
6. Mr. Olatunji Komolafe
7. Alh. Iliasu Ahmed
8. Ms. Chika O. Obimma
9. Mrs. Alpha Yaduma
10. Mr. Philip Okafor
11. Simon Daudu

FCT KARATE ASSOCIATION

1. Dr. Akinola Johnson
2. Barr. Gina Igbinnovia
3. Mrs. Maryam Thani
4. Mr. Willis Agbedo
5. Alh. M. B. Shehu
6. Mr. Joshak Habila
7. Dr. Chuka Ezenwa
8. Arc. Fidel Ajogu

FCT SQUASH ASSOCIATION

1. Elder Etteng I. Etteng
2. Chukwemeka Ire Okoli
3. Alh. AA. Garba
4. Chief N. E. Oyo
5. W. Commander Gambo Nuhu (Rtd)
6. Dikki Benjamin
7. Brig. Gen. Yakubu Yaduna
8. Maj. J. A. Fayehun
9. Sq. Ld. Stephen Onuh
10. Engr. Terry Okartae

FCT SPECIAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Andrew Kyanida
2. Abubakar Salihu Abdullahi
3. Sir. Peter OKOLO
4. Engr. Ola Olarenwaju
5. Hajia Fatima Mohammed Sani
6. Umaru Labaran Dabo
7. Alh. Sani Rabe Amar
8. Mal. Yusuf Ibrahim
9. Nnanna Olu Eleri

FCT SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

1. Chief M. A. Oyadina
2. Alh. Musa Abba Aliyu
3. Mr. Obi Chukwukere
4. Mr. David O. Agbana
5. Benjamin Iwelumor

FCT TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

1. Alh. Mohammed Bala
2. Mr. Jerry Adejo
3. Mr. Chukwemeka Iroaganachi
4. Mr. V. O. Oguejiofor

5. Alh. Mohammed Adamu
6. Mr. Ohi Jacob
7. Samaila Anuku

FCT TAEKWONDO ASSOCIATION

1. Mrs. Stephannie Kanu
2. Hon. M. P. Ughanze
3. Mr. M. P. Akanya
4. Ms. Grace Omonokhua
5. Mrs. H. Al Mustapha
6. Mr. Frank Emefela
7. Mr. Ayuba Didam
8. Mr. Chiedozi

FCT TENNIS ASSOCIATION

1. Dr. Fred Achem
2. Wing. Commander Peter Iweze (Rtd)
3. Mr. Sule Ocheja
4. Mrs. Fiona Damisa
5. Mr. M. A. Audu
6. Engr. C. O. N. Okoye
7. Mr. Sebastine
8. Air Comm. Osita Obiereka
9. Dr. F. Ayandele
10. Mr. Joseph Nwaforsni
11. Cannie C.C. Ekenwa (Ms)
12. Mr. Femi Ohiewere
13. Mr. Yusuf Ahmadu
14. Mr. Olu Mejule
15. Mohammed Ohinoyi

FCT VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Vincent Mangi
2. Alh. Nuhu Audu Awo
3. Alh. Isiaku Bello
4. Mr. Jackson Imandi
5. Alh. Bashir I. Gaya
6. Mr. Amos Samuel
7. Alh. Safiyanu Mohammed
8. Alh. Sani Mohammed
9. Hon. Samson B.
10. Alh. Ibrahim Habu Sule

FCT FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

1. Alhaji Umar Faruk Abdullahi – Chairman
2. Barrister Mishelia
3. Alhaji Umar Abdul
4. Mr. Ishan (Chairman FCT Referees Council)
5. Mr. Andrew Abba

OTHER ASSOCIATION

1. BASE/SOFTBALL
Mr. Mbaogu
2. CRICKET
Arc. R. Unde
3. PARA – SOCCER
Ahmed Sani
4. SCRABBLES
Mr. Suleiman Corah
5. SHOOTING
Mr. Martins T.
6. TRADO-SPORTS
Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed Baba

SIGNED

BWAMBA, AYUBA KWALI

For: Director

Business Trust

Finance

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
Chanchangi Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
IRS Airlines	
CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - Cal	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.
EAS Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja-Lagos	8:30a.m.
Lagos-PHC	10:30a.m.
PHC-Lagos	12:30a.m.
Lagos-Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano-Lagos	4:30p.m.
Lagos-Abuja	6:30pm.
ADC Airline	
Lagos-Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja-Lagos	8:55a.m.
Lagos-Calabar	11:15a.m.
Calabar-Lagos	7:20a.m.
P/H-Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos-Sokoto	8:55a.m.
Sokoto-Lagos	11:55a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on working days.

Liquidation: Savannah Bank wants judge to transfer case

By Kemi Ogedengbe,
Judicial Editor

Worried that Justice Jonah Adah, who was presiding over the closure of Savannah Bank had allegedly taken sides, the bank yesterday asked the chief judge of the federal high court to reassign the case to another judge.

The bank had filed a suit in the court challenging the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) over the forceful closure of the bank.

When the matter came up last week, Justice Adah said that he had closed the plaintiff's case since it refused to call witnesses as required by the court.

But, the plaintiff's counsel, Mr. Rasheed Yusuf from G.K. Gadzama chambers filed a notice of appeal against the

decision of Justice Adah to close the case.

In the appeal, the plaintiff is praying for an order allowing the appeal by setting aside the ruling of the federal high court dated February 2, 2005.

He also asked for an order directing the plaintiff/appellant to re-open its case at the court below and call its remaining witnesses to testify for the purpose of proving the case.

He said that the trial judge erred in law when he refused the plaintiff's application for adjournment and consequently closed its case when there were cogent reasons adduced for the adjournment.

He added that one of his witnesses, the Chief Librarian of the of the National Library who was subpoenaed at the instance of the plaintiff, was present in the court when the judge closed the case, but did not produce the documents required because they were sent to a contractor for binding.

Yusuf said that the plaintiff's other witness who was to testify on the adjourned date suddenly took ill and could not testify in court on grounds of ill-health while the information was made available to the court by the counsel.

"In the circumstance, the trial judge erred in law when he invoked the principle that there must be an end to litigation in closing the case of the plaintiff even though the plaintiff had more than 15 vital

witnesses to call for the purpose of pronouncing its case."

He added that the trial judge erred in law when he held that the plaintiff had not shown enough diligence in the prosecution of his matter, even though, the plaintiff took steps to ensure the attendance of his witnesses in court.

According to him, the trial judge also erred in law when he failed to abide by the principle of natural justice in compelling the plaintiff to close his case, when the matter is very complex and requires calling of many witnesses for the plaintiff to prove its case.

He also prayed that the proceedings in the case should

be stayed pending the determination of the appeal by the court of appeal.

But, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), prayed that the relief to stay the proceedings of the court should be dismissed.

CBN counsel, Adetunji Oyeyipo (SAN), asked the court to consider whether the grounds of appeal are lucid or have merit.

He said, "the call is not to decide whether the appeal will succeed or not but what the court should consider is whether the grounds are valid. I submit that they are not valid and have no merit."

"Such appeal can be brought only when leave of the court is obtained from the lower court," he added.

According to him, all the four grounds of appeal of the plaintiff are mix-law and facts while the decision complained about is a discretionary order because it revolves around the refusal to grant application for adjournment.

He, therefore urged the court to dismiss the application since the leave of the court was not obtained. Saying that the plaintiff was not interested in the matter but filed application for stay to delay proceedings.

Further hearing continues March 11, 2005.

NDIC may change deposit insurance design - MD

The managing director of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) Mr. G.A. Ogunleye has disclosed that the corporation will put in place specific insurance design feature to ensure adequate depositor protection post-consolidation.

Ogunleye who made this disclosure over the weekend on the occasion of the money market association of Nigerian delegate conference held in Lagos, said other regulators and operators need to make changes in their modus operandi to ensure that the banking system is efficient post

consolidation.

According to him, "In order to harness the opportunities of bank consolidation, the regulators/supervisors should review the supervisory approach as well as the information disclosure requirements by banks."

"On the part of the operators, they should enhance their risk management capacity, enthrone responsive corporate governance and embrace the right culture that would promote market disciplines among others," he said.

He added that apart from the post consolidation challenges that the system presently has some challenges facing it, saying these include liquidity problems, threat posed to depositors' funds by using such funds for raising capital and possible increase integration risks etc.

He stated that despite the problems that are beyond to arise as a result of consolidation that it has the potentials of evolving strong and resilient

Nigerian banking system to the benefit of all and sundry.

Nevertheless, he stressed that while the 13 point agenda

N2bn loan: Kogi denies indebtedness to CTB

Kogi government says it has paid back the N2 billion syndicated loan it borrowed from Continental Trust Bank (CTB) in 2001.

The state government said it paid back a total of N2.9 billion being the actual loan and accrued interest on the loan to the bank.

The bank had dragged the state government before a Federal High Court in Abuja alleging that the government owed it more than N1.2 billion in respect of the loan.

In a statement of defence the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice in the state, Mr Ben Ikani, said the loan was taken at an interest rate of 24 per cent per annum in 2001.

He said that the money was to be repaid at N100 million per month over a period of 24 months by deduction at source from the state's monthly share from the federation account.

Ikani said the state government repaid N900 million of the loans in 2001, but suspended repayment when it was discovered that the bank made spurious charges and debit entries to the government's account.

On reconciliation of the account, he said the state government discovered that the bank was charging 30 per cent interest rate instead of the 24 per cent agreed on.

In its response, the bank said the subsequent interest charge of 30 per cent on the loan was based on the prevailing money market rate at the time and that it was made known to the defendants.

It also said the state government was still indebted to it to the tune of over N1.2 billion from the actual loan and accrued interest from 2001 to date.

Trial Judge, Justice Binta Murtala Nyako, adjourned further hearing in the suit to March 10.

NSE trading bearish

The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) remained bearish last week as the index dropped by 3.05 percent while a turnover of 229.2 million shares worth N2.56 billion in 19,022 deals was recorded in contrast to a total of 257.9 million shares valued at N3.31 billion exchanged in the previous week in 20,043 deals.

The above position meant that the turn over value fell by around N750 million. There were no transactions in the federal government development stocks, State government bonds and industrial loans/preference stocks sectors.

The banking subsector was the most active during the week (measured by turnover volume), with 173.6 million shares worth N1.08 billion exchanged by investors in 8,373 deals. Volume in the banking subsector was driven in part by activity in the shares of Inland Bank (Nigeria) Plc and Zenith Bank Plc. Trading on the shares of the two banks accounted for 67.6 million shares, representing 39.0% of the sub-sector's turnover. The Conglomerates subsector followed on the week's activity chart with a turnover of 13.05 million shares valued at N172.0 million in 1,570 deals. Preceding week, the Banking subsector led on the activity chart and was followed by the Petroleum (marketing) subsector.

The All-Share Index dropped by 3.05% to close on Friday at 22,067.26, while the market capitalisation of listed equities closed lower at N1.79

trillion. This was the lowest position in recent times. Twenty-one stocks appreciated in price during the week, higher than the twenty in the preceding week. Okomu oil palm plc led the week's gainers' chart with a gain of N1.95 to close at N17.80 per share while 7-Up Bottling Co. Plc followed with N0.50 to close at N23.50 per share.

Other price gainers in the Top 10 category include: CAP Plc - (N0.46), Glaxo Smithkline consumer Plc - (N0.40), Zenith Bank plc - (N0.27), CFAO Nig. Plc - (N0.23), First Bank of Nig. Plc - (N0.20), Julius Berger Nig. Plc - (N0.19), Inland Bank (Nig) Plc - (N0.17) and First Aluminium Nig. Plc - (N0.10).

Benin Oba seeks support for ACB

The Omo n'oba n'edo Uku akpolokpolo, Oba Erediauwawa II of Benin has called on Nigerians to invest in ACB International Bank during its forthcoming initial public offer (IPO).

According to a statement signed by its head corporate affairs, Mr. Igwe Igwe speaking during a courtesy call on the deputy governor by the management and staff of the bank led by its managing director/CEO, Mr. John. I. Udeka, the deputy governor of Edo State also pledged the overwhelming support of the state and people of the state to the bank whose establishment is closely inter-related to the history of nationalism in the country.

Welcoming the return of the bank as ACB International Bank Plc, the Oba of Benin reminisced with nostalgia, the popularity of the bank founded by the first President of the country, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

He called on well-meaning Nigerians to invest heavily in the bank for what it represents

as one of the very first indigenous banks as well as for what it holds for the future having been repositioned to render world class financial services.

The monarch also called for the quick re-opening of the branches in Benin City and other parts of the state where the former ACB enjoyed huge patronage.

Capital Bank reveals "the best kept secret"

Capital Bank International has revealed "the best kept secret." The 22-year-old bank, which as been ranked as one of the top 10 corporate banks at the CBN Dutch Auction System, is on a 10-city tour to unfold its "best kept secret" to its numerous customers.

In a statement by the bank it stated that the train, which recorded a successful maiden outing in Lagos last week has since had similar feats in Abuja, Kaduna and Port Harcourt. Similar experience is expected in such other identified places like, Aba, Warri, Onitsha, Benin, Ibadan and Kano.

Explaining the essence of the Road Show, Mr. Omatseyin

Ayida, the managing director, noted that it was the climax of the campaign aimed at informing the customers and the general public on some of the essential facts about the bank which, though hidden from the public, had been the pivot of its success.

He noted that such customer-focused policy was responsible for the bank retaining its household clients that have been with it for an average of 12 years and more. "We have an experienced and cohesive workforce who have managed these relationships for years and successfully managed the transition from Commercial Bank (Credit Lyonnais Nigeria) Limited to CBI without losing any client," he said.

Business Trust

International

Banking giant, HSBC posts \$17.6bn profit

Global banking giant HSBC has said it posted a "solid" set of results for 2004, typically understating another strong performance as the bank reaped the gains of its growing worldwide presence.

It said pretax profit jumped 37 percent to 17.61 billion US dollars while net profit increased 35 percent at 11.84 billion US dollars.

Analyst forecasts had been for a pretax profit of 17-19 billion US dollars.

Before taking into account goodwill amortisation, the cost of adjusting the value of past acquisitions, pretax profit rose 35 percent to 19.43 billion US dollars.

It said net interest income, the difference between its interest payments to customers and interest earned on loans extended, rose 21 percent to 31.02 billion US dollars.

The charge for bad and doubtful debts came to 6.36 billion US dollars, a very slight increase, while total assets at the end of 2004 totalled 1.28 trillion US dollars, up 23 percent.

HSBC chairman Sir John Bond said the bank's opportunities for further profitable growth "have never been broader" and noted that while there remain concerns, there has also been much progress on issues clouding the

outlook.

"As we look forward, the external imbalances which have been a feature of the global economy in recent years remain a potential vulnerability for the financial markets," he said in a statement.

"However, some of the concerns which made for an uncertain economic outlook in 2004 have been allayed to a degree. Despite the six interest rate increases in the US since the beginning of last year, the outstanding level of consumer debt has proved manageable, largely because employment levels have remained high and long-term interest rates have fallen."

On the risk front, the chairman noted that there is a growing need for higher savings rates and for greater individual responsibility in funding personal retirement provisions as the developed world's population ages.

Bond said while investment in China has slowed, the country's rate of real economic growth has remained strong and the world economy has withstood a significant period of high oil prices, even showing "an impressive resilience."

Speaking at a press conference, group chief executive Stephen Green said he was optimistic about

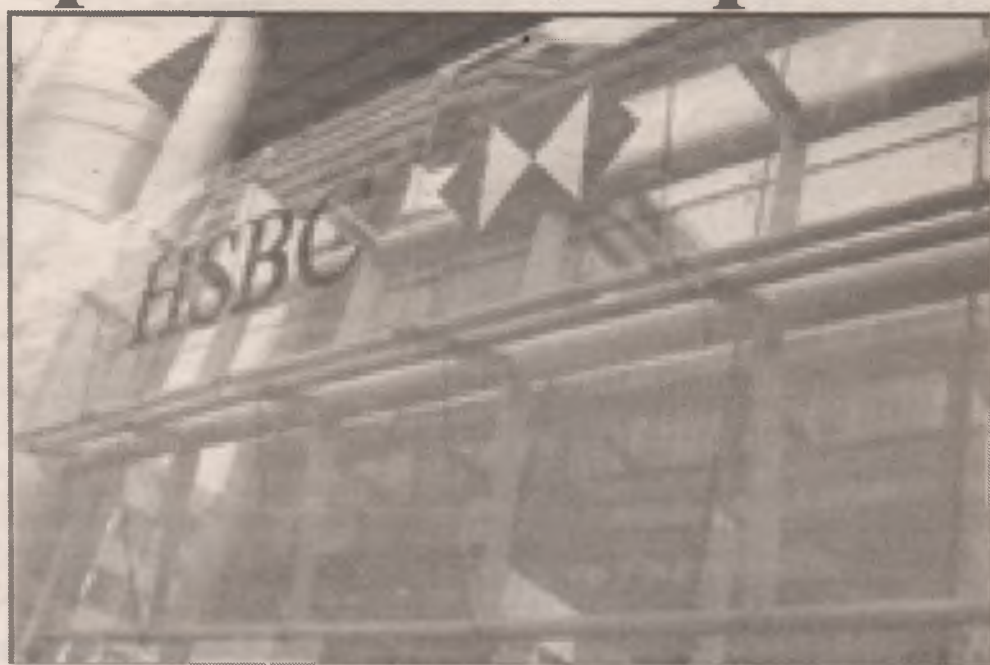
China's economic growth and hoped to continue investing in the country.

"We will continue to grow our branch network there. We are confident in the medium term for our business in China," he told reporters.

HSBC has sealed a number of high-profile deals over the past three years, including its 1.7 billion dollar investment for a stake in Bank of Communications (BoCom), China's fifth largest bank.

Green said HSBC still planned to set up a credit card business in China. "We are still pushing for that ... hopefully in a not very distant future."

In January, the bank, which has long aimed to build its presence in South Korea, lost out to Standard Chartered in the race to buy Korea First Bank.



HSBC Corporate Headquarters

Ex-WorldCom CEO denies role in fraud

Former WorldCom Incorporated's Chief Executive, Bernard Ebbers took the witness stand in his criminal trial on Monday and flatly denied playing any role in the \$11 billion accounting fraud at the telecommunications company.

Ebbers, who faces up to 85 years in prison if convicted of fraud and other charges in connection with the accounting scandal, told jurors he would have put a stop to the fraud had he known about it.

Instead, he said, he was kept in the dark about any financial tricks used by Chief Financial Officer Scott Sullivan to hide soaring expenses or inflate revenues.

"He never told me he had made an entry that wasn't right," Ebbers, 63, testified. "If he had, we wouldn't be here today."

The former basketball coach, milkman and bouncer said he had some "general supervisory responsibility" for accounting, but was "not involved in the actual conduct of the department."

Control of the department was left to Sullivan, Ebbers told a Manhattan federal courtroom packed with press, spectators, and supporters, including his wife.

"As I said before, I wasn't advised by Scott Sullivan of anything ever being wrong with accounting at WorldCom."

As expected, Ebbers' testimony contradicted that of Sullivan, who pleaded guilty to fraud and implicated his boss during earlier testimony as the government's star witness.

Sullivan testified that he warned his boss that the only way

the company could meet its earnings projections would be to make "adjustments" to the financial statements.

Ebbers repeatedly responded by telling Sulli-van that "we have to hit our numbers," according to the finance chief's testimony.

But no other witness has been able to directly link Ebbers to the fraud, meaning the case will largely come down to whether jurors believe Sullivan or Ebbers, who had been portrayed as an intimidating and detail-oriented boss.

Ebbers, dressed in a blue suit and pale yellow tie, sought to present a different view on Monday, speaking in detail about his teenage years on a Navajo reservation, his five daughters, and his humble beginnings in the telecommunications business.

At one point, he appeared confused by the page numbers

on a document introduced into evidence; at another he told jurors he'd donated more than \$100 million to charities; later he testified that he considered retirement in 2001 when doctors said "your pumper isn't pumping the way it should."

Speaking with a folksy style, Ebbers said his management style reflected that of a coach, who motivated his staff "to play together" like a team.

"I considered myself demanding," he said "I expected results. I sometimes said things I shouldn't have said maybe," he testified.

Reid Weingarten, lead attorney for the defense, wrapped up his questioning of Ebbers late Monday afternoon, after displaying evidence that Ebbers purchased \$5.3 million worth of WorldCom stock with the last of his savings in May 2002, just weeks after he had

been forced to resign.

By June, investigators uncovered the accounting problems, and all of Ebbers' stock including the shares he had just purchased — eventually became worthless.

Asked why he bought more stock after his resignation, Ebbers said: "I believed WorldCom was a great company."

He added that he felt "shock" when informed of the accounting problem. "I never thought anything like that had gone on. I had no earthly idea anything like that would occur."

After Weingarten's questions, Assistant U.S. Attorney David Anders cross-examined Ebbers about his knowledge of accounting and his role as the company's ultimate decision maker. Anders' cross-examination is scheduled to continue on Tuesday.

Oil supply may exceed demand — OPEC

World oil supply may be running at a small excess of up to 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) and soaring prices near \$52 are higher than fundamentals justify due to speculation, a top OPEC official said.

Acting OPEC secretary-general, Adnan Shihab-Eldin said the balance between supply and demand this year justified a price below \$50 a barrel.

"We hope the fundamental factors — that supply is adequate and OPEC will ensure it has the capacity to maintain adequate supplies — will bring prices to a level that is more reflective of fundamentals and we believe that is \$40 to \$50 for U.S. crude," Shihab-Eldin told Reuters.

Earlier, he told a conference in Singapore that the global oil market was balanced, "if not an excess of 100,000 to 200,000 barrels per day."

US light crude raced to a four-month high at \$52.28 a barrel on Monday, prompting assurances from some OPEC members that the producers' cartel, which controls 40 percent of global exports, would do all it could to cool the market.

US crude traded 9 cents lower at \$51.66 a barrel at 12:54 a.m. EST.

"Prices seem to be reflecting more than fundamentals," Shihab-Eldin said, adding there had been a notable increase in speculative activity since the start of the year.

He said analysts' projections indicated that last year's price rally, which saw oil shoot up by a third, could translate into a reduction of only 0.2 to 0.3

percentage points in still strong 2005 gross domestic product growth.

"The world economy has become less sensitive to high oil prices. Last year is a testament to that," he said.

Ministers of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meet on March 16 in Iran and oil's latest climb close to last year's record of above \$55 has led most members to back away from any output cut in the second quarter when demand wanes after the northern hemisphere winter.

"The fact that we have over \$50 oil may be softening the need to consider a cut," Shihab-Eldin told Reuters in an interview, echoing comments on Monday by OPEC president and Kuwait's Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah.

He said the ministers would look closely at new projections for second-quarter demand when deciding on policy later this month, with the cartel's previous monthly forecast calling for a seasonal fall in demand of up to 1.3 million bpd.

"(A drop of this size) would have meant there was a need to consider reducing," he said, but added that the emergence of China as a major oil consumer had softened the seasonal fluctuations in the oil market.

"The current assessment still calls for a drop in demand but not as large as in the past" when demand fell by 2 million bpd or more between the first and second quarters, he said.



Bernard Ebbers, Ex-WorldCom CEO

Oil prices hold firm near \$52

High-flying oil held just below its recent four-month peak yesterday as cold US weather drove heating oil demand and held the interest of investment funds, attracted by a tight global supply and demand balance.

US light crude futures shed 10 cents to \$51.65 a barrel, just below a four-month peak of \$52.28 struck on Monday. London Brent crude sat down seven cents at \$49.99 a barrel.

"It's still that supply and demand story," said Michael Lewis, head of commodities research at Deutsche Bank.

"The underlying demand and supply situation is still extremely tight."

Cold weather in the US and Europe has tightened up demand for heating fuels over the past fortnight, helping drag prices up out of an early-February dip to set Monday's peak.

Industry analysts predicted on Monday that colder than normal temperatures in the U.S. Northeast had contributed to a sixth straight fall in distillate inventories last week.

The US government will release its weekly inventory report

today. Heating oil supplies are already seven percent below year-ago levels.

Cold weather looked set to continue. US demand for heating oil was expected to rise about 14 percent above normal this week as a major winter storm ran the length of the East Coast, the US National Weather Service said.

Northwest Europe could also expect colder than usual weather for the next week and a half, private forecaster Meteorlogix said.

Dollar weakness has also helped attract buying, as institutional investors have leapt into commodities to hedge against the sliding greenback, which has lost three percent of its value against the euro in the last three weeks.

The influx of speculative money has helped oil gain more than \$6 in that time.

The headline \$50 number has also led OPEC oil producers to back away from talk of a possible output cut for the second quarter.

"The fact that we have over \$50 oil may be softening the need to consider a cut," Shihab-Eldin OPEC's acting Secretary-General, Adnan Shihab-Eldin told Reuters yesterday.

Kuwait, Qatar, Venezuela and Indonesia have come out in favor

of keeping OPEC's formal output limits unchanged when the cartel meets in Iran on March 16.

Shihab-Eldin has said the group sees a growing consensus that a \$40-50 range is sustainable, backing up comments by Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi last week that prices could stay in that range this year.

Kuwait's oil minister said he wanted OPEC's reference price to drop into a \$28-35 a barrel range, as the group discusses how to rejig its oil basket to reflect its low-quality supply.

The group's basket of crudes was last valued at \$46.26 a barrel — around \$5 less than the front NYMEX price.

Kuwait's oil minister said that he would prefer to see the basket price lower, and added that OPEC was also considering changes to the composition of its crude oil basket to reflect the low quality of OPEC's production. This move alone would remove \$1-2 from the basket's value, cartel officials said.

The denser of the group's supplies last year traded at more than \$10 discounts to light, sweet crudes like those benchmarked by NYMEX crude futures.

Business Trust

Energy

Local content: Shell moves exploration team to Nigeria

Anglo-Dutch Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), has moved its global exploration unit from Houston, USA to Nigeria.

Deepwater Manager Exploration, Emmanuel Enu, it was gathered, is leading a process that would consolidate exploration expertise, previously scattered in four locations - Houston, Rijswijk, Lagos and Port Harcourt, and ultimately create a centre of excellence in Lagos.

The move started in early 2000, when Emmanuel midwived the establishment of the Niger Delta deepwater team in Houston.

This, according to the company, followed the formation of the Shell Deepwater Services by the Shell Group, as a centre of excellence, where teams from all the deepwater business across the group would come together.

The company explained that in adopting this strategy, the group realised that deepwater was a largely uncharted territory, with few experts and hence the need to bring them together in an arrangement that combines

From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

synergies. Earlier in the 1990's Emmanuel had led a team comprising a Nigerian and two Dutch to Houston on a five-month tour of duty to assess seismic data of Nigeria's deepwater, on the basis of which Shell acquired two oil blocks - OPL 212 and 219.

The team wrote the first proposal for the drilling of Bongu as well as its appraisal when it returned to Nigeria.

However under the new arrangement, the company disclosed that there is a regional exploration director in the person of Martijn Minderhoud Chike Onyekwe becomes the manager for Onshore and Shallow offshore while Emmanuel Enu is the deepwater manager, exploration in Nigeria.

According to Martijn, Nigeria is very important for the group with significant exploration resources adding that since the new global exploration unit demonstrated early breakthrough, the company

opted to encourage the exploration effort here.

In his words, "The drive was to refocus exploration activities in a systematic manner, by drawing on the pool of Nigerian exploration expertise from other locations back to Nigeria."

Also speaking on the new development, Nigeria Area Exploration Manager, Angus McCos said Emmanuel would spearhead evaluation teams from Lagos to deliver material success from "Big Cat" wells.

The Presidential adviser on petroleum and energy, Dr. Edmund Daukore, has refuted a media report by a national daily (not Daily Trust) that presidential approval is responsible for the delay in commencing the oil block biddings earlier scheduled to hold in February this year.

According to a press statement signed by Emmanuel Agbegir, deputy director (press and public relations) in the office of the presidential adviser on petroleum and energy, complex technical details adopted to improve trans-parency and competition is responsible for the change of date.

The statement added that the quest to improve trans-parency and competition in the bids is in line with Nigeria's

'Presidential approval not delaying oil block biddings'

commitment to the Extractive Industry Trans-parency Initiative (EITI).

It further assured all stakeholders that "the process towards bidding for the 2005

licencing round is very much on course and all things being equal, the exercise will be conducted with minimum delay."

LNG may get terminal in Italy

Shell energy Europe BV and ERG Power and S.P.A have announced the signing of an agreement for the development of a terminal for liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in Italy. The planned site for the

terminal is the industrial area of Priolo/Augusta/Melili in the province of Syracuse in Sicily.

According to the company, the terminal is planned for a capacity of Ca.8 billion cubic meters of gas per year and will require an investment of approximately #400 million.

Subject to the permitting process, construction is envisaged to start in 2007 and the terminal is expected to be operational in 2010.

The terminal, it was also gathered, will be developed according to the highest international technical and environmental standards.

With Italy being the third biggest European gas market, the LNG plays an important role in Shell's European gas strategy and will provide an alternative source of gas supply to Italy.

Dangote group ventures into steel manufacturing

The Dangote Group, a foremost indigenous manufacturing group, has decided to go into the steel manufacturing sector with the first phase of its plant to have a Production capacity of 0.5m (500,000) metric tons per annum. The project would be located in Lagos State.

According to a press statement from the company, Meacon of India, who were the Consultants to the Ajaokuta Steel Plant Project and the Delta Steel

Plant project have been retained as the consultants for this project. The first phase would be completed within fifteen months.

Along with this project, said the statement, a separate project in the Ship breaking business is being considered to generate the raw material for this project. In the second phase, the company would be importing Iron Ore to be used as a feedstock, which would enable the company to prod-

uce sponge iron. The plant would be producing reinforcement steel bars, wire Rods in Coils, Equal angles up to 100mm as per DIN 1028, Channels up to 150mm as per DIN 1026 and Sections up to 500mm.

The venture is expected to generate employment both direct and indirect. Also, it is expected that the project would increase the government's foreign exchange earnings when products from the plant are exported.

Privatisation: NNDC takes interest in KRPC, steel coy

The New Nigerian Development Company (NNDC) is gearing up to participate in the privatisation of federal government parastatals, the company's group managing director, Alhaji Ali Alkali has disclosed.

He said, while receiving the director-general of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), Dr. Julius Bala who paid him a courtesy call last week, that the privatisation committee set up by the Northern governor's forum, which NNDC is a member has been directed to participate effectively in the companies to be privatised.

These companies include the Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company (KRPC), the Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company (FSFC) Kaduna, Katsina and Jos Steel Rolling Mills,

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

NITEL and NEPA. He assured that the NNDC will strive to ensure that the full economic potentials of the northern states are exploited for the benefit of the people through active collaboration with other stakeholders.

The BPE DG, Dr. Bala had called for closer collaboration between NNDC and BPE adding that the NNDC will continue to play a leading role in the economic development of the north and the country in general.

He disclosed that arrangements are at advanced stages for the privatisation of NITEL and NEPA this year adding that when the process is completed,

interested stakeholders in the economy including NNDC would be invited to partake in this process.

Meanwhile the NNDC, GMD has called on the Ukrainian trade delegation to collaborate with the company in promoting joint venture partnership in such strategic sectors as oil and gas, information technology, solar energy and agro-allied sectors.

Alhaji Alkali made the call when the delegation, led by the Ukrainian ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Oleg Skoropad paid him a courtesy call in Kaduna adding that great investment opportunities existed in the north.

Mr. Skoropad said Nigeria was Ukraine's biggest trading partners in Africa with transactions worth over \$200 million adding that his country was desirous of reducing the trade imbalance between the two countries.

ExxonMobil participates in deepwater discovery

ExxonMobil, has said that its subsidiary, Esso Exploration and Production, Angola limited has participated in a deep water oil discovery on Block 31.

The palas 1- discovery, the company stated was drilled by Semi submersible drilling rig, Leiv Erriksson, in 5,250 feet (1,600 meters) of water to a total per day depth of 12,200 feet (3,745 meters). The well was tested at a maximum rate of 5,330 barrels of oil through a 5/8 inch choke.

It is the fifth Oil on discovery Block 31 which is

located approximately 105 miles (170 kilometres) offshore Angola, and is the first discovery outside the northeast corner of the block.

Previous discoveries include Pluto, Saturn, Mars and Venus.

According to a source, Pilas and other discoveries previously announced on Blocks 15, 17, 31 and 32 represent significant addition to the company's resource base in Angola which is now estimated at more than 11.5 billion oil equivalent barrels.

In addition to Esso

(with 25% interest), the other participants in Block 31 are BP (Operates 26.67 percent), Sonangol E.P. (20 percent), Statoil Angola AS (13.33 percent Marathon Petroleum Angola Block 32 Limited (10%) and TEPA (Block 31) Limited (a member of the total group of companies) (5%). Sonangol is the concessionaire.

Exxonmobil is a leading holder of deepwater acreage in the world's most attractive deepwater regions. In West Africa, it has 15 blocks, totalling almost 12 million gross acres.

In Angola, Esso holds interest in six offshore deepwater blocks covering in excess of 7 million gross acres.



MEDIA TRUST LIMITED

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

DAILY TRUST

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



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

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name of Subscriber:
 Company Name:
 Delivery Address (Not Box No):
 Telephone(s):
 Start Date: Expiry Date:

Paper subscribe for: Daily Trust Weekly Trust

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

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

- ABUJA**
No. 22 Lusaka Street,
Off Bissau Street,
Wuse Zone 6,
P.O. Box 6873, Abuja
- LAGOS**
NAN Premises
National Arts Theatre Complex,
Iganmu, Lagos.
- KADUNA**
No. 6 Sullubawa Close,
Off Kaburu Road,
Ugwaru Sarki GRA,
P.O. Box 6573.
- PORT HARCOURT**
24 Ikwerri Road,
Cavalry House,
Mile 1 Deobu
- JOS**
Former British American Building,
Jos, Plateau State.
- KANO**
Abdullahi Mai'Adus House,
Murtala Mohd Way
Fagge C,
Fagge, Kano

ENQUIRIES:
 The Marketing Manager 09-6705988, 09-6712301, 0803786792, 09-5235787 (ext. 115)
 Musa Alhaji Muhammad: 09-6705988, 08033176656, 09-5235787 (ext. 116)

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	15	17.80	55,241	982,304.80
PRESKO PLC.	10	10.41	27,788	289,498.08
Sector Totals	25		83,029	1,271,802.88
AIRLINES				
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC.	1	1.00	250	250.00
Sector Totals	1		250	250.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	21	1.92	122,710	241,640.40
Sector Totals	21		122,710	241,640.40
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	17	3.42	422,408	1,444,635.36
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	44	6.63	399,125	2,646,198.75
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	1	1.92	500	960.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	2	2.26	6,000	13,560.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	1	5.18	1,600	8,288.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	611	22.89	2,314,550	53,477,564.50
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	37	1.28	404,260	520,025.96
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	255	9.52	2,407,355	23,765,556.45
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	27	0.58	1,967,336	1,143,204.08
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	3	1.38	239,500	326,120.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	2	7.81	200	1,562.00
LIION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.64	2,500	1,645.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	5	1.13	31,080	35,120.40
NAL BANK PLC.	3	2.80	849	2,377.20
OCEANIC BANK PLC	62	5.18	2,307,100	11,686,925.52
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	9	1.60	4,177,314	6,891,261.40
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	5	7.41	138,600	1,027,026.00
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	24	1.54	631,179	950,316.03
TRADE BANK PLC.	1	1.35	720	972.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	27	10.00	129,094	1,290,940.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	397	18.90	3,181,455	59,935,833.17
WEMA BANK PLC.	10	3.93	70,074	275,390.82
ZENITH BANK PLC	191	13.80	2,704,774	37,121,459.65
Sector Totals	1,736		21,537,573	202,566,942.29
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	199	89.00	763,877	68,681,553.57
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	485	33.77	1,623,343	55,971,487.26
Sector Totals	684		2,387,220	124,653,040.83
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	60	23.00	196,193	4,512,659.99
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	2	4.56	5,000	22,800.00
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	8	7.13	17,725	126,379.25
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	39	9.98	168,245	1,667,723.85
Sector Totals	109		387,163	6,329,563.09
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	30	4.70	109,013	509,421.87
CAP PLC.	2	7.35	10,500	77,175.00
D. N. MEYER PLC.	2	4.85	1,540	7,469.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	2	4.03	3,369	13,586.76
Sector Totals	36		124,422	607,652.63
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	1	0.87	5,599	4,871.13
Sector Totals	1		5,599	4,871.13
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	7	1.00	34,849	33,566.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	14	4.81	92,620	451,389.16
CHELLARAMS PLC.	2	1.71	2,622	4,483.62
JOHN HOLT PLC.	1	0.80	1,000	800.00
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	146	15.30	607,182	9,460,346.31
Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	70	12.26	412,764	5,091,446.13
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	1	1.09	500	545.00
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	64	14.17	237,458	3,364,779.86
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	3	1.11	6,646	7,279.21
Sector Totals	308		1,395,641	18,414,635.29
CONSTRUCTION				
CAPALBETO	4	7.25	2,528	18,328.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	3	15.54	22,750	351,647.00
Sector Totals	7		25,278	369,975.00
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	1	0.84	220	184.80
Sector Totals	1		220	184.80
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	36	23.49	71,506	1,645,217.16
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	150	51.98	212,771	11,018,990.19
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	20	16.61	122,152	2,028,944.72
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	65	52.90	67,375	3,551,233.17
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	61	141.00	53,316	7,496,037.93
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	2	15.78	1,200	18,936.00
UNION DICON SALT PLC.	1	6.02	100	602.00
Sector Totals	335		528,420	25,759,961.17
FOOTWEAR				
FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES MAN. PLC.	1	0.34	18,228	6,197.52
Sector Totals	1		18,228	6,197.52
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC.	4	0.60	27,775	16,665.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	13	3.06	54,183	165,140.39
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	2	5.30	1,100	5,830.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	1.08	500	540.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	11	3.35	72,226	239,247.80
PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	6	4.50	9,138	41,289.96
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	21	8.90	149,191	1,292,101.44
Sector Totals	58		314,113	1,760,814.59
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMACO PLC.	3	1.58	213	348.54
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	3	1.00	10,000	10,000.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	7	2.90	112,900	327,410.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	26	3.10	251,798	778,969.90
Sector Totals	39		374,911	1,116,728.44
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	1	0.60	10,000	6,000.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	3	1.40	54,400	76,160.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.06	1,000	1,060.00
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	1	0.83	100	83.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	5	1.49	12,500	18,025.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	16,666	15,499.38
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC.	1	0.76	200	152.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	9	3.03	170,031	470,153.34
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	2	1.97	5,000	9,850.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	5	3.02	15,500	46,810.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	3	0.76	34,284	26,055.84
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	12	0.99	49,158,504	48,658,678.80
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	6	2.51	57,731	146,464.81
Sector Totals	50		49,533,916	49,474,992.17
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	4	1.44	20,205	29,095.20
Sector Totals	4		20,205	29,095.20
PACKAGING				
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	1	1.15	4,687	5,390.05
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	1	3.87	200	774.00
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	0.91	105,000	95,550.00
Sector Totals	3		109,887	101,714.05
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	5	0.80	38,000	30,400.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	128	61.45	532,550	32,807,847.44
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	25	2.04	841,122	1,715,888.88
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	40	17.524	17,524	3,106,956.06
CONOIL PLC.	60	116.00	44,431	5,086,839.00
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	22	149.84	12,295	1,825,243.60
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	48	173.38	43,405	7,587,118.91
OANDO PLC.	205	88.99	165,691	14,708,950.33
Sector Totals	533		1,695,018	66,869,244.22
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
DAILY TIMES PLC.	3	0.69	150,000	102,000.00
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	2	2.11	1,800	3,798.00
Sector Totals	5		151,800	105,798.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	45	8.50	368,624	3,134,265.50
Sector Totals	45		368,624	3,134,265.50
TEXTILES				
ABA TEXTILE MILLS PLC.	1	0.91	20	18.20
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.44	20,000	8,800.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	6	2.10	36,398	79,435.80
Sector Totals	9		56,418	88,254.00
Overall Totals		4,011	79,240,645	502,907,623.20

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
ETERNAOIL	841,122.00	1,715,888.88	25
NB	1,623,343.00	55,971,487.26	485
IMB	1,967,336.00	1,143,204.08	27
OCEANIC	2,307,100.00	11,686,925.52	62
FIRSTBANK	2,314,550.00	53,477,564.50	611
GUARANTY	2,407,355.00	23,765,556.45	255
ZENITHBANK	2,704,774.00	37,121,459.65	191
UBN	3,181,455.00	59,935,833.17	397
OWENABANK	4,177,314.00	6,891,261.40	9
UNIC	49,156,504.00	48,658,678.80	12

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
NOLCHEM	112.00	116.00	+3.00
JBERGER	14.80	15.54	+0.74
TUP	23.00	23.49	+0.49
SKBEECHAM	8.60	8.90	+0.30
OCEANIC	4.94	5.18	+0.24
CADBURY	51.80	51.98	+0.18
NIGERINS	2.89	3.03	+0.14
LINKASSURE	1.43	1.49	+0.06
MANNYBANK	1.08	1.13	+0.05
PFIZER	3.30	3.35	+0.05

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	179.99	173.38	-6.61
MOBIL	178.99	174.50	-4.49
NESTLE	145.01	141.00	-4.01
GUINNESS	91.00	89.00	-2.00
NB	35.01	33.77	-1.24
UNIPETROL	89.90	88.99	-0.91
OKOMUOIL	18.60	17.80	-0.80
LEVBROS	15.99	15.30	-0.69
PZ	12.90	12.26	-0.64
AP	62.00	61.45	-0.55

Dollar gains ground

The dollar rose against the euro yesterday, coming off the previous session's six-week lows as investors focused on the potential for raising US interest rates and on relatively weak European economic data.

US 10-year bond yields were hovering near three-month highs after strong inflation and manufacturing data on Monday fuelled expectations of higher US interest rates, which would widen the rate differential between the United States and the euro zone.

"What we've seen in rate spreads is quite a sharp widening of interest rate expectations in favour of the United States and it just looks a bit more favourable for the dollar from a fundamental perspective," said Mitul Kotecha, head of global foreign exchange research at Calyon.

"Our models suggest the economic data is now playing a bigger role again in terms of driving FX," he added.

The euro dropped a quarter of a percent to \$1.3203 by 1100 GMT. It was also undermined by unofficial data showing the number of Germans out of work rose to a new post-war record in February.

The German seasonally-adjusted jobless rate rose to 11.7 percent in February, the Federal Labour office said, and the unadjusted jobless total rose to 5.216 million.

"The fact that German unemployment is at a record is enough to force the euro lower," said Adam Myers, currency strategist at Societe Generale in London.

Inflation was expected to rise to an annual rate of 2.0 percent in the euro zone in February from January's 1.9 percent but slightly below expectations of 2.1 percent, according to the EU's flash estimate.

Purchasing Manager Surveys of euro zone manufacturing came in flat but ahead of expectations. Euro zone PMI stood at 51.9 in February, the same as in January but better than a forecast of 51.7.



GLOBAL FLEET OIL & GAS LTD

ATTENTION: PETROL STATION OWNERS!

Global Fleet Oil & Gas (Nig) Ltd, an emerging power in the downstream sector of the Nigeria Petroleum Industry and Operator of 80 own stations nationwide, is desirous to increase to 1000. A phase of this expansion programme is to buy filling stations in the Northern part of the country.

Stations in all major towns and highways would be seriously considered. Interested parties should indicate by sending photocopies of the following documents:

1. Photograph of the station
2. DPR License
3. Certificate of Occupancy/ or any other proof of file
4. Fire Certificate
5. Police Report
6. Other proofs of ownership and permission to operate a filling Station.

Sellers should send their Offers to:

Mukhtar Abdulkadir,
Global Fleet Regional Office
NNB International Bank Building
1, Continental Lane Opp. Leventis Roundabout
Kaduna, Kaduna State.

Tel: 0803 339 3650

A.A. Kure @ 49



On behalf of committee of friends, we felicitate with our financially prudent Governor, **Engr. A.A. Kure** on the occasion of his 49th Birthday. For you have increased the revenue base of Niger State and have never defaulted in payment of salaries and other contractual obligations since 1999 when you assumed office. We pray Allah to continuously guide you to the right path in meeting the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerlites.

Happy Birthday

-Signed

Mallam Haruna N. Yahaya (FCA)
On behalf of committee of friends



An opportunity to INVEST IN THE OIL SECTOR

Initial Public Offer



Japaul Oil & Maritime Services Plc.

Rc 250346

Offer for Subscription 600, 000, 000 Ordinary Shares of 50k each at N2.20 per Share.

Payable in full on application.

Application opens February 28, 2005 and closes March 28, 2005.



Joint Issuing Houses:



NAL Bank Plc



Valueline Securities & Investments Ltd.

Application forms are available at all banks and stock-broking firms nationwide, and can also be downloaded online at www.japaulplc.com

Consult your Stock broker, Accountant, Banker, Solicitor or any other professional adviser for guidance before subscribing.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

'Plastic bags takes over 50 years to decompose'

Perhaps not many Nigerians know that it takes an average of 50 years for the Cellophane bags used for packaging pure water and shopping to decompose after use.

The menace of pure water sachets and cellophane bags is increasingly becoming a disturbing phenomenon that is greatly threatening our environment.

Every day millions of pure water sachets and cellophane bags are being indiscriminately disposed after use with little or no thought about what happens to these hard to destroy material.

Cellophane bags and pure water sachets are made from organic polio-vinyl-chloride or PUC, a chemical extracted after extensive distillation from its original source, bitumen.

In Lagos State, more than 30 percent of waste generated have been attributed to the pure water sachet syndrome which has become a household name all over the country.

According to the Chief Executive of the Lagos State environment enforcement outfit, Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI), Bola Ilori, the inability of the materials with which the water is packaged to decay, has continued to constitute a major problem to waste management in the state.

Speaking with newsmen in his office, Ilori lamented what the consumption of the commodity has done to militate against the efforts of the state government to combat environment pollution.

The former executive secretary of the defunct Alimosho local government said if the war against filth must be won in the state, NAFDAC has to order re-packaging of the product.

"NAFDAC has to come into it and do something with the manufacturing because they have become a major problem in this town.

"NAFDAC must tell them to change the packaging, the nylon with which they are being packaged is not biodegradable. It never decays till after 25 to 40 years, so that means that every N5 pure water people drink, we are incurring 25 years trouble."

Ilori argued that the manufacturers now had no reason not to source for other materials to package water since the price of the commodity had increased.

According to him, NAFDAC has to move in now to ask the manufacturers to

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

increase the quality of their packaging materials to make it biodegradable.

"That will help the state a lot. If you visit our dumpsites, you will understand the magnitude of the problem posed by pure water sachets to Lagos environment."

He explained that the problems is not only that of decay but that any material it stands on would also not decay, thus posing a great problem for the entire waste management programme of the state government.

The problem, Ilori added, was not restricted to the dumpsites alone but also extends to even the waters that surround the state, "if you go to the ocean lines and see what pure water has done to the ocean lines, you will pity this city, and you begin to ask yourself what will happen in ten years time."

"It is not only waters, the drainages are blocked, and most of the flooding we are having in the state, pure water sachets contributed 30 percent of it. During the dry season all other materials would have decayed, but the pure water nylon would be there."

The state, he added, had remained helpless to the menace because the country had not attained the technological level of other countries, such as sorting of waste.

Meanwhile, the legislature in Aba South local government of Abia State has passed a bye-law against the indiscriminate dumping of pure water sachets on the streets.

The leader of the council's legislature, Chief Jonah Onwuchekwa, said in Aba that the bye-law was part of the council's effort to rid the commercial city of filth.

According to Onwuchekwa, the bye-law, which is awaiting the chairman's assent, makes it mandatory for pure water hawkers in the area to provide a receptacle for the immediate collection of sachets from consumers.

He said the measure would help "to avoid, or at least, minimize the littering of the streets with cellophane as was presently the case where packaged water consumers dispose of the sachets indiscriminately.

In Abuja, the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) has said that it pays N44 million to private contractors monthly for the evacuation of refuse in the FCT.

Ag. Director of AEPB,

Hajiya Hadiza Abdullahi has said that FCT has been shared into 12 districts where waste is collected through the public-private participation.

She said fast food joints constitute immensely to the generation of waste which used to block the city, sewage network.

She reiterated the commitment of the board in the area of waste regeneration especially the menace of pure water sachets through waste regeneration.

Meanwhile, the chairman House of Representatives committee on Environment, Hon. Emeka Atuma, has decried the increasing spate of blockage of sewer lines and drainages in the country.

Hon. Atuma further attributed the development causing serious environmental problems to the indiscriminate disposal of cellophane bags used for packaging pure water and shopping.

According to the chairman, the house committee on environment's tour of some major cities in the country led to the discovery of acts which people perpetrate that posed environmental hazards to the populace.

His committee, he said, would upon resumption from

recess convene a meeting of producers of pure water and members of the house committee on environment with a view to finding a lasting solution to the problem of indiscriminate disposal of cellophane bags.

The meeting would among other things explore sustainable method of packaging and disposal as the committee, he noted would "suggest the use of bio-degradable materials in packaging pure water as opposed to nylon cellophane which is not subject to decomposition and ends up

blocking our drainage.

However the use of cellophane in packaging water and fruit juice would be prohibited in Nigeria if the bill being put together by the ministry of Environment scales through the National Assembly.

Already, President Obasanjo had given the nod to the ministry to propose the bill, the ministry of environment; Col. Mande (rtd) disclosed this.

Col. Mande, who lamented the indiscriminate disposal of cellophane bags on streets, further explained that such

bags render the soil agriculturally unproductive thereby effecting crop production.

The minister said that he had already directed appropriate quarters in his ministry to put together the bill which would be tendered before the National Assembly for discussion and subsequent passage into law.

He therefore stressed the need for the packaging of water and other liquid substances in containers that could be recycled to avoid littering the environment with cellophane bags.



Tunnels are a common sight in Saudi Arabia where the rocky terrain makes it difficult for road and highway construction. This tunnel in Mecca leads to the plain of Arafat, some few kilometres from the Holy city.

FG committed to preventing Bar Beach ocean surge - Ogunlewe

The Federal Government has said that its decision to commit another huge sum towards the replenishment of the Bar Beach was to prevent an imminent ocean surge that could be devastating on Victoria Island this year.

Minister for Works, Chief Adeseye Ogunlewe told our correspondent in an interview in Lagos that the situation at the Bar Beach deserved urgent attention and that firms jostling for its permanent development would need a whole year to conclude technical plans of action on the project.

He said the Federal Government could not fold its arms and watch the ocean overflowing its banks again when it could put up a temporary measure that would prevent loss of lives and property worth millions of naira.

Although the minister was silent on the actual

From Olumide Bajuulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

amount needed to carry out the replenishment exercise, our correspondent however recalled that the federal government spent about N4 Billion when it carried out similar exercise four years ago.

He said, "The companies that had so far sent in their proposals said they would need 12 months to complete the design and other logistics and investigations.

"We are now saying that within now and the 12 months, what should the Federal Government do? It is either the Federal Government fold its arms and let the surge to happen or have a temporary arrangement until the company would take over its permanent development." He added.

Asked why the Federal Government did not adopt the study conducted by a private firm sponsored by the Lagos

State Government concluded at a cost of \$1million, Ogunlewe said President Olusegun Obasanjo insisted on following due process in awarding the contract.

He said the state government presented the name of a single firm it was supporting to execute the project whereas the president believed that more companies should bid for the project in the spirit of due process.

He said, "The president believed that we should go through the due process, that there must be competitors, that there must be a proper design which must be thorough and competitive and that the people must know the concept so that we could have a choice."

The Lagos State Government had last week condemned the move by the federal government to commit huge sums to replenish the beach when the money could

form part of the money needed to find a lasting solution to the problem.

The Deputy Governor, Chief Olufemi Pedro at a news conference in Ikeja had described the action as a wasteful expenditure because it would only provide a temporary measure to the perennial ocean surge on Victoria Island.

He said it was wrong for the Federal Government to take over the development of the beach when a Supreme Court verdict had vested control of all waterfronts in the state on the state government.

It would be recalled that eight companies including Energx Construction firm, Dredging International & Westminster Consortium, Entech PYE of South Africa and BPS Engineering among others, submitted proposals to the federal ministry of works last year for the execution of the project.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Poor maintenance culture, bane of Nigeria's economy - BICL boss

Engineer Afolabi Adedeji, the managing director of a Lagos-based property and facilities management firm, Buildwell International Company Limited (BICL), in this interview with Daily Trust's Zakariyya Adaramola, speaks on how poor maintenance culture and careless attitude of Nigerians toward government facilities are killing the economy. Excerpts:

Why is BICL campaigning for maintenance culture at this material time?

Let me start by introducing BICL: it is a private limited liability company incorporated in Nigeria in 1995. We are one of the pioneers in the emerging field of facilities management. We have spearheaded series of workshops on maintenance culture. The workshops attracted attention and patronage from all the major sectors of the Nigerian economy: banking, airspace management, information technology and logistics.

Now to your question, we are campaigning for maintenance culture because we realise that the practice could save the country from spending unnecessarily. We have been promoting maintenance culture in the country as far back as 1995, and to God be the glory, our efforts have now been recognised by the president. President Olusegun Obasanjo said last year, while he was on a visit to Owerri, Imo State, that he would soon set up a presidential committee to look into the promotion of maintenance culture in Nigeria. Even if BICL is not included in the committee, we will still play a vital role similar to roles played by Afri Project during PTF of General Muhammad Buhari. We also give management and advisory services to organise exhibitions as well as construction supervision because I was trained basically as a civil engineer, and I was out on the field for 10 years. But more and more, we are increasingly emphasising the planning and management aspect of construction industry with strong emphasis on maintenance culture because we realise that poor maintenance culture has been the bane of the Nigerian economy.

What is facilities management?

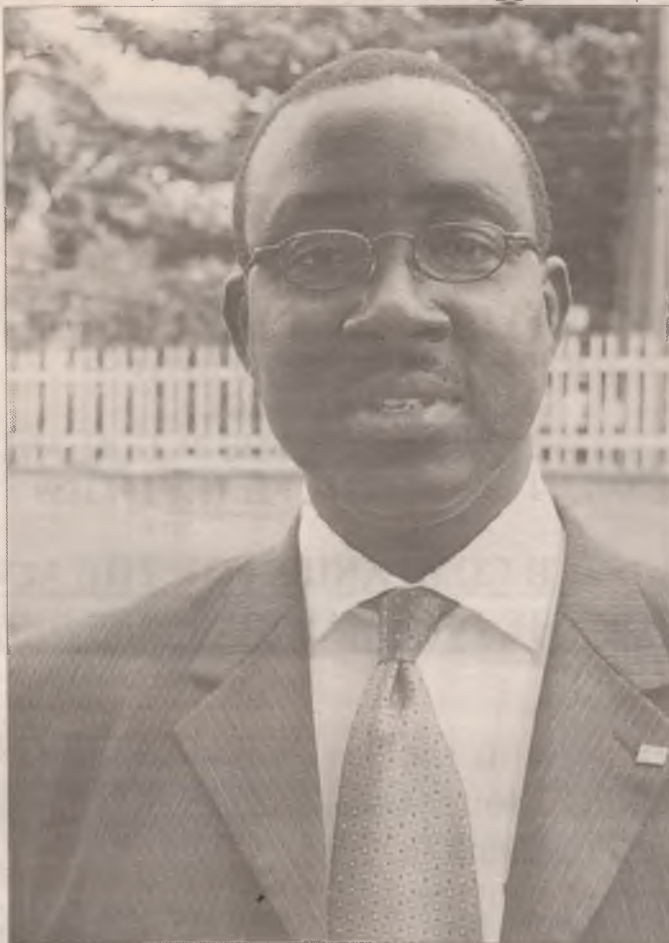
Facilities management is a relatively new profession. It has its origin in property management. When I say relatively new I mean its less than 20 years old even in the USA and the Great Britain. And one of the definitions given to facilities management by British Institute of facilities management (BIFM) who accidentally has just accredited us as a sustaining member, is that "it is the practice of coordinating the

physical workplace with the people and work of the organisation."

You will find out that every organisation has facilities that it uses to do its work. From the building that houses the company to chairs to vehicles and computers, we all use facilities. So, facilities management is all about making those facilities support the core functions of the organisation. You may think is not relevant until things go wrong than you realise the important of facilities management.

Facilities management integrates the planning, management and delivery of services to meet peoples need in their living and our wives and women are home managers in their own right. We sometimes intentionally undervalue what they contribute. And they take care of the home, clean basins, laundry work, cook and so on. So they need facilities to support their work. Even for the working class families maintaining the kerosene stove is one of the facilities management. When you don't maintain the kerosene stove it might start leaking the moment it starts leaking, you will want to buy a new one and this affects your budget. So maintenance could save extra spending or unplanned spending. And unplanned or extra spending could affect a lot of things in the home or in the economy.

Facilities management is the collection, analysis and interpretation of data with respect to property used. You find out that in an office building there is a lot of information is involved in it inventory of furniture, inventory of office equipment. And there is a term we use in facilities management called rate of chore, that is when an accountant moves from the third floor to the fourth floor is it going to move his desk with him? In that case you have changed the floor arrangement. So, rate of chore applies, if there is any movement like that or you want to establish or furnish an office. You have to explore different orientation and arrangement. You can do that very easily on the computer screen and there are software packages in facilities management like arch bus of which any colleague architect Ayo Aderenle is the licence holder in Nigeria. It can



Engr Afolabi Adedeji, MD BICL

handle profuse amount of information.

Facilities management involves a lot of access to information, management of information. And you can't do all these things manually or mechanically you just go crazy when you attempt doing it manually. So, you can see that we need facilities in all actor of our economy, in everyday life-local government, state government and federal government.

Facilities management therefore is an amalgamation of several profession: Engineering, architecture and business administration. Human behaviour is important to the maintenance of building like gently encourage your occupants of offices to use foot mats before entering their offices this will go a long way in saving costs. That alone, from research in America, can save up to 10 percent of total expenditure. Urging your workers to switch off electric appliances while on break could save you additional NEPA charge. All these are what facilities management is not to do.

The way you manage your facilities is closely align with your business strategy. There are some organisations in Nigeria who believe in giving out property like cars to their workers and deduct the money from their salaries. This will make the car owners to take proper and good maintenance culture of their cars.

Having large assets base could help an organisation in time of distress. If the assets are properly maintained, they could be sold off and the money plough back into the base when in need of money. So all these are business aspect of facilities management.

Also, if we maintain properly what we have we

would avoid unnecessary breakdown which tells on our pockets. Nigeria will really move forward if we imbibe good maintenance culture because a lot of the money used in building government houses, roads and other projects are loans from World Bank and foreign countries. So, we save the country from debt if we maintain our infrastructure well. If not, the country will continue to be in economic enslavement. Professor Aluko said what the country borrowed since 1960 was 18 billion dollars and we had paid 42 billion dollars so far and they said we are still owing 34 billion dollars. And if we refuse to pay, they would occupy us like Iraq and do all sort of things. Do we not see how they are doing in Iraq, don't we see how prisoners are being abused in Iraq.

Are you hopeful that Nigerians can imbibe maintenance culture without force of arms?

Yes, I am hopeful because when people begin to realise the benefits to be derived from it, they will surely embrace if it is not the question of whether they like my face or not, it is the question of economic necessity. People are beginning to realise that things have changed worldwide, economies have changed. Nigerians have to realise that we don't have options than to maintain what we have now so that we will not keep on spending on replacements everyday. It is what our government spend on replacement that is ruining us. If we had adequately maintained all roads built in the 1960s, there will not be need for new ones now.

And now there is crisis and when there is financial

crisis, you minimise your expenditure by maintaining what you already have. So all these are part of facilities management cum maintenance culture. And many organisations are beginning to tell their employees about maintenance culture some of them, like CBN, V-mobile, DHL and others, who sent delegates to our seminars, told us they are doing just that and we are happy. If all Nigerians could do this, the country will be a better place to live in.

Nigerians are not enjoying service of the Nigerian Railway Corporation Services due to lack of maintenance culture. Can you advise our government on best to revive the NRC?

First of all, the government must have the political will and realise that for Nigerians to move forward we need good railway infrastructure and we need to maintain the existing ones. We should stop relying on moving goods and people by road because today 80 percent of movement of people and goods are done by road. So, we need to develop and maintain our rails. But first of all there must be the political will. Secondly, we must move from the narrow gauge to the standard going because that has been the long standing thing, although we have heard support and cooperation from the Chinese and they have been managing the Railways for US. We need to go beyond that, we need to realise that railway infrastructure we inherited from the British were put there to serve their selfish interest.

The rails were lined from South to North to evacuate primary products from hinterland to the coast where they would be shipped to the Great Britain period. And our government since then did not improve on that. Why don't we have East-west rail line that would connect Lagos-Onitsha-Enugu to Port Harcourt?

This was suggested by President Olusegun Obasanjo just before his inauguration in 1999, by Professor Pat Utomi and Ayodele Teriba, an economist. They say get all these young school leavers to cut the path for the railways pay them like N10,000 in a month it would ripple effect in the economy. This they said, would stop unemployment, number two, it would make those people busy otherwise they would become political thugs.

And you know if we don't revive our railways we would continue spending unnecessarily on road maintenance and it will not lead to anywhere good. Don't we realise that heavy steal and

metal which used to be carried by train before, are now being carried by lorries on road. And believe you, this is part of what damage our road because these steel and metal are too heavy to be carried on poorly constructed Nigerian roads.

BICL has just been accredited by British Institute of Facilities Management. Does the accreditation add anything to your image?

Yes. The accreditation has made some "doubting Thomases" to believe that facilities management has come to stay in Nigeria. And people have been calling to enquire about our services.

Precisely, what have you done to warrant the accreditation?

We have been championing the cause of maintenance culture in private and public work we realise that this is where many things went wrong in Nigeria. Maybe this is what they saw in us before they accredited us. But aside from that, we had applied for accreditation long time ago and we have been monitoring it.

What effort are you making to see that maintenance culture is adequately imbibe by all Nigerians?

A lot. We have sent communiques of our seminars to ministry of works and ministry of housing as well as that of environment. And we have been organising lectures on maintenance culture for secondary school students in Lagos to each them how to go about maintaining their school facilities. We realise that that this is helping to save expenses and also save lives. You know that bomb blast of 2001 was as a result of bad maintenance culture, do you know that? Also, the recent accident in Maryland, Lagos that killed about 30 passengers was as a result of bad maintenance culture. So, bad maintenance culture kills in the order of thousand even a times, more than HIV/AIDS.

So we, are saying various state governments should support us in cash and kind to campaign for good maintenance culture in the country. I call on governors Ebenga Daniel of Ogun, Asiawaju Tinubu of Lagos and Mallam Shekarau of Kano as well as Gen. Buba Marwa to support this move. I know a lot of them as good and honest Nigerians, they should contribute to good maintenance culture by supporting our campaign because a stitch in time saves nine. I understand that some are a little bit apprehensive about our campaign but I tell you this is part of the ways we can use to move this great country forward.



**MINISTRY OF FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) UNIT
MINISTER'S OFFICE**

MFCT Secretariat, Kapital Road, Area 11, PMB 24, Garki, Abuja Nigeria.
Tel: (09) 314 1295, 314 2371, Fax: (09) 314 3859

**LIST OF SHORTLISTED COMPANIES FOR THE ACCELERATED
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)**

To ensure rapid development of plots in the Central Business District, the MFCT sought and obtained approval from the President to get the private sector involved in an Accelerated Development Scheme. This Scheme is to be operated within the recently approved policy of granting approvals for development of structures of six to twenty five (6 - 25) floors in accordance with the Master Plan and in strict adherence to originally designated land use and development control guidelines.

The Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) placed adverts in the newspapers for developers to express interest in this development. The following companies were shortlisted but have not paid the N1million (one million) Naira development lease levy required for prequalification.

1. PCD ASSOCIATES
2. ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES AND TRUST PLC
3. INTERPROJECTS ASSOCIATES LIMITED
4. LANDMARK PROJECTS AND MARKETING LIMITED
5. MAGPIE LIMITED
6. MARYLAND KIDNEY CARE CORPORATION
7. HABIBU ENGINEERING NIGERIA LIMITED
8. BGB NIGERIA LIMITED
9. BOLORI BROTHERS LIMITED
10. ESLI PERFECT SECURITY PRINTERS LIMITED
11. MONWUBA ASSOCIATES CONSULTING ENGINEERS
12. ONOBA ASSOCIATES
13. BROADFIELDS INTERMEDIARIES LIMITED
14. QUATTROPLUS LIMITED
15. MICRO ALLIANCE LIMITED

16. COMBORI PROPERTIES LIMITED
17. SUHAF ASSOCIATES LIMITED
18. VETIVA CAPITAL MANAGEMENT
19. WALIMO INVESTMENT NIGERIA LIMITED
20. INTER-CONTINENTAL ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
21. GOSHEN PRINT MEDIA LIMITED
22. PYRAMIDS ARCHITECT
23. WESLEY MORGAN
24. EMMA AKPA AND CO.
25. ASI SYSTEM BUILDERS LIMITED
26. EAUXWELL NIGERIA LIMITED
27. ZEF NIGERIA LIMITED
28. INTERAF ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED
29. KEN-GLORY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED
30. TOFA ENTERPRISES LIMITED
31. ICON PARTNERS LIMITED
32. YABOD GROUP OF COMPANIES
33. ATLAS ELLIOT INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
34. REYNOLDS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY NIGERIA LIMITED
35. NUMORA MULTI TRADE LIMITED
36. BROAD STREET PROPERTIES PLC
37. TRUST MERCHANT VENTURES LIMITED
38. MAITAMA STORES
39. FEDERATION OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

These companies should endeavour to pay the development lease levy no later than March 31st 2005 if they are to be prequalified:

If you have questions, please address them to:
Mr. Mohammed Aliyu
PPP Unit
Minister's Office
Room 335
MFCT

FEATURES

Irrigation, water supply drag FG to states

By Uthman Abubakar,
Senior Reporter, Features

Food and water security has been the major concern of human societies since the beginning of their formation. Organized human societies have made efforts over time, most appreciably, in the form of policies and programmes, formulated and fashioned out according to the imperatives of the changing times, to provide and sustain this vital security for its members. Nigeria, a mainly agrarian society, has a robust treasure of such policies and programmes, built either by its component parts, regions and states, as the case may be, or by the entire country itself since the pre-petrol era when agriculture was the mainstay of its economy and, therefore, accounted for the bulk of its revenue. The growing need to boost agricultural productivity and water supply to satisfy the country's leaping population has sustained the bulky concern of governments and necessitated the diversification of efforts to provide this security and boost the economy, even during the current petrol era. Such efforts concretized into the construction of dams by both the component parts and the whole country itself for dry season farming to ensure that food production does not stop at the more conventional rainy season farming, and to conserve abundant drinking water. Consequently, river basin development authorities and other necessary agencies were established by the federal and state governments to manage these facilities for utmost productivity.

The peaking need for the diversification of the country's economy from the oil to other sectors that seem to hold substantial promise for economic prosperity, most preferably, a major reversal to the agricultural sector with all its pre-petrol significance reformed to meet current needs, have now launched the federal and state governments in a race towards achieving the utmost productivity by utilizing their respective facilities.

For instance, most of the states owning their own dams, or federal dams, or both, which they have been utilizing mainly as sources of drinking water for their urban centers and for various levels of irrigation activities over the years, now seem resolved to improve them according to current demands and utilize them, most importantly, for extensive state-organised community-conducted dry season farming and for sustainable drinking water supply.

The federal government, perhaps, pricked by mounting public criticisms in the last decade over its perceived neglect of its own dams, most dishearteningly, the irrigation projects attached to them, has also had to engage in the race towards that with some fiscal policies, most instrumentally, the provision of funds in the

2004 and 2005 fiscal year for more irrigation projects than it, perhaps, ever embarked upon in the last three years. It says it is, "more than ever before committed" to ensuring food and water security and take an agrarian approach to the diversification of the economy. It believes that the series of contracts it has awarded in the last two years for the construction and resuscitation of its irrigation and water supply schemes sprinkled in all its river basins can placate the teeming agrarian communities on what they perceive as its prolonged failure to fulfil their yearnings for adequate irrigation facilities and drinking water. "Agriculture is the main occupation of our people, especially in the north, and we believe we have to harness all our available resources to boost it, not just for food and water security but for our general economic prosperity according to emerging necessities," Water Resources Minister, Alhaji Muktari Shagari, told Kano State Deputy Governor, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, during his recent visit to Kano, Jigawa and Bauchi states to inspect works at the phase I of the Kano River and the stage I of phase I of the Hadejia Valley irrigation projects and Azare water supply scheme.

The phase I of the Kano River Irrigation project is located about 25 kilometers south of Kano city, covering an area of over 22,000 hectares mostly laying on both sides of the Kano-Zaria and Karfi-Rano highways. The project, which is to provide irrigation facilities in its area of coverage by utilizing water from the Tiga dam reservoir, comprises the east and west branch regions

in the mid 1980s, leaving some aspects of the work outstanding.

The contract for the current works at the project site, aimed at completing the outstanding, according to the Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority, was awarded in January 2003 at N8,599,766,761.00 (N8.6 billion) with a completion period of 42



Water Supply: Pumping test at location L1/7

months. The scope of the contract includes survey, revision of design, drawings and execution of all construction works for the full realization of the uncompleted sectors of the scheme covering a total of 6562 hectares; desilting and repairs of major irrigation structures in the existing sectors of the project.

According to the Water Resources Minister, the desilting of the canals for the irrigation of 15,000 hectares has consumed an additional N180 million as the government now resolved to resuscitate the moribund Gari irrigation scheme, which has some outstanding works, at N300 million. He announced that the federal government was

first awarded in July 1981 with the original plan to develop 12,500 hectares of irrigable land in the valley. It was suspended in 1984 due to financial constraints, restarted in 1991 to irrigate 6109 hectares north of the drain under the phase I and 6500 hectares under the phase II south of the canal. Works resumed at the site in June, 2002. The contract suffered financial constraints over the years up to 1998 when the ministry and the defunct Petroleum (special) Trust Fund (PTF) took over its financing and awarded a fresh contract for its completion at N2.96 billion. Unfortunately the contract did not materialize before the PTF was scrapped. According to Shagari, lack of

resources, land and irrigation development to enhance the agricultural production of the farming communities in the coverage area where wheat, rice, corn, sugar cane, sorghum and vegetables are grown. The project is designed to tap water releases from Challawa gorge and Tiga dams into the Kano-Hadejia river system.

The project contract was has lateral and distribution canals, field or farm ditches as well as drainage canal, field drain, collector drains and drainage buffer. Out of the over 6000 hectares currently prepared 200 hectares are expected to be ready for commissioning and distribution to farmers by the end of May, 2005. Community leaders in the two states

thanked the federal government for expressing commitment to irrigation schemes, but asked for much more. The Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, said the schemes would provide more food and employment as he pleaded with the federal government to improve water and electricity supply. The Emir of Hadejia, Alhaji Adamu Abubakar Maje, assured that if the Hadejia valley irrigation scheme is operational, Jigawa can supply other states "from Kano to Lagos" with food.

Alhaji Mukhtari Shagari announced in the aspect of water security that the federal government would spend N450 million on the Dala water supply scheme to increase water supply in Kano metropolis apart from establishing the Kano Reference Laboratory to enhance the quality of drinking water in the six northwest states of Kano itself, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara.

The Kano Reference Laboratory is one of the two reference laboratories for the National Water Quality Monitoring Network. The other laboratory is located in Lagos. There are also four regional laboratories located in Minna, Akure, Enugu and Gombe. The construction of the Kano laboratory is expected to be completed in March, 2005. The federal government is to provide access road, electricity and water in the laboratory premises. It is, therefore to install a transformer to facilitate the connection of the laboratory with the national grid as well as necessary facilities for the supply of water from the state water board apart from digging a borehole to support the laboratory services. Kano State government is to construct road extension to the nearby village to facilitate the

dewatering of the laboratory premises by channeling to a nearby stream through the extension.

The Azare Water Supply Project in Bauchi State executed, according to the river basin authority, at N3,409,367,005.11 (N3.4 billion), commenced in January, 2002 and is expected to be completed in October, 2005. It is to supply water to Azare, Jama'are and the surrounding settlements. The river basin authority records has estimated the present population of the two towns at 124,500 for Azare and 44,100 for Jama'are. The projected populations in the year 2030 are 215,000 for Azare and 76,000 for Jama'are. As a result, combined water for the two communities is expected to multiply by 2030. The project includes refurbishing and incorporating the existing supply facilities in the two towns into the proposed scheme.

Under the project, water is to come from 40 boreholes. The boreholes are to be provided with control houses and submersible pumps. Water is to be pumped into the collector pipes leading to a 2000 cubic meter (2 million litre) reservoir located at Yola village head works where it will undergo chlorination treatment. From that reservoir the water is to be pumped through a 500mm, 30.5 km-long ductile iron transmission main pipe into two 2000 cubic meter (2 million litre) reservoirs located near Azare town. From there, the water is to be pumped to existing and new elevated water tanks which are on a fill and draw mode system of operation. The water will then gravitate from these tanks to the consumers.

The project scope covers head works, where the water is located and the transmission mains (pipes), which consists of about 30.5 km 500mm diameter ductile iron pipes and fittings to convey the water from the head works to the Azare distribution system and about 4.2 km 300mm diameter ductile iron pipe and fittings to convey the water to the Jama'are distribution system. Communities along the main pipes are expected to be fed with water by separate boreholes. The project scope, therefore, also consists of the Azare distribution system, which incorporates and refurbishes the existing distribution system in the town, the Jama'are distribution system to perform the same function as that of Azare in Jama'are, mechanical installations and power supply.

The federal government seems still at pains to fashion out an effective programme of community mobilization and participation and wean the benefiting communities to shoulder some necessary aspects of responsibility for the security and maintenance of facilities for the sustenance of the irrigation and water supply schemes to serve their desired purposes.



A Downstream trapezoidal canal at the Kano River Irrigation project.

divided by the Shimar River which drains most of the runoffs and excess irrigation waters of the project area. The contracts for the development of both the west and east branch regions, having approximately 13,000 and 7,000 hectares of irrigable lands respectively were awarded in 1977 and 1980. The contracts were implemented to varying degrees of completion but abandoned due to the financial constraints of the government

awarding a N2 billion contract for a new irrigation scheme at Bagwai for the irrigation of 665 hectares under the Kano River project.

The N5.6 billion stage I phase I of the Hadejia Valley Irrigation Project lies in the Auyo and Kafin Hausa local government areas of Jigawa state between the Hadejia and Kafin Hausa rivers around the fadama town of Auyo. It is a multi-purpose project involving the use of water

budgetary provision in the recent years stalled the project until 2004 when funds were secured and N1.2 billion was paid the contractors out of their N1.5 billion outstanding. Work, therefore, resumed. The irrigation system has a clay-lined trapezoidal canal as feeder canal to convey water from the storage pond to the main canal. It has a total length of 2.87 km. The 27 km main canal also has clay lining and is trapezoidal in shape. It also

News

Obasanjo urged to intervene in Bachama crisis

The Bachama Heritage Foundation has solicited the intervention of President Olusegun Obasanjo in the ongoing chieftaincy crisis in Bachama land of Adamawa state. This was contained in an open letter to the president jointly signed by the national president and the assistant national secretary of the foundation, Mr. Michael Mahula Tika, and Mr. Garba respectively.

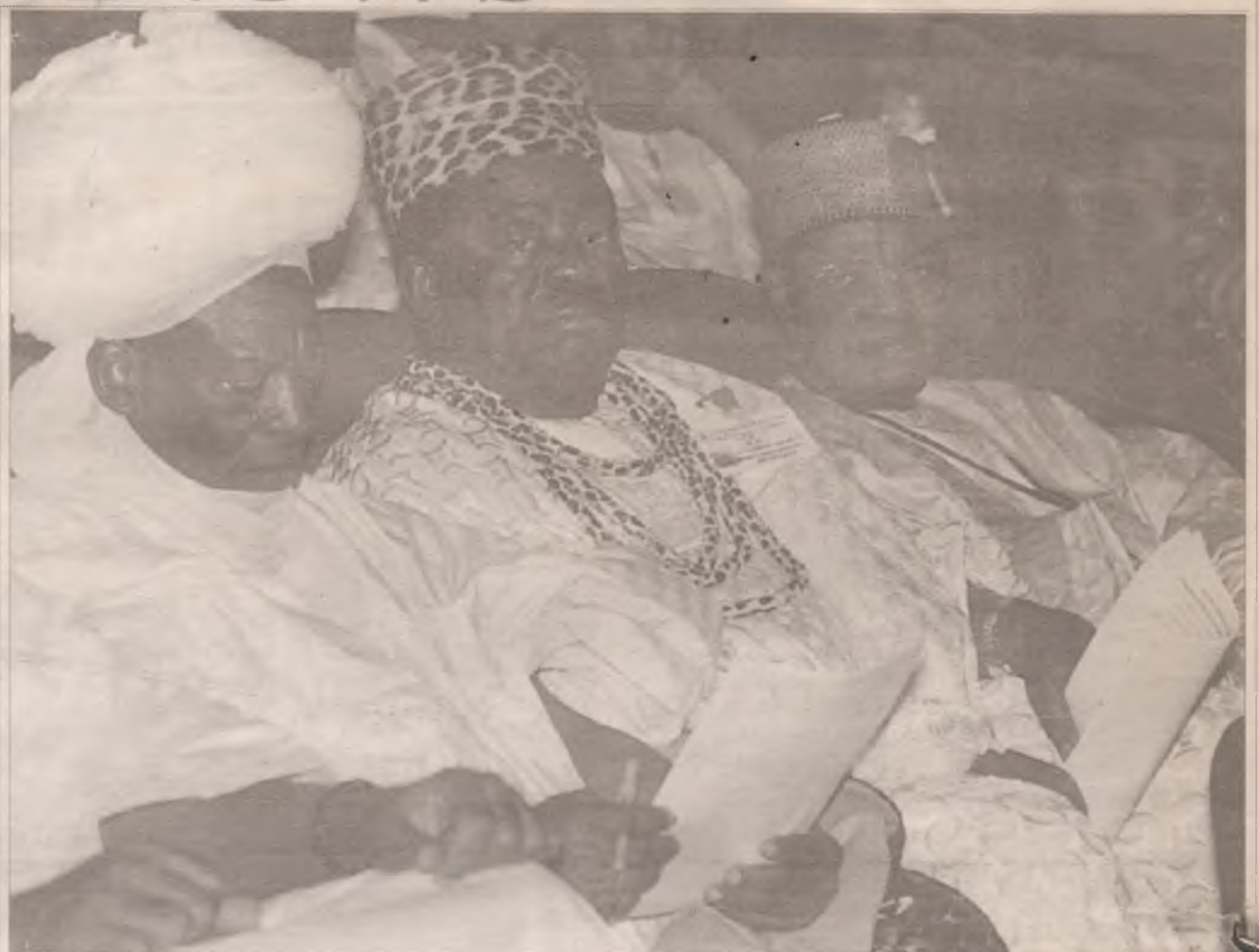
The foundation, which passed a vote of no confidence on Vice-President Atiku Abubakar because he is an interested party in the crisis appealed to Chief Obasanjo to intervene before the situation gets out of hand. It traced the genesis of the crisis to the deposition

of Freddy Bongo as the Hama Bachama, and the imposition of Asaph Zadok as the new ruler. It said, "ever since the government took these two unpopular decisions, which for all intents and purposes, are aimed at ridiculing the revered traditional stool of the Bachama kingdom, peace has eluded the kingdom as other people have resolved never to accept these aberrations and humiliations."

The foundation decried the continued presence of soldiers and anti-riot mobile policemen in Numan and other parts of the Bachama kingdom, alleging that they were there to perpetrate illegality through the use of force on the people.

It disclosed that so far, the Bwatiye people have lost three youths from the barrel of soldiers and police in Numan, and maintained that the presence of soldiers would not restore peace in Numan.

"The incidence of Odi and Zaki Biam are still fresh in our minds. We ask Mr. President to positively and urgently intervene in this unfortunate matter so that further bloodshed can be averted," it stated.



L.R.: Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Shehu Usman Abubakar, Tor Tiv Alfred Torkula, Alhaji Hassan Adamu, Wakilin Adamawa and Commodore Emeka Omeruah (rd.) at the National Political Reform Conference held in Abuja...recently.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

FG documents cultural assets nationwide

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, (Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt)

The federal government yesterday announced that it was taking inventory of cultural assets like sites, monuments, festivals and groves in the country.

Speaking yesterday in Port Harcourt at the opening of a national conference on developing strategies for viable cultural promotion and tourism development in a reforming economy, the minister of Culture and Tourism, Ambassador Frank Ogbuewu, said it was upon such an inventory that a tourism management and promotional strategy could be developed. He said that President Olusegun Obasanjo would soon launch a national endowment for the arts which would strengthen private and public sector partnership.

The minister appealed to states and local governments to cooperate maximally with the ongoing documentation of cultural assets in their areas, and disclosed that similar conferences had been held in Lagos, Enugu, Abuja and Kano, and were intended to rub minds with stakeholders in the culture and tourism enterprise so as to come up with a workable mechanism for utilising 'our cultural endowment to promote sustainable tourism in line with NEEDS and poverty alleviation programmes'.

In his speech at the occasion, Governor Peter Odili of Rivers State said Nigerians should focus more on traditional things rather than the quest for foreign culture. He said his administration would continue to support tourism through maintaining law and order, and provision of tourist centres.

Minister pledges grants to cotton farmers

The minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello, has said that arrangements have been concluded to offer grants to cotton farmers in order to boost cotton production in the country. Alhaji Bello, who made the statement in a chat with the Hausa Service of the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) monitored in Abuja yesterday, said that the gesture was in order to revamp cotton farming and production in the country.

He said, "We want to show farmers and textile industrialists that the federal government is ready to help them. Our aim is to boost cotton farming and production. We are also ready to give them export and import grants, particularly if textile industries process the cotton and want to export it."

According to him, farmers were expected to reciprocate government's gesture by shunning every negative tendency detrimental to the development of the industry, and urged them to report any disgruntled citizens who were smuggling the cotton into the country.

However, the leader of the Cotton Farmers Association, Alhaji Aliyu Isa

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter (Abuja)

Dan Maraya, expressed doubt over the implementation of the programme in the country. He said a number of seminars on empowering cotton farmers

had taken place without result in the country. He also hoped that government would implement the programme by offering enough grants to cotton farmers in order to achieve the desired objective in the country.



Governor Makarfi

Kaduna Assembly investigates Saminaka food tragedy

The Kaduna State House of Assembly has resolved to investigate the method of feeding students in boarding schools in the state. This was as a result of the recent suspected food poisoning which affected about 700 students of Government

College, Saminaka in Saminaka local government area of the state.

A motion of urgent importance moved by Hon. Muhammad Lawal Mato, representing Lere west constituency, said that the

food poisoning that affected the students was as a result of poor preservation of foodstuff. Hon. Mato appealed to the House to urgently intervene in the incident. He revealed that over 200 students were still at the Saminaka General Hospital receiving treatment due to the infection they contracted because of the

poisoning.

Meanwhile, the Kaduna Assembly has waded into the activities of the state's fire service to ascertain the cause of its ineffectiveness. The motion, which was moved by Malam Muhammad Auwal Muhammad, the chairman, Committee on Local Government, described the matter as urgent.

2 million children to get polio vaccination

Arrangements have been concluded for the flag-off of polio immunisation exercise as well as measles vaccination in Jigawa state. Two million children, according to health officials, are targeted

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

for the polio and measles vaccination in the state.

Health Commissioner Muktar Birniwa told *Daily Trust* that already, N16

million has been released for the purchase of syringes and other logistics. He added that additional N9.3 million was released for each round of polio immunisation by the state government. In addition, he said, 82.4 per cent participation was recorded during the last exercise, and expressed the hope that 90 to 100 per cent participation is expected in this round. Alhaji Birniwa disclosed that 1 million doses of the vaccines are already in stock.

In his analysis, the primary health care agency

boss, Alhaji Mustapha, said 997,000 children were targeted for polio, while 1,577,000 children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years would be vaccinated for measles.

According to him, 2,300 adhoc staff have been trained for the exercise which would be carried out in 287 wards within 4 days. The boss assured that the exercise would be successful considering the adequate arrangements already put in place. He commended the state government and other donor agencies for their contribution to the exercise.

Inter-religious conference holds in Zamfara

The 6th international conference on Christian/Muslim mutual relations in Nigeria has been scheduled to hold between 1st and 5th March, 2005. This year's conference, which has as its theme: 'Shari'a and Christian/Muslim Mutual Relation in Nigeria: the Way Forward', is to hold at Gusau Hotel, Gusau, Zamfara State.

From A. Muhammad Rakiya (Correspondent, Jos)

Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima of Zamfara State and the Most Rev. Peter Akinola are expected to deliver keynote addresses at the occasion. Also Dr. Tonie Iredia, the NTA DG, will deliver a paper on the role of media in a multi-religious society, among others.

The Sultan of Sokoto and

president general, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSC-IA), Alhaji Muhammad Maccido, is among dignitaries expected at the occasion.

The conference is organised by the Association of Christian/Muslim Mutual Relation in Nigeria (ACMMRN), in conjunction with NSCIA and the Zamfara state government. It is a biennial event, and four of such conferences were held in 1993, 1995, 1997 and 2002.

ABUJA TRUST

Immunisation: el-Rufai seeks LG boss, traditional rulers support

The minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Malam Nasir el-Rufai, has appealed to traditional rulers and chairmen of the six area councils in the FCT to mobilise residents for the first round of 2005 immunisation days expected to have started last Saturday. In a message read on his behalf by the acting permanent secretary of the ministry, Alhaji Mohammed Mai Jir, the minister said the traditional rulers should ensure that parents present their children for immunisation. He pleaded with the area council chairmen to be fully committed towards the total eradication of polio in the society and emphasised the need for routine immunisation in the territory in view of the present threat of tuberculosis and measles. The minister thanked UNICEF and other stakeholders for their efforts in eradicating polio from the FCT and Nigeria as a whole. Representing the executive secretary, Health and Human Services, Dr. Abubakar Kolo Mohammed stated that the FCT is the only state where population is dynamic, hence buttressing the need to prevent children from contracting diseases as a receptor state. Dr. Mohammed, who commended the *Ona* of Abaji, Alhaji Baba Yunusa, and the area council

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

chairmen in the FCT for their commitment, also reminded residents that immunisation is free and people should therefore take the advantage. The chairman of Kuje area

council, Alhaji Jibrin Wowo, on behalf of the six area councils and the *Ona* of Abaji, who represented the FCT Traditional Council, spoke respectively on the level of education and awareness they have created in their domains, but pleaded with the authorities to make enough materials available for the 4-day exercise.

Garki shopping complex traders yet to obey quit notice

Traders at the Area 1 Shopping Complex, Garki in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are yet to comply with the quit notice issued to them by the authorities of the Abuja Municipal area council (AMAC) to vacate the premises of the market. The notice, which will expire on March 13, 2005, was received by most traders with scepticism.

By Maimuna Yusuf, Reporter, Abuja

at the Rajab Shopping Plaza were too expensive for most of the traders to rent, adding that the situation was worsened by the authorities of AMAC, which charged additional fees. In his words, "If we are to pay N100, 000 for a shop, AMAC will add N40, 000; and if it is N250, 000, they will add 50,000, totalling N300, 000 per year; so tell me how many traders can afford it."

Abuja Trust went to the shopping complex recently to monitor situations and reactions of traders. According to Mr. Ifeanyi Orjiakor, a seller of electrical appliances, "I heard it over the radio, and since then, I have been making preparations to relocate to Rajab Shopping Plaza." He explained that most people would find it pretty impossible to relocate because the authorities concerned had not told them the alternative ground to go.

However, a few traders considered the story as a mere rumour that lacked bases since, according to them, their shops were not containers. They posited that in as much as the speculated threat was from AMAC and not the Federal Capital Development Authorities, the issue of demolition lacked weight.

Another trader, Mr. Ernest Chukwu, said that the shops

But at the Rajab Shopping Complex, traders have already occupied about 30 shops while 18 were yet to be rented.



Central Area after Friday prayers in Abuja

Community gets electricity after 2-year outage

Respite has come the way of residents of Unguwan Dodo in Gwagwalada area council of the FCT, as electricity supply has been restored to the community after two years of outage.

the community was part of his campaign promises to the community.

Speaking with *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* yesterday in Gwagwalada, the council chairman, Alhaji Zakari Angulu, said restoring power supply to the community was part of efforts to make life more comfortable for residents.

He said though the transformer was only serving a small portion of the community, the decision was to ensure that the situation of the past was avoided.

Angulu said the restoration of power through the purchase of a transformer for

He explained that since the old transformer in the community exploded, there was need to ensure that the new one was capable of serving all the power needs of community before full installation.

"Experts are working on the transformer to ensure that the new one does not explode again," he stressed.

The chairman said efforts were also being intensified to ensure that other communities lacking electricity in the council were provided.

He said that Paiko Kore community in the council, which has been without electricity for an unspecified number of months, would soon be provided with power supply.

"The council's aim is to ensure that every community in the area is provided with electricity," he said.

Residents of Unguwan Dodo, who spoke to *NAN*, expressed their gratitude to the council for providing them with electricity after the long period of outage.

They however appealed to the council to ensure that every area was covered and provided with electricity.

FCDA warns relocated traders

Traders relocated from the Bakassi Market in Abuja have been warned against converting their newly allocated shop plots at Dei-Dei for different purposes.

The Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) director of Urban and Regional Planning, Mr Augustine Ike, gave the warning on Monday in Abuja.

He told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* on Monday in Abuja, that any of the 4,200 shop owners who contravene the stipulated terms for the allocation would be penalised.

He stated that one of the conditions of allocation included movement and erection of specified shops within the next two months.

According to him, that condition was prioritised to make the allottees erect their shops before the on-set of the rainy season.

"Other conditions include the prohibition to transfer, sell, sub-let or building something different from the

designed shop contained in the allottee's letter.

"Payment of N18, 000 ground rent per annum, keeping the surroundings clean and paying for services are also stipulated in their letters of allocation.

"Each allottee's letter stipulated that the allocation which is renewable after five years could be revoked because of an overriding

public interest," he said.

He reminded allottees selling their allocation papers to remember that his department has the photographs of all allottees and would in no distant future conduct a random check to ascertain the veracity of shop ownership.

The director warned that any contravention of those conditions would not be tolerated.

Car falls off bridge

A Toyota Carina car with registration number, BZ 679 ABC, fell off the bridge and crashed into a ditch along Herbert Macaulay Way without hurting the driver.

The driver, a lady, was said to have lost control of the car while in motion. An eyewitness account told *Abuja Trust* that she was conscious when she was

By Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter, Abuja

brought out of the half-battered car.

As at the time of filing in this report, rescue efforts were being made to draw out the car from the ditch, while some policemen were seen conducting investigations. When asked to comment on the matter, the police officers said that they had no comments.

Man, 27, faces court over forgery

A 27-year-old man, Samuel Amanje, of Abuje Street, High Level, Makurdi, Benue State, on Tuesday appeared before the Chief Magistrates' Court sitting in Jabi on a two-count charge of forgery and cheating.

By Ebenezer John Buoro, Intern, Abuja

Maintenance Department of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA).

The accused pleaded not guilty to the charge. His counsel prayed the court to regard his client as innocent until he is found guilty of the charges preferred against him.

The chief magistrate granted the accused bail, and adjourned the case to March 17, 2005 for further hearing.

Meanwhile a 21-year-old undergraduate of the Department of Sociology at the University of Nigeria,

Nsukka, Paul Nwankwo, has appeared before the same court for alleged possession of firearm.

The prosecution said that the accused person was arrested by Inspector Christopher Uroko and a team attached to Utako police divisional headquarters at the Peace Mass Transit garage, Utako, Abuja, with a locally made pistol. He was charged with unlawful possession of firearm contrary to section 28 of Fire Arm Act, cap 146, law of the Federation 1990. He pleaded guilty to the charge. The case was adjourned to March 8, 2005 for ruling.

KANO TRUST

Nassarawa LG residents tasked on 2005 census

The people of Nassarawa local government area have been urged to participate in the forthcoming 2005 population census, saying the exercise will be hitch-free and peace. The council's chairman, Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, made the call while inaugurating the census committee.

He described the exercise as the bedrock for the execution of developmental projects.

The council boss observed that the government could not really determine projects without ascertaining population figures.

Alhaji Gawuna maintained that apparently realising the positive impact of the exercise to human development, the council has planned deliberately to make it a success.

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru
Correspondent, Kano

Some of the strategies to ensure the success of the census, according to him was the setting up of the committee with the mandate carry out enlightenment and sensitisation campaigns to ensure the support of the people.

Alhaji Gawuna dispelled the insinuation that the exercise was ploy by the western countries to reduce the population of Muslims.

He warned people against giving fake address, multiple registrations and intimidating the census officials, saying anyone found culpable will be prosecuted.

The chairman implored the committee members to see their appointment as a challenge.



Sterling Nigeria plc returns to Kaduna-Kano expressway to complete their contract. Work has however stopped at the Chiromawa bridge.
Pix: Musa Kazaure.

Rep gives cash, materials to constituents

A member of the House of Representatives representing Bagwai/Shanono federal constituency has donated cash and materials worth N14 million to his less privileged constituents.

The donation includes 60 motorcycles and 100 bicycles worth N7.8 million N2 million for the sponsorship of 40 youths who to a 1-year training at the Sani Abacha Youth Centre and the cash donation of N20,000 to each of the trainees as capital.

One million naira out of the amount goes to women empowerment programme under which 200 women received N5,000 each to set-up small businesses for themselves.

Presenting the keys and the cash to the beneficiaries, Alhaji Faruq Lawal said additional N2 million has been set aside for scholarship scheme to various students in the area. He disclosed that the gesture was meant to boost the morale of the electorate in the constituency.

He pointed out that the cash and the materials given to the beneficiaries were not on loan bases but a gift to make them independent.

Speaking also at the occasion, the state party chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Uba Lawal Jigo, represented by Alhaji Sidi Mustapha, charged other members of the House to emulate the good gesture of Faruq

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent, Kano

Lawal.

Alhaji Jigo then called on the beneficiaries to reciprocate the gesture by making good use of it. He appealed to those that are yet to benefit from similar gesture to be patient.

Kano to improve water services in metropolis

The Kano State government has ordered for three brand new high lift pumps from Scotland to improve water pumping to various parts of Kano metropolis.

Explaining reasons behind the current situation in water supply to Kano metropolis, the state commissioner for water resources, Alhaji Sabo Sagir, said when they came in, they met one

KNSG takes stringent measures against loan defaulters

Stringent measures will from now on be taken against civil servants who default in the repayment of loans collected from gov-

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent, Kano

ernment. The commissioner for finance, Alhaji Musa Suleiman Shanono, dropped

of the three pumps functioning, and they were able to rectify the other two which brought about the improvement in water supply when Mallam Shekarau assumed office in 2002.

"But as those pumps were too old, installed since 1985, they constantly break down and their spare parts are difficult to obtain. Hence

we decided to use the excess of N170 million from the purchase of water treatment chemicals in 2004 budget allocation to purchase brand new high pump machines from Scotland and we are expecting them in six months time. Once they arrive and are installed, the problem of sending water to every nook and cranny of Kano metropolis will be over," the commissioner assured.

the hint when receiving a task force committee report on verification of various loans disbursed from 1999 to date.

According to the report presented by the chairman of the committee, Alhaji Haruna Bello Bachira, a lot of discrepancies were detected in the disbursement and repayment of such loans from beneficiaries. He said the committee has identified a total of 578 loan defaulters cutting across all ministries and government establishments in the state.

The chairman further disclosed that the committee also uncovered twenty-eight officers who after benefiting from

some form of loan, left the service without refunding the owed loans as agreed in the conditions of repayment. Also discovered were substantial amounts deducted from salaries of loans beneficiaries at the High Court of Justice and the state water board, which are yet to be remitted to the coffers of the state ministry of Finance.

The commissioner however warned that government will not hesitate to punish erring culprits through appropriate disciplinary action to serve as deterrent. He also emphasised that the committee was not constituted to witch-hunt or blackmail any civil servant but to put proper government record straight.

Chellarams holds sensitisation forum on fire incidents

Chellarams Plc has organised a one-day interactive programme in Kano to enlighten foam manufacturing industries in Kano on how to fight fire outbreaks.

Speaking during the interactive session, the AGM, technical service of Chellarams Plc, Lagos, Mr. Iroegbu Nnamdi, said that foam industries need to know about the right chemicals to use in foam processing in order to reduce fire incidents.

He observed further that there has been increase in the

By Jamilah Nuhu,
Correspondent, Kano

cost of chemicals polyol and TDIs that are used for foam making because they are petroleum bases and that any time there was an increase in petrol, the price of foam chemicals also increases. He enjoined foam manufacturers to ensure quality products for their customers.

He expressed optimism that the Nigerian market for foam making would go beyond sleeping foam and furniture to foam for packaging and other uses.



The main thoroughfare of Yola road leading to Kurmi market under construction.

EKO TRUST

DFID to spend N500m on Lagos this year

The British government through the Department for International Development (DFID) would spend N500 million naira (about two million pounds) to prosecute its programmes in Lagos this year.

The programme manager in Lagos, Mr. John Barker, disclosed this in an interview with our correspondent in Ikoyi on Monday during a budget seminar packaged by the Ikoyi/Obalende local government area to unfold its 2005 programmes and projects to stakeholders in the area.

Barker said the DFID programmes would cover Ikoyi/Obalende and Apapa/Badia areas of the state where it hoped to achieve visible service improvements by providing technical assistance, funding, as well as direct support to pilot projects.

He said the execution of projects in the affected areas would be carried out under a special programme tagged: "State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy" which involved mainly policies targeted at service delivery and budgets

By Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

reflecting the strategy to achieve them.

The DFID representative said he had been working the Ikoyi/Obalende Local Government Council to produce policy based and target driven budget to initiate an Urban Redevelopment programme, which would be implemented the council working in partnership with its community, the state and federal government.

He said the programme would cover areas like education, drainage and waste, congestion, markets and security designed to ensure visible improvement within the neighbourhood.

Barker said the programme would drastically address the problems of traffic congestion and waste problems in Obalende and Ikoyi while it would solve the problems associated with the provision of pipe borne water to the people of Badia when it commenced.

He said the agency was already working with the state Water Corporation on the supply of clean water to the people of Ijora Badia.

UniLag to reopen soon

The vice chancellor of the University of Lagos, Professor Oye Ibidapo Obe, has hinted that the institution shut down in wake of students' disturbance in January this year would soon reopen.

The vice chancellor however said those suspected to have a hand in the arson/disturbance would be rusticated and after which they would face prosecution.

Professor Ibidapo Obe came out with this on Tuesday while receiving members of the University of Lagos Muslim Alumni in his office.

The VC who described the event as nothing short of a terrorist attack said the loss caused by the student's mayhem after proper assessment was a huge one.

Professor Obe who maintained "that the sad event was uncalled for explained that the crises started from students reactions to epileptic power supply and news of privatisation of student's hostels.

According to him, NEPA is passionate with the plight of the students that it supplies powers to campus

at eighty percent level compare to the environment where the school is located.

The VC maintained that all he is after is to improve the condition of students on campus while adding that the idea of the hostels privatisation was to make students have value for their money.

Professor Obe said meeting of the senate of the institution has been scheduled for this week to deliberate on the development and the way forward for the school.

Earlier, the deputy president, University of Lagos Muslim Alumni, Lere Alimi, who expressed shock over the level of damage, called for thorough investigations into the disturbances.

He appealed to the university's authorities to consider the immediate reopening of the institution to avoid distraction in the academic pursuit of innocent students.

Lere also suggested that all students and their parents must be made to sign an undertaken of good behavior to forestall similar occurrence in the future.



Major Al-Mustapha (left), listening to his counsel at the Lagos High Court, Ikeja...recently.

Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu.

Withheld LG fund: LASG insists it'll not compromise stand

Despite President Olusegun Obasanjo's comment on the withheld councils' allocation, the Lagos State government yesterday insisted that it will not compromise its principled stand.

"It (Lagos) will not compromise a principled stand on its constitutional rights in the Nigerian Federation," the state government reiterated thus through its Information and Strategy commissioner, Dele Alake.

The commissioner who reacted to Obasanjo's position in his monthly media chat on national television said the Tinubu's administration was of the view that the issue of local government creation was not a personality clash between the president and the Lagos state governor.

His words; "The Lagos State government is of the firm view that this matter is not personality contest between president Obasanjo and Asiwaju.

"It is strictly about constitutionalism and the rule of law. The state government

will always accord the highest respect to the exalted office of the president."

According to him, it was the height of disrespect for the constitution for president Obasanjo to justify the continued seizure of the Lagos council funds by the federal government despite the Supreme Court ruling.

He said the development was a threat to the future of Nigeria's democracy. "When those who have a legal and moral responsibility to uphold the letter and spirit of the constitution begin to

assault the rule of law with impunity, we have real cause to fear for the future of democracy in Nigeria.

"It is indeed ironical, if not downright cynical, for the president to claim to be obeying the judgment of the Supreme Court by refusing to release the funds," said the commissioner.

The commissioner alleged that the president was setting a new condition for the release of the fund as against the Supreme Court judgment. "Nowhere in the judgment did the Supreme

Court asked the Lagos State government to revert to 20 council areas. This appears to be a new condition set by president Obasanjo for the release of the funds and the truth is that the president cannot elevate his personal opinion above the decision of the highest court of the land," Alake said.

The commissioner explained that Obasanjo has both the moral and legal obligations to abide by the apex court's ruling since the funds were meant for local governments in the state.

Julius Berger yet to commence Ogun bridge project

More than four weeks after the Federal Ministry of Works directed construction giant, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc to repair the damaged expansion joints on the Ogun River Bridge at the Lagos end of the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, the firm is yet to move its equipment to site.

In the interim, officials of the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) are to ensure smooth ride and prevent accidents.

The managing director of the agency, Charles Unuigbo, said the remedial measure became imperative, as the material required by the construction company would have to be imported.

According to him, the federal government has given the firm the mandate to import the expansion joint,

but that it would take some time.

Said Unuigbo; "The material is not available locally. It has to be imported and we just gave Julius Berger a letter last Friday to enable it to bring in the materials. But in the interim, we have asked FERMA to replace the dislocated steel plates to prevent avoidable accidents," the FERMA boss said yesterday.

The dislocated expansion joints on both sides of the dual carriage way have been creating traffic nightmares to motorists along the inter-state route.

Works minister, Adeseye Ogunlewe, had approved a N49 million vote to rehabilitate that portion and others on the long bridge including the clearing of silted manholes to prevent flooding during raining season.

Prior to that approval, the controller of works in Lagos, Adedolapo Adeniji, an engineer had instructed the managing director of Julius Berger, Mr. Will to replace the dislocated expansion joints.

Adeniji told the managing director to mobilise his men to site and accommodate the cost under an existing all-year-round retainership arrangement between the Federal Ministry of Works and the firm.

But the minister who was according to a request from the FERMA boss endorsed the N49 million package for the immediate repair of all damaged portions between Warewa end of the long bridge in Ogun State and Berger in Lagos State.

Ogunlewe approved the fund during an inspection tour of the expansion and repair works on major federal highways in the two states.



Bola Tinubu

Unbeatable Offer!

BUY A
***Starcomms**
FIXED WIRELESS PHONE

#14,950!

+

****N1,000 FREE Airtime**



AND GET A FREE
Starcomms
Westec Phone Set

For your friends and relatives in Maiduguri

+

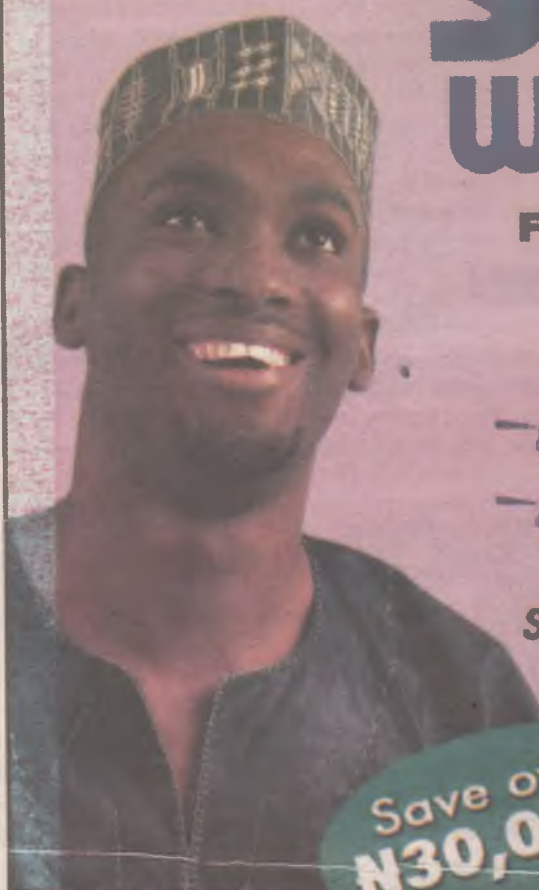
N1,000 FREE Airtime

FREE Call Minder (Voice mail)

FREE Instant Messaging (SMS)



**Starcomms will deliver to the address you give us.
 At no cost to you!**



**Save over
 N30,000!**

**Offer lasts till March 15, 2005 or while stock lasts. (Valid in Kano only)
 For free balance enquiry, dial *225***

*Starcomms Fixed Wireless Phone refers to product sample above or equivalent

**N1,000 FREE airtime PLUS - FREE Balance on Demand, FREE Call Minder and FREE Instant Messaging in Kano and Maiduguri

- No Access charge on Starcomms Lifestyle package - FREE local Starcomms to Starcomms calls - No negative billing

The Starcomms Westec phone set is programmed to work in Maiduguri only. Starcomms reserves the right to change

prices and tariffs at any time without prior notice. Promo conditions apply.

Kano Customer Care Centre:

16 Audu Bako way, Kano. Tel: 064 959910

Kano Dealer Centres:

1. Kenneth & George. 75 Ibrahim Taiwo Rd., opp. IRS building, Kano. Tel: 064 944666

2. Ephybrand Nigeria Ltd. 2b Zaria Rd., by Zoo Rd junction, Kano. Tel: 064 944861

3. Alennsar Communications. Plot 6, Zoo Rd., Kano.

4. First Option. Shop 4, No. 89 Yoruba Rd. Sabon Gari, Kano.

Starcomms

...we speak your language.

For more information call (toll free) 941234 | LAGOS | KANO | MAIDUGURI | www.starcomms.com

News

Akwa Ibom sets up Tsunami disaster relief committee

The Akwa Ibom State government has set up Tsunami Disaster Relief Committee with the Commissioner for Information and Social Re-orientation, Mr Parchi Umoh as the chairman.

In a letter signed by the secretary to the State Government, Elder Efiang Esang, the committee has the chairman of the state council of chiefs, His Royal Highness, Okutu Asiak, chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria

From Edet Etanen, in Uyo

(CAN) in the state, Bishop Camillus Etukudah; state chairman of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Mr Oyong Etim Asuquo, the state director of National Orientation Agency; Elder Ebong Akpan, the general manager of AKBC, Miss Mercy Otu; state newspapers corporation, Deaconess Ekaette Ekpo, Obong Daniel Ekanem of Nung Ukana Ibesikpo,

assistant director Office of the Secretary to the State Government; Mr Ubon Akpan and the chairman of Ethical and Attitudinal Reorientation Commission (EARCOM), Mr Esem Eyibo.

According to the release, the committee is saddled with the responsibilities as its terms of reference to raise resources for the victims of the disasters which affected south-east Asia and part of Africa; mount publicity and make necessary contacts for the purpose of collecting donations to the victims.

The Tsunami Disasters Relief Committee is also to sensitise and mobilise the people towards the programme with the aid of the National Orientation Agency in the state.

The secretary to the State Government, Elder Efiang Esang, while congratulating the appointees charged the committee to work closely with his office with a view to establishing committees at the local government level, and also tasked them to coordinate the collection of donations at the state and local government levels.

Elder Esang further charged the members to intensify effort and work cooperatively in order to render faithful and dedicated service to justify the confidence reposed in them by the state government.

12 died and two injured in a fatal auto crash

No fewer than 20 people lost their lives and two others injured as a result of fatal auto accident that occurred along Katsina - Kano road near Badima village of Rimi local government area, Katsina state.

Daily Trust findings at the scene of the accident discovered that the accident which occurred around midnight on Saturday, left the two vehicles burning in flames up to the early hours of Sunday morning.

Further investigations at the sector command of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) in Katsina disclosed that out of the 14 passengers inside the commuter vehicle, a J5 bus, with registration number XA 115

From Lawal Ibrahim, in Katsina.

BAT, 10 of them were burnt and were rushed to Katsina Federal Medical Centre.

The sector commander further disclosed that the accident occurred as a result of an attempt by the J5 bus driver to overtake which led to a collision with a heavy truck with foreign registration No. RT 9222 X, a Mercedes Benz.

The sector commander, Katsina, Dr U. I. Gummi attributed the prevalence of accident cause in the state with recklessness, over loading and over speeding as well as failure to respect all the traffic rules and regulations.

Kwara approves N69m for flood control in Ilorin

The Kwara State government has approved N69 million for the channelisation of Ilorin township in its effort to control flooding. Governor Bukola Saraki who disclosed this to newsmen in Ilorin explained that the channelisation project would check the negative effects of flooding which has become a yearly ritual in Ilorin.

He said the project would

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent, Ilorin

begin soon but advised the public to stop dumping refuse on waterways, to complete the high priority placed on environmental sanitation to ensure a healthy society.

Governor Saraki also assured that more dust bins would be provided at needy areas in the state capital.

Reacting to the alleged

indiscriminate sacking of staff at the College of Education, Oro, Dr Saraki said the management acted according to the recommendations of the white paper of government.

He said following complaints, "I waded in to ascertain whether the management went outside the content of the white paper and found out that the action was in order."



The Vmobile stand at the just concluded Kaduna International Trade Fair.

Masari explains Nigerian parliament

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, yesterday said that the parliament in Nigeria is a new thing which must be nurtured as it constitutes too much an integral part of democracy to be relegated to the background.

Speaking at a public presentation of a book entitled: "The Nigerian Legislative and Executive Companion" which held at the National Assembly, Hon Masari charged the organisers of the event, the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) as well as embassies and high commissions in the country to assist Nigeria in developing a real functional democracy.

"The way the parliament is regarded by the people seem to suggest that we only make promises and cannot deliver. Likewise, the bureaucrats see it as a bottleneck, and the executives sometimes act without our input" he said.

He added that while the environment in which parliament operate is not absolutely ready for the role

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter

which it has to play, there remains the need for parliament to struggle with the system so as to become accepted as an integral part of democracy.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, the executive director of CRP, Mr Yinka Lawal, said that the significance of the book is underscored by the compelling need to entrench democratic values and tenets in Nigeria.

The maiden edition of the 924 page handbook, which was published with support from the foreign and Commonwealth office including the British High Commission, focuses on the National Assembly, state Houses of Assembly, federal and states' executives, political parties in Nigeria as well as the ECOWAS parliament.

The book, according to Mr Lawal, is intended to facilitate constituent's easy access to their elected representatives and other democratic institutions in Nigeria, thereby promoting popular participation in governance

and enhance greater interaction between both legislators and executives at different governmental and international levels.

"This handbook," he added, "is intended to open up and encourage popular participation in governance as practiced by many democratically advanced countries, and to promote dialogue among them and to serve as a means for legislators and government functionaries to receive feedback from their constituents and the public on their performances."

"The opportunities created by this book will indeed be very useful to different segments of the Nigerian society, like the legislators, executives, civil society groups, diplomatic corps and the general public," he said.

The cover price of the book is N5,000.00 CRP is a human rights non-governmental organisation registered in Nigeria that seeks to promote the rule of law and fundamental liberties with a review to strengthening democracy and democratic institutions in the country.

Electricity razes Cross River community

Less than two months after the commissioning of an electrification project in the state by Governor Donald Duke of Cross River, the people of Afaha Okoyong Odukpani local government area of the state are now displaced as a result of fire incident. More than seven houses were razed and property worth more than N10 million were destroyed by the fire which Daily Trust learnt emanated from an electrical fault in the transformer that feeds the community.

The transformer, according to sources blew hot and caused simultaneous burning of residential houses at the late hours of Friday, last weekend and attempts to put off the fire failed.

The village head of the community, Chief Dominic Aniba told Daily Trust that the Afaha people are now displaced, as they are rendered homeless following the incidence.

He called on the local and the state government to come to their aid to enable them return to their abode soon.

From Bassey Ita, in Calabar

Speaking in a telephone interview on the matter, the chairman of the council said he sympathised with the

people over their plight, adding that the council will liaise with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to assist them return home.

Gov Bukar threatens exco members over performance

Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim of Yobe state has threatened to do away with any member of the state's executive council who fails to do well in discharging his or her duties.

Governor Ibrahim who gave this warning signal was speaking to media men shortly before the weekly state executive council meeting, held at the weekend in Damaturu, Yobe state.

According to the governor, he will not hesitate to relieve any member of the state's executive of his or her appointment provided the government was not satisfied with the appointee's performance.

While making welcome remarks to some newly appointed commissioners, Governor Ibrahim cautioned one of the appointees who had

been removed from the state's executive council at the past due to non-performance, to take his job seriously with his re-appointment.

He observed that the re-appointed commissioner has learnt his lessons when he was relieved, saying that Yobe state people expect so much from the executives.

Governor Ibrahim advised that the appointees should never disassociate themselves from government decisions and policies programmes, since they are part of such decisions.

He cautioned that the appointees would easily fall into trouble where they deny involvement in decisions reached at executive council meetings.



Committee on Communication, Hon Kurfi Idris Ishaq (right) and Hon ... meeting held at the ... Abuja ... recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ACADEMIC
COMMUNITY AT THE NATIONAL POLITICAL
REFORM CONFERENCE (NPRC)**

**NOTICE TO ALL UNIVERSITIES, POLYTECHNICS
AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

**INSTITUTIONAL DISCUSSION FORUM ON THE POSITION
OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ON MAJOR ISSUES
AT THE NATIONAL POLITICAL REFORM CONFERENCE**

The National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) has taken off with representatives of the academic community as participants. The representatives who are drawn (two each) from the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and with geopolitical spread, have agreed on a commitment to canvass the views, not of their individual persons, but those of the community which they represent. As a consequence, a bottom-up approach of consensus building through institutional participation in the debates has been endorsed. In this regard, all heads of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are invited to convene a Forum where the major issues on the NPRC agenda will be debated by the local academic community.

Objectives

The objectives of the Institutional Discussion Forum on the National Political Reform Conference are:

- to debate from a well-researched perspective, the options for each agenda item that will ensure the emergence of a strong, united and vibrant Nigeria;
- to propose with reasons, the option that is most appealing to the local academic community and hence regarded as the institutional stand on the NPRC agenda items;
- to discuss reforms in the education sector for presentation at NPRC that will ensure a revitalisation of the sector and to make it more responsive to national needs;
- to ensure that all members of the academic community have an opportunity to contribute to the national dialogue; and
- to provide institutional input into the development of a Position Paper from the Academic Community to NPRC.

Issues

The following issues (not exhaustive) are expected to be discussed at the Institutional Forum:

- Constitutional reforms
- Political party reforms
- Electoral reforms
- Judicial/legal reforms
- Civil society reforms
- Consultation and consensus building
- Police/prison system reforms
- Reforms of the structure of governance
- Education reforms (not one of the issues on the NPRC Agenda but to be canvassed by the representatives of the academic community. Each institution will be expected to articulate its position on reforms including structure of the educational system, its governance and funding).

Methodology

The Institutional Forum is expected to be attended by all members of the academic community. Each institution is expected to subject the options to debates during the Forum and agree on an option for each item. The option selected is to be supported by well-researched reasons and superior arguments that are characteristic of an intellectual community.

Submission and Closing Date

All submissions should be word processed in Microsoft Word format and forwarded in a diskette or preferably as e-mail attachment to:

- Executive Secretary, NUC (pokebukola@yahoo.com) FOR UNIVERSITIES
- Executive Secretary, NBTE (nyakubu@nbte-nigeria.org) FOR POLYTECHNICS
- Executive Secretary, NCE (kabiru_isyaku@yahoo.com) FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

**Submissions should be received on or before
Wednesday March 9, 2005**

Professor Peter Okebukola Professor Nimi Briggs Engr. (Dr.) Nuru Yakubu

Dr. Joseph Omada Dr. Kabiru Isyaku Professor Cletus Uwazurike

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

VACANCY

HORIZONS MEDICAL CENTER

Job opportunities exist in a newly established ultra-modern specialist hospital in Abuja for highly qualified and skilled applicants to fill the available positions listed below:

(i) Medical Officers -

QUALIFICATIONS: Medical Degree;

EXPERIENCE: At least 5 years post NYSC cognate experience.

(ii) Nurses -

QUALIFICATIONS: Successful completion of nursing Degree/School; Registration with Nursing Council;

EXPERIENCE: At least 5 years cognate Experience; Post-basic qualification in Midwifery will be an added advantage.

(iii) Laboratory Technologist -

QUALIFICATIONS: Certificate in Laboratory Technology;

EXPERIENCE: At least 3 years cognate Experience; A diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology will be an added advantage.

(iv) Accountant -

QUALIFICATIONS: A degree/diploma in Accounting;

EXPERIENCE: At least 5 years cognate experience.

(v) Medical Records Personnel -

QUALIFICATIONS: Diploma in Medical Records;

EXPERIENCE: At least 3 years cognate experience.

METHOD OF APPLICATION -

Interested candidates should apply in their own handwriting to the following address:

**The Hospital Manager
Horizons Medical Center
Plot 777 Bouake Street
Zone 6, Wuse
Abuja**

A detailed CV (with contact phone numbers) and photocopies of relevant documents must accompany all applications. Knowledge in computer application will be an added advantage.

All applications that do not comply with above requirements or are not received within two weeks of this publication will not be considered.

NB: Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

**The Hospital Manager
Horizons Medical Center
Abuja**

Inside Politics

National confab, a political gimmick — ACF NEC member

The president, North Central Youth Forum and member of the national executive council of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Alhaji Audu Sule has described the ongoing National Reform Conference as a political gimmick that confirms the failure of the present government.

Alhaji Sule, who stated this to newsmen in Abuja, said the convocation of the conference was an indication that the government has lost its bearings in governance, warning that the northern youths would not condone any move by anybody to break-up the unity of the country.

"Youths from this zone will not succumb to any plan by any group or individual to marginalize or separate the

unity of the country which our leaders laid their lives for."

He called on the northern delegates at the conference and representatives of ACF to firmly defend their interest without any fear.

"With some of the best persons nominated from the north, I am strongly in support of any decision taken by them."

Sule who is from Benue state, urged northern youths to rally behind their delegates and support whatever decision taken by the delegates to the conference.

In his words, "the northern youth are solidly behind whatever decision taken by the northern delegates to the conference provided it protects the interest of the region and its people."



From right: Governor Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State, Senator Farouk Bello and Justice Belgore at a function in the house, Birnin Kebbi...recently.

ANPP commends Abaji council chairman

The leadership of the Kotonkarfe local government chapter of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) in Kogi State has commended the chairman of Abaji Area Council in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Alhaji Muhammad Angulu Loko, for the various development projects he has executed since coming to office.

The ANPP leadership, under the chairmanship of Alhaji Hussaini Shuaibu said their decision to visit the council chairman was informed by the good relationship that exists between the Kotonkarfe local government chapter of the party and the chairman as well as the activities of the council chairman which have spilled over into their local government.

Alhaji Hussaini also said that the visit of the ANPP executive to Abaji area council was a kind of "thank you visit" to the council chairman for his contribution during the last local government election which could however not take place.

The Kotonkarfe chapter ANPP chairman further observed the historical relationship between Abaji and Kotonkarfe manifesting in peace and cordial relationship through political, social and economical for a spanning a long period of time urging the Abaji area council chairman to continue to cement and foster cordial relationship and co-existence so that the party would do even better in 2007, both at federal and state levels.

In his welcome remarks, the Abaji area council chairman, Alhaji Muhammad Angulu Loko, expressed appreciation to the executive members of ANPP from Kotonkarfe for the visit and vote of confidence on him, assuring them that he is

always ready to support them more so as they belong to the same party in addition to the long relationship that exist between Kotonkarfe and Abaji.

Alhaji Loko also assured the ANPP chieftains that he was always ready to render assistance to the party both financially and morally urging them to continue to live in peace so that ANPP will continue to wax stronger.

Confab: PDP youths canvass sanction for Ngige, Alamieyeseigha

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) youths vanguard has canvassed for sanctions to be imposed by the party on Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra state and his Bayelsa state counterpart, Chief D.S.P. Alamiesiegha for making unsavory statement about President Olusegun Obasanjo over the national political reform conference.

National coordinator of the youths group, Mallam Yusuf Ahmed, in a statement in Abuja weekend, said the party should punish Gov. Ngige for his reaction to President Obasanjo's charge to delegates to the conference not to discuss Nigeria's unity.

Similarly, the group said the Bayelsa state governor deserved to be sanctioned for his umbrage against the president for including federalism as one of the no-go-areas to be discussed at the confab.

The group has therefore demanded that the action of the two governors be discussed at the March 3, 2005, national executives committee meeting of the party holding in Abuja.

According to the national coordinator, sanctioning the governors would act as a deterrent to

PDP chairmanship: Plateau elders support Tapgun

As lobbying and secret campaigns to get the chairmanship of the largest party in Nigeria, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) continue, a group, concerned elders in Plateau state, has said that the Mr. Fidelis Tapgun, former governor in the state is the most credible candidate for the position.

The group, in a statement signed on its behalf by Dr. Peter Manjel, and made available to *Daily Trust* in

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent (Lagos)

Lagos said Mr. Tapgun appeared to be the most credible person to mid-wife between the "extremists" and the liberal members of PDP.

It said the party needed a leader versed in the art of leading at the edge of chaos, adding that members have no choice but to go for a new leadership that will position

the party to cope with contradictory forces.

"It needs a leadership that is more politically savvy and instrumental. There is a need for a team that can transform the destruction tensions of diversity in the party into a construction leadership action. It needs someone like Mr. Fidelis Tapgun for the position," said the group.

The concerned elders in Plateau said PDP needed someone most neutral, distant from the camps spoiling for supremacy and without any overt ambition beyond seeing to its survival and ultimately the well being of the Nigerian nation.

"As a campaign director-general of PDP in the presidential elections in 2003, he delivered. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo had a commanding lead across the country. With such a feat, Ambassador Tap-

gun is well positioned for the job," said the pleatea elders.

The groups, who said the PDP is made up largely of strange bed-fellows, said many of the actors that featured in the collapsed 2nd republic in 1983 are key members of PDP, "hence the party needs a person who did not participate in the 1983 episode."

"One major issue, which many may find difficult to admit, is the fact that the PDP is made up largely of strange bed-fellows. Key members of the party were actors in the NPN and NPP, two political parties that forged an accord that eventually collapsed, and which created deep mistrusts between and amongst the actors that have lasted long after the demise of the second republic in 1983. But during that period Fidelis Tapgun was an administrator, not an active politician, hence he was neutralize," said the group.

Pro-IBB groups strategise plan for 2007

The Akwa Ibom state coordinator of the Peoples' Democratic Front (PDF), retired General Anthony D. Etukudo has disclosed that rather than working as splinter groups, Pro-IBB groups would work together as a team under a much stronger body known as the 'Peoples' Democratic Front (PDF).

Retired General Etukudo, who made this known in Eket, Akwa Ibom state when pro-IBB activists numbering hundreds paid him a solidarity visit with a request that the co-ordinator involves them in the task of bringing IBB back to power in 2007, added that the idea of group work was accepted as the strategise approach towards the 2007 IBB presidential elections.

Otuekong Etukudo, while thanking the groups for their patience, resolve and determination, informed the groups

From Edet Ekannem, Correspondent (Uyo)

that they should not under any circumstance allow themselves to be intimidated by those whose agenda is personal, dubious and mercenary, into taking actions inconsistent with the wishes, interest and specific directive of Alhaji Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

He urged all the IBB supporters to declare for PDP but to disregard all irresponsible and unauthorized pronouncements, publications and call for meeting by groups other than PDF.

Otuekong Etukudo charged the committee to be fair and objective in carrying along all pro-IBB groups and IBB friends irrespective of ethnic group, sex, age or socio-economic status, and urged such groups or individuals to take advantage of

PDFs open-door policy to identify with the group and make imputs at the PDF's secretarial in Uyo.

Thanking members of pro-IBB groups for their high level of sacrifice, patience

and loyalty to the cause, the elder statesman called on Nigerians to participate in this movement for democratic stability so that according to him, Nigerians will not convulse at the cross roads of confusion.

PDP UK chapter changes leadership

The United Kingdom chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) ha appointed a caretaker committee to steer its affairs pending election of a substantive executive committee.

The constitution of the caretaker body followed the dissolution of the erstwhile executive committee after a vote of no confidence had been passed on it at a meeting held on Sunday, 27 February, 2005.

According to a notification letter sent to the

National Headquarters of the PDP in Abuja, the caretaker committee is to be headed by Bako E. Chiroma (NE) as chairman and Princess Adeyinka Adedoyin (SW), secretary and nine others as members. The letter, which was jointly signed by the caretaker chairman and secretary, and made available to *Daily Trust* assured that the UK chapter of the PDP "remains united, peaceful and focused on the principles and ideals that form the bedrock of the PDP."



Arewa Consultative Forum

No. 4A Sani Sambo Avenue, P. O. Box 1149, Kaduna-Nigeria. Tel: (062) 218007, 218009, Fax: 218004

Website: www.arewaconsultativeforum.com

E-mail: mutanenarewa@arewaconsultativeforum.com

BIRTHDAY FELICITATIONS TO

ALHAJI SHEHU USMAN ALIYU SHAGARI AT 80



His Excellency,
Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Usman Shagari 'Turakin
Second Republic President of the Federal Re
Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, sends greetings and felicitations to our Patron, Alh

to', GCFR,
of Nigeria
Shagari, GCFR, at 80

At the Fifth Annual Memorial Lecture in memory of Sir Ahmadu Bello, *Sardauna of Sokoto*, Premier
Sunday Awoniyi, in his lecture paid tribute to you as the third lecturer of the
"Alhaji Shehu Shagari, our respected, amiably former President of the Federal Republic
humility, patience and accommodation of the foibles of all sorts of people so essential in our
commitment to democracy endeared him to many, particularly those who were privile
This tribute was apt, well deserved and still relevant toda

ern Nigeria in November 2000, Ch
ns follows:
ria who demonstrated that kind
t democratic setting. His love a
ave worked closely with him".

We wish you many more years of service to true democracy in our be
Signed:

untry.

Signed:

Col. Hamidu I. Ali
Secretary-General,
Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF.
No. 4A Sani Sambo Avenue, Kaduna.

THE ARTS

Arts Council boss is dead

By Crispin Oduobuk,
Group Literary Editor

Dr Nnakaenyi Arinze, Director/Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Abuja, is dead. A statement from the management of the NCAC said that Dr Arinze passed away "in the early hours of the morning of Thursday 10th February 2005."

Before his appointment as Director/CEO of the NCAC in 2000, the late Dr Arinze had been with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) as the finance and supplies



The late Dr Nnakaenyi Arinze

director from 1996-1999. Earlier on, he had served, also as a director, in the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) from 1993-1996.

The late Dr Arinze also held a number of directorial posts within the federal civil service between 1989 and 1991 as

Directorate of Museums and Monuments.

The NCAC press statement further conveyed the information that the late Dr Arinze started work with the federal civil service in 1972 as a museum education officer, adding that "he brought to NCAC a wealth of experience that spans over 30 years."

Meanwhile, arrangements are underway to inter the late NCAC boss on Friday the 15th of April at his hometown of Isingwu in Nnewi South Local Government Area, Anambra State. The late Dr Nnakaenyi Arinze is survived by a wife and children.

Ex James Bond, Sean Connery in a \$30 million US lawsuit

By Emma Price

The 74-year-old former James Bond star and movie legend, Sean Connery, is being sued by his New York City neighbor for a cool \$30 million US. Connery is alleged to be 'creating hell', with loud music, dripping water and a plague of rats; in general they claim he is making their lives miserable.

Dr. Burton Sultan has accused Connery of trying to force his family off the premises so he can acquire the property at a knock-down price. Connery has been living in the Manhattan apartment, owned by his son Stephane, since April 2001.

In his lawsuit, Sultan accused the actor of allowing workers to create a deafening noise, fumes, dripping water and an infestation of rats, not to mention loud music allegedly played at all hours.

Sultan claimed that construction work has wreaked havoc on his collection of museum-quality Victorian and early 20th-century wicker furniture, irreparably damaged by water, falling plaster and black soot and grime.

The suit, filed by lawyers Engel & McCamey, describes an alleged incident when Sultan's daughter knocked on the veteran Scottish actor's door to ask him to turn the music down. Connery himself answered the door in his bathrobe, unkempt and disheveled. "Connery's appearance and behavior was that of a rude, foul-mouthed, fat old man," the lawsuit read.

But the actor's publicist said the claims were



This picture of the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre is part of the collection of posters of British mosques launched by the British Council last Monday in Abuja.

ridiculous. She said that the property was owned by his son Stephane but insisted Sean lived in the Bahamas. "Sir Sean Connery does not own any property in the US and is rarely in New York," she said.

"Anyone in the US can sue for anything. That does not mean that the suit has any merit. The claims are ridiculous," she reiterated.

Late last year Connery, who gained fame as Agent 007 in the Bond films, placed 13th on a British magazine's poll of the greatest living movie stars over age 50.

Courtesy Earthtimes.org



Ex James Bond actor, Sir Sean Connery

Black 'street' literature comes of age in U.S.

By Diane Bartz

After years in the literary underground, "street lit"—a sort of hip hop black literature that is often self-published and sold on U.S. street corners—may finally hit the big time.

Street lit stories are rough in every sense—the language, the violence, the explicit descriptions of sex and the determination of the characters to escape desolate inner city neighbourhoods.

Religion, obsession with brand names and explicit struggles between right and wrong play a large role in the books, making them a combination of morality tales, Mario Puzo's most violent Mafia novels and chick-lit shopping fiction.

"It wasn't really a phenomenon at first," said Simba Sana, who co-owns the small Karibu book chain in suburban Washington, D.C. "They basically appealed to dudes who were just out of prison."

Sister Souljah's novel *The Coldest Winter Ever* has sold a million copies since it came out five years ago and still sells well. She and writers like Nikki Turner have been picked up by big publishers partially because of loyal women readers.

"What really broke it open was Sister Souljah," said Sana. "It was a book about a black girl... It broke it open for Nikki Turner."

At any given time, seven or eight of Karibu's best-selling paperbacks are street lit novels, said Sana.

But it could go farther. The same middle-class white people who read Ha Jin because of an interest in China or Mario Vargas Llosa to get an inside glimpse of Latin America might read Solomon Jones' gripping *The Bridge* to learn about ghettos in their own city.

Tony Medina, who teaches literature and writing at Howard University, would prefer to see bookstores stock better written books about street life—works like *Daddy was a Number Runner* by Louise Meriweather or *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas.

"I come from the projects. I come from the 'hood. It's like any place; you have beauty and ugly side by side. Why celebrate the ugly?" he said. "I think it (street lit) causes a problem. ... It romanticizes hustlers and pimps."

"There's a whole wealth of literature out there that's more challenging, more redemptive," he said. "People are saying, 'At least they're reading.' That's garbage. That's a cop-out."

Malaika Adero, a senior editor at the Atria division of

Simon and Schuster which publishes Sister Souljah and four other street-lit authors, disagrees.

"It is a portrayal of what is urban America and what goes on in marginalized societies," she said. "The readers of these books are satisfied to see the world as they know it, to see language as they hear it or speak it. They see characters that they know."

Street lit's fathers were Iceberg Slim, whose real name was Robert Beck, and Donald Goines, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both had been to prison and wrote about prostitution, drugs and streets from a first-hand view. Slim's best known book was *Pimp: The Story of My Life* while Goines' most popular book was *Black Girl Lost*.

These were authors without creative writing degrees, agents, publishers or appearances on television talk shows. Authors would often pay to have books published, and they would be sold on street corners and out of the back of vans.

Despite the grittiness of Nikki Turner's novels, she was raised by her grandparents to be a good girl. Her background is middle class and conservative.

"Basically I read *Coldest Winter Ever* by Sister Souljah and when I put that book down, there were no more books. At the time, I was a travel agent. I said, 'I'm gonna write a book,'" said Turner, 30. "I was always intrigued by that lifestyle but I couldn't have joined it. My grandparents would have killed me."

Turner's first two books, *A Hustler's Wife* and *A Project Chick*, sold a combined total of 150,000 copies, said her manager, Marc Gerald.

Turner has been signed by Ballantine Books as their first street lit writer. Her third book, *The Glamorous Life: A Novel*, comes out in April.

Borders bookstores has caught on to the books' popularity and are including street lit writers like Vicky Stringer in their African American fiction along with classics like James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

Sana seemed frustrated with the quality of some of the books. Four of the most popular novels are riddled with errors. In one, two characters' names are switched after one dies. In all four, slang is sometimes incomprehensible, grammatical errors common, moral characters tend to be made of cardboard and the writing often repetitious. But all are fast-moving and hard to put down. Reuters

THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS

Can FG successfully reform film industry?

The film industry crisis is pitting some elements of the Movie Producers Association of Nigeria, led by Mr Madu Chikwendu, against others in the industry. It is not as if the industry has been without controversies in the past. Indeed, there had been a multitude of them. In fact it was these controversies that made the federal government to step into the confusion in order to bring some quiet into that money-spinning sector which in recent times have earned around \$2 billion for Nigeria.

Apparently, the aim of government is to set needed fundamentals rules which would enable the industry become entirely private-sector driven and efficient for the overall benefit of all and sundry, hence, the reason behind the setting up of a committee to examine the situation on ground and make recommendations that could transform the industry.

As Mr Chikwendu pointed out recently, there is a need to put structures on ground as reorganisation of the industry is needed for the distribution channels and production. However, when things are in place,

**From Bright Ewulu,
Deputy Business Editor,
Lagos**

government can effectively enable the sector by way of policy and financial support. Speaking to journalists during the recent media launch of MTV Base, the minister of information, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu spoke of the readiness of his

ministry to reform the film industry in the overall interest of the nation. He said although the committee saddled with the responsibility is still at work, the federal government will continue to show its support for the industry.

He stressed that government's determination to give Nigerians a film industry that they can be

Analysis

proud of is better captured by the fact that President Olusegun Obasanjo is a lover of Kingsley Ogoro's film *Across The Niger*.

The minister told Nigerians that they should respect their own movies and film stars and entertainers, saying that the contribution

of these individuals and group to the image of Nigeria is wonderful. He said the contribution of the stars should be appreciated by all Nigerians. Going further, the minister disclosed that speculation that the ministry will end up merging the Film Censors Board and the

National Film Authority is not true.

Despite the government's on-going effort to reform the sub-sector, some analysts are convinced that the effort will remain cosmetic until the issue is approached holistically. For them, the government should look at the entire genres of the showbiz industry and the creative sector in order to really transform the situation.

They believe that the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), patent laws of the land and all such legislations bordering on intellectual property protection should be emphasised. According to them, this would ultimately transform the economy when the majority of Nigerians can safely enjoy royalties from their intellectual property. This would ultimately stem piracy of books, software, songs, art works of all sorts, games, etc, as well as protect investors across the nation. This, they posit, will end up bringing more revenues into the coffers of federal and state governments.



President Olusegun Obasanjo



Minister of Information Chukwuemeka Chikelu

Bad taste and fake accents on radio

By Ogbu Samson Ode

For many, weekends are those quiet days that permit being lazy and unkempt. Even when it is a week day, one can convince his or her mind to think Saturday or Sunday. On these sacred days of rest when the very shallow pockets of people are

dry, the radio is the only alternative to sleeping endlessly. More so, since NEPA now rations television viewing hours indirectly. Music is truly universal; it may come from a particular place, of a particular language, but it belongs to all who appreciate the artiste, the art and listen to it. We

Opinion

should only give criticism to encourage the art and dissuade the misfits.

With my anger rising I tuned my transistor radio to more torture. This time it was the FM station located at one of the hills in Asokoro that

was dishing out the irritation. The names of the presenters were all abbreviated to just alphabets (understandable considering the need to be hip on radio) but the attempt at humour was horrible. The jokes were very dry with

constant allusions to prostitution and sex: *bad taste*. One of the presenters did the worst impression of a Hausa man I have ever heard. The fact that he could not even pronounce the word properly made things worse. To him Hausa was 'Aausa'. I make bold to tell radio announcers and presenters

to show their audiences some respect. We are not all overly impressed with the fake American accent, music and hip style. Learn pronunciations.

This was how one of my sacred days of rest was almost stolen from me by two radio stations. Thank God I only lost a few hours.

A repackaged magazine

Your authoritative public relations journal is now back with a bang and a promise to not only stay, but to also continue to focus on the continent's PR landscape." This is the optimistic manner with which Kabir Dangogo, the editor of the repackaged and renamed *Africa PR Journal* (formerly *Public Relations in Africa*), opens the editorial comment and it captures the motive behind this well researched journal.

The new *Africa PR Journal* is a publication of the Federation of Africa Public Relations Associations (FAPRA), the biggest PR association in Africa. For the first time in the new edition, FAPRA tried to put together in one document, reports from international and continental public relations events as well as the multiple

Review

Title: *Africa PR Journal*

Editor: Kabir Dangogo

Pages: 28

Publisher: FAPRA

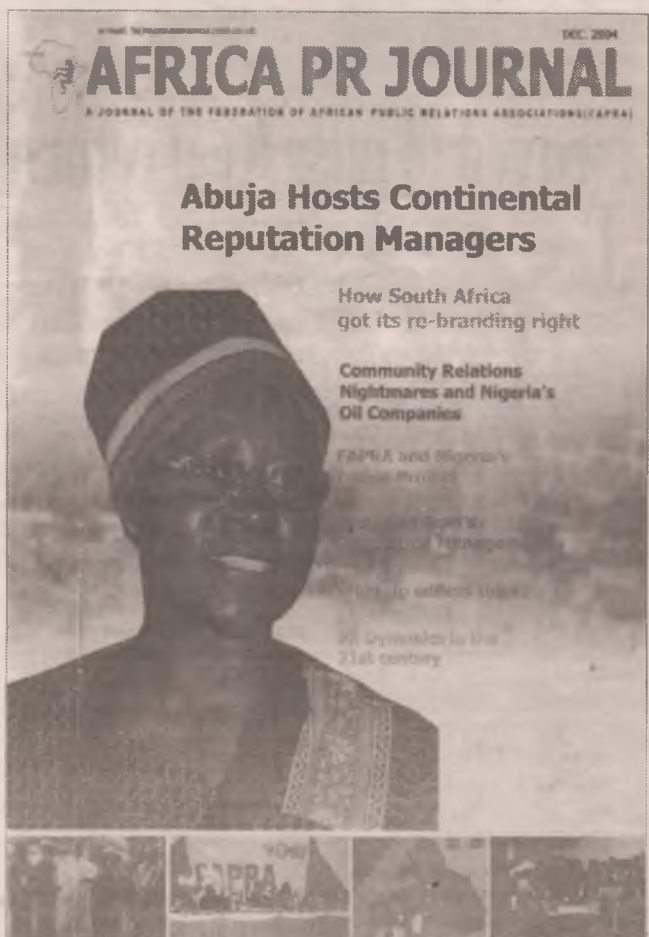
Reviewer: Mohammed S. Shehu

presentations made by seasoned and leading PR practitioners on the continent of Africa.

It touches on various PR issues from Nigeria, which hosted the 17th All African Public Relations Conference held between the 24th and 26th of May, 2004 in Abuja, to how Ghana is successfully managing its reputation and the re-branding of South Africa. Other topics include; FAPRA and Nigeria's image project, community relations

nightmares and Nigeria's oil companies and PR Dynamics in the 21st century.

Another interesting aspect of the journal is the conference paper of Kate Bapela, the president of the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA) titled 'Government and Reputation management: The South African experience.' In this paper, she highlights how South Africa, a country ravaged by the apartheid regime, was able to revive its



Cover of the magazine

glory by way of adopting different PR skills and techniques in the its constitution which is today referred to as one of the best in the world.

Community relations nightmares and the Nigerians oil companies is the title of the article by Sola Omole of Chevron Texaco. He traces the community relations problems that confront the multi-national oil companies operating in the Niger Delta.

The journal also contains an article on the use of PR in stimulating foreign investment on the continent by Nigeria's minister of information and national orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu.

As a whole, the journal is a good representation of the practice of PR on the continent. But FAPRA would have done better with more contribution from other individuals rather than concentrating on the presentations made at the Abuja conference.

SPORTS

Inter's Facchetti throws in towel over title

Inter Milan president Giacinto Facchetti says the club have to forget about trying to catch up with the Serie A leaders and focus instead on the Champions League and securing a place in next year's European campaign.

Inter's 1-0 defeat to AC Milan in their derby on Sunday was their first defeat of the season in any competition but leaves them in fourth place in Serie A 14 points behind joint leaders Juventus and Milan with just 12 games remaining.

"We mustn't think about the distance from the top any longer, but concentrate on third place as this becomes our true objective," Facchetti said.

"We will try and prepare ourselves in the best way for the Champions League, which we have a great chance of doing well in," he added.

Roberto Mancini's Inter side have a good chance of progressing to the quarter-finals of the Champions League after drawing 1-1 in Porto last week.

Facchetti's comments struck a different tone than those made by Mancini after Sunday's loss which came after a late goal from Brazilian Kaka.

"Fourteen points are quite a lot but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't give our all in the remaining games. In fact that is an obligation and in football you never say never."

Asked if Inter would now focus more on Europe than the domestic campaign, Mancini said: "A team can't use the league as training for the Champions League. Inter is Inter and we have to give the maximum."

Facchetti said that Inter had been unfortunate not to emerge with what would have been their 17th draw of the season.

Of all the matches we have drawn, this was the only one we really deserved to draw," he said.

"We lost, but I don't want to talk about bad luck. The

two defences and the two midfields worked very well and created serious problems for the strikers," added the former Inter and Italy full-back.

Milan captain Paolo Maldini rejected the view of those who said Milan were fortunate to emerge with three points from what was a disappointing derby.

"We secured a great victory. We are told that we were lucky, but if this is a constant feature this season, then it means that we are able to create our own fortune," said Maldini.

"The game was tight and we were able to take our chance. We were focused for the whole 90 minutes, they were careless on only one occasion and paid for it," he added.

Milan's victory completed an excellent week for Carlo Ancelotti's side following their 1-0 Champions League win at Old Trafford against Manchester United.

Keane in court on assault charge

Manchester United and Ireland football star Roy Keane grabbed a teenage boy round the neck, swore at him and swung a punch towards his face before stopping his fist at the last minute, a British court heard.

The midfielder, who denies a charge of assault and a public order offence, clashed with the 16-year-old student near his home in Manchester, northwest England, last year, Trafford Magistrates' Court was told.

Keane, 33, was walking his dogs when the boy rode past on a moped with a friend and beeped his horn to acknowledge the star, the court was told.

As the moped passed, Keane — who was then injured — swung out with his walking stick, prompting the 16-year-old, who was not named in court, to turn around and make a crude hand gesture at the footballer.

A few weeks later in

September 2004, the pair were visiting a friend near Keane's home when they were approached by the sportsman, the boy said in a videotaped interview to police shown to the court in place of direct testimony.

The teenager told police he noticed Keane walking towards him. "I felt a bit like, 'God, what's going to happen now'," the boy said.

"Then he (Keane) said: 'Did you call me a w****r? Why did you do that?'," to which the teenager replied that it was because Keane had nearly hit them with his stick.

"He walked up to me and I'm not sure what he said next; he was being a bit aggressive," the boy said.

"The next thing he did was swing at my face with his right fist. He said, 'That's nearly hitting you'. I flinched backwards."

The boy said he promised to call police, after which Keane threatened him and walked away, at which point the teenager muttered an insult to his friend about the footballer.

Apparently hearing it, Keane marched back and grabbed the 16-year-old around the neck, breaking a silver chain.

"His forehead was touching mine. I was quite scared. When he was speaking he was spitting as well," the boy said in the interview.

The case was expected to last two days.

Nedved to miss Real return

Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved is almost certain to miss his club's Champions League second

leg match with Real Madrid.

Czech international Nedved has been in a clinic since suffering concussion in Juve's 1-0 first leg defeat to Real in Madrid on Tuesday, when he clashed heads with Spanish defender Raul Bravo.

Juventus said on Monday that after undergoing tests Nedved had been released from the clinic but needed seven days of rest at home.

The Italian club said further tests would be made on March 8, just a day before the second-leg with Real, to decide when Nedved could begin training.

Juventus face Roma on Saturday in Serie A.

Pires joins Arsenal injury list

Robert Pires has joined a growing list of injured and suspended Arsenal players and will miss their Champions League match against Bayern Munich at Highbury next week, manager Arsene Wenger said on Monday.

The French winger, victim of a lunge that earned Southampton's David Prutton a red card in the teams' 1-1 draw on Saturday,

will be out for up to three weeks with a sprained ankle. "It doesn't look like anything is fractured," Wenger told the Arsenal website. "But it is a good ankle sprain. It does not look like he will be ready for two to three weeks."

Arsenal, 3-1 down after the first leg of their first knockout round tie in Munich last week, are being severely weakened by injuries.

Make it REAL



Nigerian Bottling Company Plc

A Coca Cola HBC Company

BUSINESS DEVELOPERS for Abuja City

Nigerian Bottling Company Plc, is the authorised bottler of Coca Cola range of products and the leading bottler of beverages in Nigeria.

As part of our relentless drive to develop a world class selling organisation, we are searching for young, bright, highly inspired, self driven and market oriented candidates, with a total quality orientation and positive customer attitudes. Successful individuals will be those who will share of our vision of delivering top quality services and products to our esteemed and loyal customers and consumers.

The Role

Successful candidates reporting to the Unit Sales Manager will be responsible for the following:

- Ensuring constant availability of all our brands and packages in the Strategic Sales Depots and High Volume Outlets (SSDs/HVOs)
- Identifying potential outlets and developing existing SSDs/HVOs.
- Recommending placement and monitoring trade assets productivity.
- Implementing and monitoring marketing activities in SSD/HVO coverage.

The Person

If you are ready to take advantage of this unique opportunity to join a multinational manufacturing and selling organization and be developed to your full potential, you will possess;

- A BA/B.SC degree or HND certificate.
- At least two - three (2-3) years selling experience.
- Excellent communication and selling skills.
- Excellent customer service skill with a flair for doing things right, the first time.

In addition, you must be resident in Abuja and familiar with the city.

To apply, please send your hand written applications with a curriculum vitae stating daytime contact address, telephone number and copies of credentials (quoting Ref. Nos. BD/001/05 on the left hand corner of the envelope) to the locations below:

Nigerian Bottling Company Plc
Wuse Depot
Area 3, Beside Grand Square Stores,
Abuja

Nigerian Bottling Company Plc
Gwagwada Depot
Specialist Hospital Road
Abuja

Nigerian Bottling Company Plc
Suleja Depot
Sule Barau Road, Beside Ideal Supermarket
Abuja

Applications close by 10th March 2005 and only short listed candidates will be contacted

Sports

BIG LEAGUE ROUND-UP

Three Northern teams occupy Premier League summit

Champions Dolphin climbed to fourth place in the league after a 2-0 home victory over El Kanemi Warriors.

They are one point off the three Northern front runners — Kwara United, Kano Pillars, and Gombe United.

Kwara United lead on goal

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Group Sports Editor

difference after a 2-1 home win over Lobi Stars. Pillars won 1-0 at home to promoted Gateway while Nura Mohamed scored for Gombe United to give them a 1-0 win over Bendel Insurance.

After three weeks of feisty soccer action, Kwara United have emerged pace setters thanks to their well-deserved victory at home against Lobi Stars of Makurdi. Brimming with confidence, the Kadiri Ikhana-tutored side will even fancy their chances of consolidating their top position when they travel to Abeokuta this weekend to face lowly Gateway.

Kano Pillars, still basking on their slim victory over Gateway last weekend in

Kano, would come face-to-face with the menace of Daniel Amokachi when they confront Nasarawa United in Lafia. Can the Pillars curtail the effervescence and enthusiasm of the topflight newcomers? Or would Hassan Aliyu and Co. inflict further damage on the "Solid Miners" who were 2-1 losers to Julius Berger at the weekend? It looks very dicey, but these two northern teams will fight for every point. Expect some fireworks.

Rejuvenated Gombe United are enjoying perhaps the most impressive start to the season. For a team that nearly escaped relegation last season, the team from the Savannah now share the pole position after their triumph over dreaded Insurance. But they will not find it easy against Iwuanyanwu Nationale in Owerri. However, a momentary slip by the Gombe side would equally dim their chances of maintaining the pace and tempo

against Kwara and Pillars. How they would negotiate this tricky tie remains to be seen?

Whatever, the outcome of next round of matches this writer feels that three teams from across the Niger have demonstrated their competitiveness and readiness to challenge the better-funded and better-motivated clubs from the south. But pray, the trio sustain the spirit and salvo as it's one thing to set the pace and another to keep the tempo.

RESULTS

Premier League

Kwara Utd	2	Lobi Star	1
Niger Tornadoes	0	Rangers	1
3SC	0	Enyimba	0
NPA	3	Sharks	1
Julius Berger	2	Nasarawa Utd	1
Kano Pillars	1	Gateway	0
Dolphin	2	Elkanemi	0
Gombe Utd	1	Insurance	0
Gabros	2	Nationale	0
Zamfara Utd	3	Wikki Tourists	1

Division One A

Plateau Utd	2	Kaduna Utd	0
Ranchers Bees	5	JUTH	2
Yobe Stars	2	BONFC	1
VONFC	1	Jigawa Stars	0
Buffalo FC	1	JC Raiders	0
Mighty Jets	1	NEPAFC	0
Allogi Utd	1	SECFC	1

Division One B

GlobeStar FC	1	Bayelsa Utd	0
Abia Warriors	1	Sunshine Stars	1
Busador	1	Ebonyi Angels	1
Bendel Utd	1	Ila FC	1
First Bank	1	Crown FC	0
Ocean Boys	2	Union Bank	0
FC Ebedei	3	Akwa Utd	3
Delta Utd	1	Calabar Rovers	0

Nasarawa Utd partners Club Brugge

Premier League side, Nasarawa United FC of Lafia has secured a partnership deal with Belgian club, FC Brugge.

The deal, which would place the Nigerian clubside as a feeder team of the Belgian outfit, was disclosed to Trustsports by Nasarawa United Assistant Coach Daniel Amokachi, who was

From Okechukwu Eze, Sports Correspondent (Lagos)

once on the payroll of Club Brugge after their Premier League encounter against Julius Berger of Lagos in Abeokuta.

Amokachi said that the preliminary talks on the partnership has been concluded and both parties will formerly

endorse the deal this month.

The partnership deal would make the "Solid Miners" the first Nigerian clubside to attain that status, ahead of Kano Pillars and Wikki Tourists who are discussing similar partnership deals with Catalan giants, Barcelona FC of Spain.

The former international described the deal as one of

the innovations aimed at enhancing the quality of the league and returning it back to its glorious old days.

"I am excited to bring Club Brugge, my first club in Europe, to partner Nasarawa United. And I believe it's a step in the right direction. The standard has suffered in recent times but with this innovation, I see it taking shape soon," he said.

On his expectations this season, Amokachi said he was not expecting too much from his inexperienced boys, but stated that the objective was to consolidate their position in the topflight.

"If we succeed in achieving our primary objective, we will be challenging the big teams for laurels next season.

The former Super Eagles star further revealed that very soon fellow team mates in the national team at the USA '94 World Cup namely Emmanuel Amunike, Mutiu Adepoju and Mike Emenalo would return to the domestic league to contribute to the development of the game.

Dolphin player, Ayodeji, buried

Late Dolphin FC attacking midfielder, Emma Ayodeji was laid to rest in Ibadan last Saturday.

Family members departed with the body from the

Kpaima mortuary in Port Harcourt on Saturday morning, went to the club's camp and then the Liberation Stadium where the players were working out ahead of Sun-

days league game against El-Kanemi before departing for Ibadan.

Before their departure, Rivers State sports commissioner, Allwell Onyesoh made available Ayodeji's sign on fee of one point two million naira as well as his February salary and match bonus for Wednesday's victory against Insurance, the player's last game before his death.

In addition, Rivers State Governor, Peter Odili also provided his family with the sum of five hundred thousand naira before they left.

Clubs to pay N1m for fans violence

Nigerian soccer clubs whose fans are found guilty of crowd violence at league games will pay a fine of one million naira (\$7,500), the country's league board (NFL) announced on Monday.

Those clubs will also be banned from playing home matches at their grounds, the newly constituted NFL said.

It is a hefty fine for the clubs which are barely able to survive due to poor fund-

ing and in a country where the national average wage is around \$50 monthly.

NFL member Ade Ojeikere said the punitive measures were aimed at "reducing or totally eliminating crowd violence" on the terraces.

"We intend to give the clubs seminars on crowd control and how to deal with trouble during games," he said.

The NFL has concluded plans for weekly live television and radio broadcast of games, while it has started paying the travel and lodging expenses of match referees, he added.

In the past, clubs with home fixtures picked up the bills but critics said it led to referees' decisions being influenced.

Ojeikere said: "We're trying to reduce contact between clubs and referees because we think this will reduce biased refereeing, which is a major cause of crowd violence."

Last season, the league was blighted by a raft of crowd troubles, leading to the closure of several grounds.

NFL backtracks on Globacom

Contrary to comments credited to the NFL Chairman Onyiuki Obaseki, Executive Secretary of the NFL, Salihu Abubakar has said that the body is 'satisfied' with Premier League sponsors Glo Mobile.

Obaseki was quoted as inviting the telecommunications outfit to come for a renegotiation of the league sponsorship contract, or have it thrown out the window, but Abubakar told KICK OFF that Obaseki was misrepresented.

"I believe he was misrep-

resented," Abubakar said. "We are quite satisfied with Globacom. We are happy with what they are doing for the League. We are happy with what they are doing for Enyimba and we are happy with what they are doing for the Super Eagles."

Abubakar admitted however, that the NFL would welcome a renegotiation. "Of course there is room for improvement, but there is an existing contract which we have to respect. What we are trying to do is see if we can get Globacom to look at it

with a view to making improvements, but we cannot force them to do so." One avenue of making money for the league is from television rights, but Abubakar added that now, the NFL is paying part of the cost of live broadcast.

"We have a temporary arrangement with AIT to share the cost of broadcasting the matches. We did that because we wanted the league on TV. But we have some other stations bidding for the rights to the games and we expect to get some money from it soon."



Ayodeji was laid to rest in Ibadan on Saturday.

Trust Classified

CORRIGENDUM THE PRESIDENCY

RE- THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The House Committee on Education has fixed Monday 28th February, 2005, for hearing on the "bill to the establishment of National Commission for Polytechnics and for purpose connected therewith (HB 96)".

We are sorry for the misinformation on the earlier advertorial date.

Thanks

Vacancies! Vacancies!! Vacancies!!!

A new generation community bank located in Abuja has the following vacancies:

A. TRAINEES

Qualifications: Minimum of a second class degree in any discipline
Post graduation experience working in a financial institution is an added advantage

B. OFFICE MANAGER/SECRETARY

Qualifications
- HND or a first degree in an appropriate discipline
- Three years working experience as Office Manager or Secretary/PA to a high level staff of a reputable organization
- Excellent knowledge of computers

Interested candidates should apply on or before two weeks from the date of this publication to:
Head of Operations, P.O Box 6093 Garki Abuja or alliance@yaboo.com

LOSS OF CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

This is to notify the general public that the loss of Original Certificates of Occupancy and completed AGIS recertification Forms are declared missing.

- 1) FCT/ABU/OD 320 - Chief Rufus F. Giwa (Late)
- 2) FCT/ABU/OD 1467 - Giwa Mosunmola
- 3) FCT/ABU/OD 1468 - Giwa Olutimilehin
- 4) FCT/ABU/MISC 8136 - Kagaba Nigeria Ltd. ♦
- 5) FCT/ABU/MISC 10,159 - Kagaba Nigeria Ltd.

All efforts to locate the Documents proved abortive. If found please return to ALHAJI ABUBAKAR ALI of AHA NIGERIA LTD. Suit 35/36, Shopping Complex, Aguiyi Ironsi Cantonment, Asokoro, AGIS Office or the nearest police station Abuja.

Signed

Alhaji Abubakar Ali

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to notify the general public of the loss of Right of Occupancy granted in favour of the National Productivity Centre FCT/ABU/FG.690 for Plot No. 766 Cadastral Zone Ao. All efforts to trace the missing documents prove abortive. If found, please contact the Director-General, National Productivity Centre, Plot 1498 Abidjan Street, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja or the nearest Police Station.

signed

Director-General

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the loss of Statutory Right of Occupancy in respect of Land No. 202 CAD with file name 50.909 and reference No. SC-130 dated 13th January 1994, with size 613m² at Zone A2, Zone 6, Wuse Abuja, belonging to HAJIYA KULU ZELANI KALGO, is missing. MFCT and AGIS to take note.

MISSING DOCUMENT

Original allocation Paper for Plot. M797, Kuruduma FCT, belonging to BARRISTER CHIDI AGBANEJE is missing. Buyer Beware. AMAC take note.

Signed

Barr. Chidi Agbaneje.
0803-3287005

Change of Names

I, formerly known as GBEMI IDRIS ALLI, now wish to be called GBEMI ALATISE. All former documents remain valid. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and general public to note.

I, formerly MISS OLUBUSOLA OSINUGA, now MRS. OLUBUSOLA OSINUGA BEN-STOWE, National Assembly and general public, please note.

I, formerly MRS HUDA ALLI, now wish to be known as HUDA JEBARA. All former documents remain valid. AGIS and public to note please.

I, formerly known as MISS JANE AMEH, now wish to be called MRS JANE ISMAEL BELLO. Former documents remain valid. The public to note.

I, formerly MISS. MUFUDAT ADERONKE ADEGBOYEGA, now wish to be addressed as MRS. MUFUDAT ADEGBOYEGA MURNA. All former documents remain valid. The general public to note.

I, formerly known as NUODORIS, now wish to be called MRS. DORIS NWACHI. All other documents remain valid. Octopus Clan (Nig.) Ltd. and general public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as MRS KEHINDE OLAWANLE OTUNJIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS KEHINDE OLAWANLE OLUKOYA. Former documents remain valid. Osun State Civil Service Commission and general public please note.

I, formerly known as MISS ADELABU OLUFUNKE ADEBOLA, now wish to be known as MRS. OLAWOYE OLUFUNKE ADEBOLA. All former documents remain valid. MFCT and public to note.

I, formerly known as HELEN AKE AKPANA, now wish to be called and addressed as HELEN AKPANA UNIMKE. All former documents remain valid. Unical, NYSC and general public to note.

I, formerly called BALA RABE, now to be called BALA B/K RABE. All former documents remains valid F.C.E. Katsina and general public to note.

I, formerly known and addressed as AISHATU ISA, now wish to be addressed as MRS. AISHATU SULEIMAN. All former documents remain valid. Agwara Local Government, Niger State, and General public to note.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

WHEREAS THE PERSON whose names are set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and place in the said column.

AND WHEREAS the person whose names and address are set out in the second column hereunder claimed the relationship of the said deceased and has applied to the above name court for the grant of letters of administration of the personal property.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the said letters of administration be granted to such person unless "NOTICE TO PROBATE" the grant thereof is filed in the Probate Registry of the above named court within twenty one (21) days from the date of publication.

SCHEDULE

DECEASED ADDRESS	APPLICANT FOR GRANT
ALHAJI ABUDULLAHI USMAN DUHU Gulak Town, Madagali Local Govt. Area Of Adamawa State. Died on 4 th October, 2004	ABDULAZIZ USMAN DUHU No. 1 Garoua Street, Wuse Zone 1, Abuja. The Son.

DATED IN ABUJA 28TH FEBRUARY, 2005

FOR PROBATE REGISTRAR

DELIVERANCE GOSPEL CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

This is to inform the general public that the above named Church has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Rev. (Dr.) Noah Sogunro | 2. Rev. Matthew Sogunro |
| 3. Deacon Oluranti Ojelade | 4. Deaconess Mary Elijah |
| 5. Bro. Kunle Osi | |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5 Abuja, within 28 days of this publication

Signed:

ADERINSOLA ADEYANJU & CO.
(Solicitors)
Metro Plaza, Abuja

HOLYHOST POWER DELIVERANCE GOSPEL MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL

This is to inform the general public that the above named Body has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Evangelist Esther Audin -Maji | 2. Hon. Hussaini Dambo |
| 3. Pst. David Udeh | 4. Elder Paul Sama |
| 5. Elder Richard Adesami Ajayi | 6. Elder Rosemary Iweze |
| 7. Elder Oni Okonji | |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5 Abuja, within 28 days of this publication

Signed:

Secretary

PURE EDIGBLE OIL DEALERS ASSOCIATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named Body has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Esther Akpan Bassey | 2. Mr. Ike Peter |
| 3. Mr. Oha Michael Ndubuaku | 4. Mr. Obinna Chima |
| 5. Mr. Onuegbu Kingsley Aloy | 6. Mr. Offor Elias |
| 7. Mr. Etuk Frank Innocent | 8. Mr. Eze Joseph Uchenna |
| 9. Mr. Obaye Blessbe George | 10. Mrs. Ugbebor Rose |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5 Abuja, within 28 days of this publication

Signed:

Moneke Azubike Esq.
08033412466

AGBARA ESTATE, IGBESA AGBARA & OPIC FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named Foundation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. John Ogbemudia Omoregie | 2. Chief Adisa Olaewe |
| 3. Otunba Ezekiel Ade-Durojaiye | 4. Oliver Guignard |
| 5. Ms. Carmen Latty | 6. Otunba Oladeinde Banjo |
| 7. Alh. Rasaki Ishola Osanyin | 8. Muiyiwa Odejayi |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5 Abuja, within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:

MRS MOYINOLUWA OLOGURE
Legal Practitioner

THE ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS AND AUDITORS NIGERIA (ACCA)

This is to inform the general public that the above named Association of of certified Accountants and Auditors Nigeria has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Sir Isaac Ediga Egbogo (Jnr) | - Chairman |
| 2. Rev. Emmanuel S. Makurvetinim | - General Secretary |
| 3. Chief Godwin Ameh Agbo | - Chief Exec./Registrar |
| 4. Mr. Isaac Adole Ujah | - Regent Member |
| 5. Mr. Patrick A. Obilor | |
| 6. Mr. Afolabi Caleb | |
| 7. Mr. Samson Odudu Ekpa | |
| 8. Alh. Salisu Dandubus Ibrahim | |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5 Abuja, within 28 days of this publication

Signed:

Rev. Emmanuel S. Makurvetinim
Secretary-General

MISSING CAR

This is to inform the general public that a black-coloured Honda Accord SAL.4 (HALA) Car with registration No. ABUJA, BQ502 ABC, Chassis No. JHMCB 75500CO and Engine No. F22-A31005373 belonging to MOHD BELLO JEGA of the NNPC, Suleja Depot is missing. If found please, return to the nearest police station or contact the owner on 080-37008921. A handsome reward awaits anyone who assists in the recovery of the car.

SIGNED

Mrs. Amina Augie

LOSS OF RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY

This is to inform the general public that the Original Right of Occupancy No. FCT/ABU/SO.336, Plot No. 3209, Maitama District, belonging to Late Adamu Baba Augie is reported missing. If found, please return to Mrs. Amina Augie of House 4, Close C, FMWH Estate, Asokoro/Area 11, Abuja or the nearest police station.

Sports

Izilein challenges NFA over Eaglets

Golden Eaglets coach Godwin Izilein has told KICK OFF that he will do everything possible to ensure that his wards are kept in camp between the time they resume and when they depart for the African U-17 Championships in May.

"Even if I have to spend my own money to keep them in camp, I will do so," Izilein told KICK OFF, saying the unpleasant Meridian Cup experience still grates. "Part

of our problem was that we had the boys for a very short time, while the people we were playing against had been together for upwards of two years."

Izilein adds that there is even more reason for keeping the boys together for longer at Under 17 level.

"This is the point where the players are taught basic techniques that will serve them for the rest of their lives. It is not like the senior team who are already used to high level coaching where tactics are the major focus," he explained.

"At this level, players have to be taught good technique, positioning and

sometimes, even the rules of the game and to do that is not a two or three week affair. It takes time."

The coach, who is taking his boys to Kaduna for the second phase of their camping, says he intends to keep them there.

"I know there is no money at the NFA, but we still appeal to them to provide

funds to keep these boys in camp. It is not a matter of choice. If they don't get proper training, and we go out to face European teams, we will still get slaughtered again."

And he points out that his immediate goal is to qualify the team for the World Under-17 Championships later in the year, admitting

that Samson Siasia's victory with the Under 20s puts a bit of pressure on the U17s.

"Siasia has won the African Youth Championships, so that puts a bit of pressure on us to do the same. But my priority is to qualify the team for the world championships first. After that, we can talk about winning the competition."

Basketball Academy launched in Lagos

The Warriors Basketball Academy was recently launched at an impressive ceremony in Lagos. The Academy which is an off shoot of the Nigeria basketball premierships clubside, Dodan Warriors Basketball club Programme, is a private initiative and the brain child of the club's senior and coach player Sam Ahmedu.

Speaking at the occasion, Col Ahmedu said "the Academy is open to kids between 13 and 20 years from all over Nigeria and other parts of Africa who receive instructions after normal school hours daily (and all day during holiday periods) based on a well articulated programme".

"We aim is to provide basketball instructions to our youths on a consistent basis in contrast to the adhoc arrangements hitherto in existence. We believe that through regular and repetitive training, our youths will grasp the rudiments of the game at an early age and compete effectively with their peers all over the world". He stated that besides teaching

the fundamentals of basketball, the Academy is a forum for education in many spheres, providing opportunities for the kids to develop in body, mind and spirit, inculcating in them the traditional values of courtesy, honesty, sense of responsibility and service to the community.

It provides perspective about life through the eyes of the athletes who are also further encouraged to emulate role models, work hard and be disciplined and imbibe a positive mental

attitude. We consider this a priority because education is the soul of any individual and society".

Col Ahmedu further revealed that the Academy which is situated in Ilupeju, in mainland Lagos, already has over 50 registered students presently.

"We are seeking for local sponsorship to firm up its financial base and to complement the support from Executive Management which is committed to assisting the graduates of the academy secure scholarships in foreign institutions and youth clubs for some of the players who are unable to make it to NCAA Div I schools".

The occasion also witnessed a star studded match between, Team Old School made up of basketball veterans versus an all-star team of ex-internationals. The Academy is recognised by the Lagos State Basketball Association, Nigeria Basketball Association and the newly established Nigerian National Olympic Academy.



Normich defender Craig Fleming, left, chases Spurs' striker Jemaine Defoe during a Premiership match last September, Norwich chairman Delia Smith has defended her decision to make an impromptu rallying cry in the Canaries defeat by Manchester City on Monday.

HFN warns players over transfer clearance

The Handball Federation of Nigeria (HFN) has said that it is still an offence for bonafide players under contract with handball clubs in the country to seek international transfers to clubs abroad without the express permission of the national federation.

According to the handball federation, it is also an offence for players to go

for trials to foreign clubs without the permission of HFN. Henceforth any violations by players and their local collaborators will be punished. The board of the federation took decision during the board meeting of the federation held at the boardroom of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC).

The board noted that illegal transfers of players

have become rampant and hence an embarrassment to the integrity of the federation and indeed the federal government.

"Many players have turned destitute after entering some enslaving contract with clubs, thus making the clubs to exploit their desperate dispositions."

HFN insists that the federation must duly sanction all trips outside the country as well as be involved in the transfers of players in order to ensure that there is adequate protection of players in the contracts.

The federation regrets that sad incidents that involved two handball players who were involved in an accident while on illegal transfer to Tunisian clubs.

The two players- Gideon Yakubu and Yomi Farouk were on trials in Tunisian when they inhaled gas, which eventually knocked them out. While Farouk died as a result of the accident, Yakubu, who managed to come round after weeks in coma, has been on intensive care in Tunisia.

The irony has been that

the clubs that invited them are now refusing to pick their medical bills, citing the fact that they did not have subsisting contracts with both players.

The situation has handicapped the federation from pressing legal actions against the Tunisian clubs

through their national federation as well as the International Handball Federation (IHF).

HFN has resolved to appeal to all continental federations to adopt the right procedures in effecting players' international transfers.

Supporters club targets N200m

The Nigeria Football and Other Sports Supporters Association says it has set a target of N200 million at its fund raising next month.

Rafiu Oladipo, President-general of the association, disclosed in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the fund raiser, which would hold in Lagos, has been fixed around the Nigeria/Gabon World Cup and African Nations Cup qualifier scheduled for Port Harcourt on March 26.

Oladipo said although the qualifier would take place in the Rivers capital, the association fixed the date for the period when the players of the national team would be

in the country.

Vice President Atiku Abubakar and the Minister of Sports, Musa Mohammed are among dignitaries expected at the fund raiser according to the supporters club chief.

"Our target is N200 million and we are seising the opportunity of the Super enable members of the Eagles be able to raise the fund also the president of the African Supporters Other (ASSU). Union said money realised would enable the association send members to matches involving the various national teams both within and outside the country."

Orok Oyo wants speedy action on Decree 101

CAF Life Vice President Oyo Orok Oyo has expressed concern over the delay in repealing Decree 101, the law governing football in Nigeria.

Speaking with sports journalists who paid him a courtesy visit in Calabar, Oyo expressed surprise that Nigeria should have such a law in the first place.

"I wonder what is holding them (the National Assembly) from repealing the decree since the bill has been laid before them," he said.

Oyo hoped that the delay in repealing the decree would not lead to imposition of

sanctions on Nigeria by FIFA, the world soccer governing body.

"FIFA has asked Nigeria to repeal the decree and I don't see why there is this delay," he said.

Oyo also dismissed suggestions that the Francophone countries had conspired to deny Super Eagles skipper Austin Okocha the 2004 African Player of the Year Award.

"There is nothing like French conspiracy. There is a procedure for the selection of players for the award. If any player meets the conditions, he will be

selected regardless of the country such a player comes from or plays for.

"There is no doubt that Okocha is a good player, but Eto'o the player finally selected, scored more goals than Okocha.

"I don't think CAF has done anything or has anything against Okocha. What for?"

On the Nigeria/Gabon World Cup qualifier in Port Harcourt on March 26, Oyo urged the NFA not to underrate the Gabonese, saying that underrating the central Africans might be dangerous.

This Space is
for Sale

DAILY TRUST

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

EDITORIAL

Boosting power supply

On February 19th 2005, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) revealed that some 500 industries in Kano state alone had to fold up, partly because, according to MAN, they no longer can afford the high cost of private power generation which these industries had to undertake.

The phlegmatic manner the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) supplies power had been felt painfully by small-scale businesses such as saloons, tailoring businesses, business centres and soft drink shops, many of which have simply gone down under. The nation's seat of power—the Aso Rock has also had to taste the bitter pill of NEPA's ineptitude; on the 25th of February 2005, it had to endure power outage for 12 hours from 2 p.m to 2 a.m. Similar outages were reported in Gusau, the Zamfara state capital, which was plunged into darkness for nine days.

The fact that power generation by NEPA, which peaked at 4,000 mega watt, has since dropped precipitously to 1,500 mega watt shows that NEPA is having difficult time measuring up to the nation's power demands. For instance, Kano state which gets a minimum of 256 and a maximum of 300 mega watts a day, is now getting as little as 25 mega watts daily.

Now that the power output has dropped to an all-time low of 1500 mega watts, with Egbin thermal power station fluctuating between 450 and 600 mega watts, it is high time the idea of private sector participation is implemented. *Daily Trust* believes that if the involvement of private sector in power generation in the country would translate to efficiency, there can be no better fall back option.

Much as we subscribe to the private investment into NEPA, we do not support whole sale trading off of the entire shares of this strategic national asset. In other words, the Federal Government should only concede a reasonable proportion of NEPA's share capital to private investors and retain a part of it.

Commendable however, is the idea that the federal government has met with multi-national oil companies regarding alternative measures for electricity supply in the country. Meanwhile, the long term measure of exploring other possibilities like that of Mambilla in Taraba state which has unharnessed hydro-power potentials, should not be completely discarded.

A federal government and oil companies partnership should provide a viable solution to the energy crisis emanating from NEPA's inefficiency. It should put paid to excuses being bandied back and forth by the NEPA management, such as problems of gas supply. For instance, NEPA was reported to have attributed the present erratic power supply to its indebtedness to the Nigeria Gas Company (NGC) - to the tune of N3 billion. And that all hydropower stations in the country, including Shiroro, Kainji and Jebba, which account for megawatts were out of operation.

Daily Trust believes that rather than over-stretching the limited resources of the industrial sector and causing untold hardship to individuals and small-scale businesses, the private sector intervention is imperative. Our hope that the proposed partnership between the federal government and oil companies will rank the country in the class of South Africa, which generates power output only than it needs daily. Just like Iran, whose megawatts peaked during its war with Iraq, to 90,000 visaged in the 330,000. Or more practically, as envisaged in the 2010 and NEEDS document-- a try.

Printed and published by Media Trust Limited, Corporate Office: No. 22 Lusaka Street, Off Bissau Street, Wuse Zone 6 Abuja. Tel: 09 - 5235787, 5238726, Fax: 09 - 5238725. Newswatch Limited, Corporate Office: No. 22 Lusaka Street, Off Bissau Street, Wuse Zone 6 Abuja. Tel: 09 - 5235787, 5238726, Fax: 09 - 5238725. Kaduna Office: 2721036. Lagos Office: News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) premises, National Theatre Complex, Iganmu, Lagos. Tel: 01 - 4707296, 861008. Kaduna Office: 6, Sullubawa Close, Off Katuru Road, Unguwar Sarki, G.R.A. Kaduna Tel: 062 - 245916, Fax: 062 - 242496, e-mail: dailytrust@yahoo.co.uk, or info@dailytrust.com, weeklytrust.com. All correspondence to P.O.Box 6873, Wuse, Abuja. Editor: Is'haq Modibbo Kawu.

Telecommunication or teleconfusion?

By Mohammed Haruna

Last Friday, February 25 at 2.45pm a friend and colleague, Adamu Jibrin, phoned me from his Mtel GSM No. 08045211369. Actually that was his third attempt at calling me on my MTN No. 08033143372. He failed on all three attempts. On the third and final attempt, a third line crossed into our connection, or more accurately, non-connection, for, I could hear a voice complaining in Yoruba loud and clear to yet another line, that my caller was speaking Nupe. "Tapa lon soro", he said. Tapa is the Yoruba word for Nupe.

Put this down as confusion No 1.

Five days earlier, I had sent a text to a friend on her MTN No. 08036353756. Shortly after that she phoned to confirm receipt of the message. A little after she confirmed receipt of my text, MNT sent me a message to say that the text could not be delivered due to a "problem with destination number". To erase the doubt created in my mind by this message, I called my friend a second time without telling her anything about the MTN's text to me. This time she confirmed that she actually received my message six times even though I sent it only once. I didn't cross-check my account but this probably meant MTN charged me six times for a message I sent only once.

Put this down as confusion No 2.

On several occasions last month I received calls that disconnected as soon as I pressed the call button. On each of those occasions an MTN voice message said it was sorry that my calls could not be connected even though I was not the one who placed the calls in the first place.

Put these down collectively as confusion No 3.

On several other occasions last week, I tried calling my wife and all I could hear loud and clear was the echo of my voice. Each time I switched off in frustration. Whenever I got home later she would tell me she could hear me loud and clear but I would explain that I had to switch off because I couldn't hear her at all.

Put these down collectively as confusion No 4.

Last but by no means the least - and this one really took the cake - some one with an MTN No. 08036901156 sent a text to another with Mtel No. 08043117291 on February 10 at about 6pm. Through some magic, the message ended up in the Mtel phone of another friend and colleague, Mohammed Bomo, whose number had absolutely no resemblance to the destination number. Bomo is still agonizing over how he could receive a message that was never meant for him.

Put this down as confusion No 5.

I suspect, dear reader, that my story is probably yours too, that is if you own a gsm phone. I suspect that it is also the story of the millions of other Nigerians who now own the gadget consequent upon a telecommunications revolution in the country of which the federal authorities are - unjustifiably it would seem - so proud. We are, after all, always reminded, at the slightest opportunity, that the expansion of telephony in Nigeria is one of the greatest achievements of the Obasanjo presidency. Yet, chances are there are thousands, if not millions, of GSM phone users whose experiences have been worse than mine.

The main excuse for this shoddy service is that the industry is at its infancy. This may be so, but is still not a reasonable excuse. If nothing else, the huge profits that the GSM companies have been raking in imposes on them an obligation to provide first class service. For example, in under five years of operation, MTN, the pioneer and leader in the industry, has, I understand, more than amortized all its investment. I have not seen its latest account, but I have it on good authority that in its latest Annual Report, it made more profit than all our banks combined. To say that this is obscene, especially given the terrible service enjoyed by its customers, is to put matters very mildly.

Other than the greed of the owners and managers of the gsm companies, there can be one and only one explanation for why their obscene profits are not matched by the quality of services they provide: those in both the executive and legislative arms of government charged with protecting the interests of consumers are either in cahoots with the owners and managers of the companies in their determination to fleece consumers, or they are simply criminally negligent.

This, apparently, was the point Honourable Haruna Yarima (Biu, Borno State) tried to make nearly two weeks ago when he accused his colleagues in the House of Representatives of being suborned by the MTN to look the other way as the company overcharged customers for a shoddy

service. Dr. Yarima has said specifically that the MTN gave members 2,700,000 Naira worth of recharge cards every month through the Chairman of the House Committee on Communication, Honourable Yemi Arokodare, to get them not to look too closely, or even not to look at all, at the pricing and the quality of the company's services.

Mr. Arokodare never denied receiving the "gifts". On the contrary he admitted collecting them. Yet what did the House do? In its usual fit of righteous indignation, it collectively called Yarima names and suspended him for one month.

Let us, for argument sake, say Yarima was merely being a rabble-rouser. The logical thing for the House to have done was to expose him as such by instituting an investigation into the matter in the course of which the honourable member will be asked to substantiate his charges. Instead the House decided to silence him by suspending him.

Like other potential scandals before this one, it has now been swept under the carpet. But the members of the House should know that you can only postpone the day of reckoning, you can never avoid it.

For now the least the honourable members of the House can do is to get the gsm companies through the National Communications Commission, to slash their tariffs in the light of the outrageous profits they have been making on the back of millions of suffering consumers.

Unless this is done, all the boast by the federal authorities that they have brought about a telecommunications revolution in the country would amount to no more than an empty boast. In this 21st century global village of ubiquitous satellite communication, what matters really is not the quantity of telephone gadgetry but its quality.

The GSM companies may have delivered on quantity but they have failed woefully to deliver on quality. Consequently, the hope that they will shame Nitel, our national fixed line telephone company, into becoming efficient and affordable to ordinary Nigerians has been dashed. Instead Nitel has only gone from bad to worse in just about every aspect of its services, whether it is the provision of lines, its reliability or even its billings.

The main source of the latest bout of deterioration seems to be the management contract government went into with Pentascope International, the Dutch group whose technical expertise and financial strength were suspect from the word go. Not only were its expertise and finances suspect, the management contract with it was widely believed even in government circles to have been skewed against the interests of Nigeria.

Not surprisingly Pentascope has since failed woefully to deliver on its contract to expand Nitel's lines and bring quality to its service. Instead it has mightily succeeded in bringing Nitel, which, inspite of its shoddy services, was arguably the country's most solvent parastatal, completely down on its knees. For example, not long after Pentascope took charge, Nitel, which used to boast one of the best wages in the country, was reduced to paying its salaries in arrears and from overdraft facilities from banks. Its services deteriorated even more accordingly. And the cost of the Pentascope's thievery and incompetence was, again not surprisingly, passed on to the consumers through billings that have little or no resemblance with one's usage of one's Nitel lines.

At least this has been my experience of recent. I suspect it is also the experience of many of its subscribers. Last year in the first month after myself and the corporation settled our long-running dispute over its bills, it sent me a bill of about 4,000 Naira. I thought that was reasonable and I promptly settled it. The following month I received a bill nearly twelve times the amount! I simply could not believe my eyes. The phone was always code-locked after every call. I never made any international calls on it. I hardly used it to go on the internet. My wife who is the only one in my household apart from myself who knew the phone code, is not the telecommunicating type. In spite of all this, Nitel sent me a bill of over 47,000 Naira!

I have now given up on Nitel and I have decided to look elsewhere for a fixed line.

Five years ago, when government announced its so-called telecommunication revolution with fanfare, some of us hoped that it would deliver on its promise and for once prove cynics wrong about the reliability of government's pledges. It is unfortunate that instead it has once again only proved the cynics right, that it is too much to expect government to do what is right by the citizens of this country as against submitting itself to the wishes of the rich and powerful and the well-connected.

The big lesson of all this teleconfusion? Privatisation of our parastatals, is, after all, not the cure-all that its champions have been telling us it is.