

# DAILY TRUST



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## INSIDE



### Halliburton: Opposition threatens to name bribe takers

Opposition political parties yesterday threatened to name Nigerians involved in the Halliburton bribe scandal if the Federal Government fails to do so.

-Page 3

### Yar'adua orders ministries to allow information flow

-Page 3

### Food prices soar by 20%

-Page 25

### Zimbabwe shelves own currency for a year

-Page 18



## DAILY TRUST STOCK INDEX

As at Thursday, April 9

TOP GAINERS		
Symbol	Price(N)	Gain
Nestle	147.00	+6.98
AP	84.98	+1.47
BCC	22.84	+1.08
TOP LOSERS		
Symbol	Price(N)	Loss
Business	88.90	-1.00
J/Berger	22.00	-0.80
FirstBank	14.40	-0.65
Cap. N4, 504, 968, 468, 663.18		

## NAIRA EXCHANGE RATE

	Selling	Buying
1. Euro	212	210
1. Pound	247	245
1. Dollar	177	175

Source: Muhammed Zazi Bureau de Change, Lagos.

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## The story of Easter

- PAGES 28&29



# Reps dump power probe report

By Tashikalmah Hallah

The ad hoc committee set up by the House of Representatives to review the controversial report on the probe of alleged spending of billions in the power sector has decided to undertake a fresh investigation.

With this, the ad hoc committee headed by Deputy Chief Whip of the House Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has dumped the report produced by the Godwin Elumelu power committee.

The House power committee had after months of investigation presented a report which indicted former President Olusegun Obasanjo and top officials of his administration including former ministers of power.

Following controversies over the content of the report, particularly the disowning of the report by some members of the Elumelu committee, the House raised the Tambuwal panel to review the first probe.

But sources within the committee said the new panel decided to dump the report mainly because it was not clear on the amount of money funnelled into the power sector within the period reviewed—1999 to 2007.

"In all the 88 recommendations made by the Committee on Power, there was no where they made references to how much was spent in the power sector and whether there was corruption by any of the individuals or companies indicted by the committee," a member of the committee told *Daily Trust* on condition of anonymity.

"If you have the report, go through it and you will discover that the committee reported that the sum of \$13.28bn was spent in the sector but the report failed to state how the money was actually spent, who benefitted,

Cont. on Pg. 5



An FCT commercial bus that ran into a mud building along Obafemi Awolowo Express Way, Abuja, yesterday. The driver of the bus and a girl in the building sustained injuries. Photo: Nasir Imam

# Arms cache intercepted in Jos - Jang

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

A large cache of arms that was to be used to reignite crisis in Jos was intercepted by security agents in a recent operation, Plateau State Governor Jonah Jang told an audience attending the Easter service yesterday in Jos.

Speaking at the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) Headquarters before hundreds of worshippers, Jang said the seized arms were being smuggled with the intention of using them to destroy key places and blow up some important installations in the state.

Hundreds of people were killed in the Jos crisis of November last year,

which was sparked off by alleged vote rigging in the Jos North Local Government election.

The last celebrated seizure of arms since the crisis was in January, when the joint military team deployed to maintain peace in Jos arrested 26 suspected mercenaries allegedly in fake police uniforms with assorted weapons. Officials said the suspects, who were arrested during a curfew period, were in a Toyota Camry car and a Toyota Hiace bus marked 'Legislative Council, Okene LG.'

But the 26 so-called mercenaries were later found to be vigilantes from

Okene, Kogi State. The Okene local government chairman confirmed they were his men and the Kogi police command also later wrote the authorities in Jos explaining the true identity of the suspects. The 26 men were later transferred to the Force Criminal Investigation Department in Abuja and arraigned before a court on charges of illegal possession of weapons.

In announcing the latest seizure of weapons yesterday, Jang did not say exactly when and where the arms were intercepted and which security agency executed the operation.

The governor said despite efforts

Cont. on Pg. 5

## NEWS

## Deeper Life overseer, Pastor Kumuyi loses wife

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

The wife of Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi, the General Superintendent of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Mrs Biodun Kumuyi died in the early hours of Saturday, April 11, 2009 at her residence in the International Bible Training Centre, Ayobo, Ipaja, Lagos following a brief illness. She was aged 57. The Secretary, Deeper Life Bible Church who announced the passage said until her death, Mrs. Kumuyi was the National Woman Coordinator of the church. She was also international co-ordinator of the women ministry in Africa and other continents where the church has branches. According to the Church Secretary, Mrs. Kumuyi was the publisher of the popular *Christian Women Mirror* magazine which circulates widely within and outside the country. Her death was not announced at the church's retreat, which ended yesterday, making participants at the retreat to wonder on the commitment of Pastor Kumuyi, who was still at his best in all his messages even after his wife's death. The Church Secretary said her burial arrangements would be announced later.

## Why I am in guber struggle, by Ararume

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

DP governorship candidate for the 2007 election in Imo State, Senator Ifeanyi Ararume has said that his struggle for the governorship seat was a fight against injustice. Ararume who lost at the recent Court of Appeal ruling at Port-Harcourt told newsmen at the Imo Airport in Owerri yesterday that the fight had nothing with Governor Ikedi Ohakim. He said Governor Ohakim remained his brother, adding that he was satisfied that he achieved what he had set out to achieve. He said the ruling, though accepted, did not represent the voting pattern in Imo State.

## Bishop opposes death sentence for kidnappers

The Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna Metropolitan Archdiocese, Dr Matheaw Ndagoso, said on Saturday that he was opposed to death sentence as a punishment for kidnapping in the country. Ndagoso told newsmen in Kaduna that killing people on account of offences committed by such abductors was not the solution to the problem. "Two wrongs can never make a right, the act of killing is as wrong as that of kidnapping. I believe that people who commit crimes against the society should be incarcerated for a long time to deprive them of their rights. Incarceration should be done with the aim of rehabilitating them. People who commit crimes need pity and I believe we should go for the reasons why they commit the crimes instead of dwelling on the symptoms," he said. He said death penalty had never solved problems anywhere in the world, but that it heightened tensions. "I appeal to the authorities not consider death sentence as a solution to the kidnapping in the Niger Delta, for life is a gift from God and only He has the right to take it," he said. (NAN)



Wife of former Vice President Hajiya Titi Abubakar (right) at the cutting of the cake by Atiku's daughter and her husband Tunji Tolani, at the wedding reception at ABTI University, Yola on Friday.

## Clerics, governors, others advise Christians at Easter

Various messages pouring in for Christian faithful yesterday advised them to follow the teachings and footsteps of Jesus Christ as exemplified by the life he led.

In Abuja, Pastor Paul Eneche of the Dunamis International Gospel Church on Sunday urged Christians to lead a life of sacrifice. Eneche, the Senior Pastor of the Church gave the advice in a sermon entitled "the Ultimate Sacrifice" to mark the Easter celebration. According to him, another lesson Christ's resurrection taught Christians was that the resistance of the devil would turn to their assistance.

"When you are connected to his promise and presence you are automatically connected to the power to prevail," he assured the faithful. At Foursquare Gospel Church Headquarters, Garki, Abuja, Pastor Folawemi Adewunmi said

that the rejection of Jesus Christ during his days by some Philistines was due to most of the good things he had done. Adewunmi in an interview with newsmen said Christ was only trying to move us out of bondage, as some people were not happy for others to be moved out of bondage which was the case with Philistines. According to her 'with death and resurrection' we can be talking of Christianity, the power of resurrection had given us access to the kingdom and the boldness to preach the gospel. Rev. Fr Raphael Fagbohun, a Catholic priest yesterday in Abuja described the death and resurrection of Christ "as a passport to victory for Christians". Fagbohun, the force Catholic chaplain of Archangel Raphael's Police Chaplaincy, Garki barracks, said this in his sermon on Easter Sunday. He said Jesus went through the sufferings to win victory for Christians

adding that they are supposed to enjoy the victory to the full without any fear. Members of the chaplaincy renewed their baptismal promises to reject Satan and his empty promises. Also, Pastor Ubong Ntah, FCT Field Superintendent of the Apostolic Church Nigeria, on Sunday urged Christians to reciprocate God's love by rendering selfless service. He said this at the fifth Annual Easter Major Convention with the theme, "Once Far, now near" held at The Apostolic Church Kubwa Area Headquarters. Ntah said the sins of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden brought a communication gap between God and man.

According to him, the blissful communication man shared with God was broken when the man disobeyed God's instruction. Ntah said that Christ, being the husband of the Church, the Church needs to serve him diligently to mark his suffer-

ings. In Osogbo, Nigerian youths were advised not to emulate corrupt leaders so as to build a corrupt free nation in the future. Rev. Fr. Felix Olaniyan, of Saint Benedict Catholic Church, Osogbo, gave the advice on Sunday in Osogbo, during a special mass to mark 2009 Easter celebration.

In Kaduna, a Catholic priest Rev. Fr Donatus Okoye of Saint Joseph Cathedral, Kaduna called for attitudinal change among Christians as they celebrated Easter. Okoye in his Easter Homily, said the celebration of the Easter feast entailed transformation of attitudes. He said the celebration would be meaningless if Christians failed to be transformed to people who would lead by their exemplary conduct. In Ilorin, Gov. Bukola Saraki urged Christian faithful to demonstrate love and genuine care for their neighbours in the true spirit of Easter. (NAN)

## Ex-Dep Gov cautions on CBN's \$200m loan to farmers

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

Former deputy governor of Ogun State, Alhaji Adegbeniga Kaka has cautioned against politicization of the process of CBN's propose \$200 million loan to farmers, saying "political middlemen" should be avoided by the apex bank.

Also a farmer in Ogun State, he said the "political middlemen" are those who in a short time now would be coming up with various groups and bodies under the under so called ruling party in the name of facilitating the loan procurement for bonafide farmers.

interest is low for us to be interested. It is only when these factors are seriously considered that I can be personally be interested,"

Kaka recalled that a similar gesture by the immediate past administration on the issue of bird flu ended up creating "unemployment and apathy on the part of poultry food consumers, as the money earmarked by the government to fight bird flu ended up in the pockets of the country's egg-dots. The egg-dots are compounding the problem. They would get the money and at the end of the day there is nothing to show for it. They are at it

again, raising false alarm on the bird flu issue, because the international donor agencies disclosed that they want to give money to fight the flu again.

"These are the people who are destroying the system and fair CBN should be wary of the people if they are really determined to make success of the new approach in assisting the country's farmers".

Kaka emphasized that the fundamental issue confronting agriculture in the country, among which are problems of land, road and other infrastructure, should precede such a loan programme.

# NEWS

## Halliburton: Opposition threatens to name bribe takers

Opposition parties under the auspices of Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) yesterday threatened to name the Nigerians involved in the Halliburton bribery scandal if President Umaru Yar'adua refused to disclose their names and begin their prosecution.

Also yesterday, the Action Congress (AC) warned the government against any attempt to protect those involved in the scandal warning the anti-corruption campaign would go up in flames if the issue was not addressed.

A statement by CNPP's National Publicity Secretary, Mr. Osita Okechukwu said President Yar'adua knew those involved in the scandal.

They alleged the President was being economical with the truth because of his 2011 presidential.

"The \$150 million found in the Swiss Bank is not trapped but laundered with names of the bonafide Nigerian owners," the group said.

"Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) wishes to state unequivocally, that President Umaru Musa Yar'adua and his Attorney-General and Minister of Justice are economical with the truth and too soft on the war against corruption since the inception of the regime and in this instance, the monumental Halliburton Nigeria LNG scam; for our investigation shows clearly that the \$150m found in the Swiss Bank is not trapped but laundered with names of the bonafide Nigerian owners.

"Further to shield and

By Muideen Olaniyi

protect the looters, the regime did not mention the over \$ 30m that was distributed in Nigeria, just like those who were named and not under seal in the Siemen scandal have not been prosecuted up-to-date. Instead Siemen was rewarded with more juicy contracts running into billions of Naira," the CNPP.

It added that "President Yar'adua has all the details, names of the principal culprits and their agents, it is not by newspaper cuttings, but granite evidence gathered by the regime from source. Mr President is only trapped by his second term ambition, as a top member of the Board of Trustees of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), leads the hall of infamy of Halliburton beneficiaries.

"We shall disclose the names in the days ahead, if President Yar'adua continues to shield the names and fail to commence their prosecution. The tragedy is that all the time the looters head or tail wins, while Nigerians loose and the crisis in the Niger Delta festers; because of their unholy alliance with the PDP leadership.

While saying that the Department of Justice and Security and Exchange Commission of the US, are committed to aggressively enforcing the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and holding violators of their laws accountable when they engage in illegal conduct, it accused the Nigerian government of busy rationalizing inefficiency and gross corruption.

It noted that Halliburton, because of the indemnity,

had agreed to pay \$402 million in criminal fines to the Department of Justice while the country's leaders are romancing with corrupt barons and looters of our common wealth, thus violating Section 15 of the Constitution and other extant laws.

Meanwhile, the Action Congress (AC) yesterday warned the Federal Government against any attempt to shield all Nigerians involved in the Halliburton bribery scandal.

AC's warning was contained in a statement from Lagos by its National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed.

The party also said the FG should immediately identify the alleged bribe takers no matter their status in the society and begin the process of prosecuting them.

It said all the talk about not knowing the real identity of those involved cannot stand even a perfunctory scrutiny.

AC also described as an unnecessary distraction the statement credited to the Mr. Aondoankaa, that \$150 million of the \$180 million involved in the Halliburton bribery scandal has been found in an account in Zurich, Switzerland, without the identities of the account owners being known.

"Our response to this tallies with that of the civil rights group Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), which had said in a statement: 'Normal banking practices suggest that funds lodged in any bank are ascribed or owned by identifiable persons,' it stated.



Pope Benedict XVI delivers the traditional "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) Easter message from the central loggia of St Peter's Basilica yesterday. Pic: AFP

## Yar'adua orders ministries to allow free information flow

By AbdulFattah Olajide

Worried by the incessant media criticism of its alleged tardiness and taciturnity, the Federal Government has mandated ministers and heads of parastatals to reorganise the information units of their various departments with a view to allowing free flow of information to the public and making them more accessible to the media.

Presidential spokesman, Mr. Olusegun Adeniyi announced the new policy in Abuja yesterday while delivering a paper titled "Communication in Governance: The Pitfalls, the Prospects" at the 2nd Global Communication Summit organized by Timex Communications Limited. "As a deliberate

communication policy, government is taking steps to encourage more openness in the conduct of public affairs. Consequently, ministers and senior government officials have been mandated to reorganise their information departments and units with a view to making them more accessible to the media, which has the constitutional responsibility of holding the government accountable to the people", he stated.

He decried the massive criticism being attracted by the Yar'adua administration from the media, blaming it on inadequate information dissemination to the public caused by the administration's notion that

"government should concentrate more on service delivery and refrain from making noise in the media as seeing is believing."

He noted that "While this may be a correct position in an environment where empty propaganda has become the norm, it has had its adverse effects as ministers and heads of government agencies have become too quiet even to the extent of not talking about their work plans as well as the progress being recorded under them", he noted. Adeniyi also blamed the situation on the attitude and orientation of information officers who as bureaucrats he said felt compelled to restrict information unless authorised to release it by appropriate supervising officials.

## ABUTH defends sack of nursing staff over hijab

Authorities of the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH), Shika, Zaria weekend said a newly recruited nursing staff was sacked for contravening dress code.

The Chief Medical Director, Professor Abdulmumini Hassan Rafindadi, said in a statement that the hospital has prescribed Hijab which all Muslim-women nursing staff are allowed to wear for duty in the hospital.

Rafindadi said: "The management of ABUTH recently offered appointment to 180 staff nurses including one Safiya O. Ahmad. Safiya, having accepted the appointment, promised in writing to abide by all rules and regulations of the hospital and assumed

From Isa Sa'idu, in Zaria

duty on 2nd January, 2009. The nursing profession prescribes dressing code for its members which include the wearing of Hijab but should be shoulder length. This has been the rule even before Safiya's employment.

"However, Safiya decided to wear a different and unapproved Hijab. Her attention was drawn to this improper mode of dressing on several occasions by her supervisors, superiors and other Muslim interest groups. Indeed, her husband too was equally contacted on several occasions on this same issue. But all efforts to make them reason proved abortive. The management went extra length to write her a letter advising her to comply in her own interest,

the advice she totally disregards. She was then issued with a query letter which she failed to respond to."

Safiya's refusal to answer the query, according to Rafindadi, was a clear indication that she was no longer interested in her work. And in order not to establish a bad precedence, Rafindadi added, the management was left with no other option than to terminate her two months old appointment.

Safiya's husband, Rafindadi said, went on campaign of calumny after his wife was sacked despite the ABUTH's efforts, to see that he brought his wife to order. This campaign by Safiya's husband, Rafindadi said, was meant to incite Muslims within the hospital

and the neighbouring communities against the management of the hospital.

According to Rafindadi, in order to forestall peace in the hospital, the Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Shehu Idris, intervened by summoning a meeting of stakeholders in his palace which was presided over by a senior counselor of the Emirate, Wazirin Zazzau, Alhaji Ibrahim Aminu. Having made their submissions, the stakeholders asked the disagreeing parties to maintain peace as amicable solution would be found, Rafindadi said.

Speaking to newsmen, Safiya's husband, Malam Muhammad Isa, said the constitution of the country has given freedom of religion to every Nigerian

and his wife, Safiya, is inclusive.

Malam Isa, a student of the Ahmadu Bello University and a prominent member of the Muslim Student Society of Nigeria (MSSN), explained that the Hijab which his wife was wearing for her routine duty was never a hindrance to the execution of her job as a nurse. He added that his wife has never signed any agreement with the hospital, that she has to expose her body before she can work as a nurse in the hospital.

Isa said ABUTH's management the decision to sack his wife is unfortunate because she is only complying with what Allah has prescribed for her as a woman. He said wearing Hijab below shoulder length

is neither a nuisance to his wife's colleagues nor her patients. Isa also alleged that the sack was influenced by some pressure groups in the hospital who are against the wearing of Hijab by nursing staff.

One of the stakeholders who was brought into the crisis to stem its escalation, Sheikh Abubakar Imam Ikara, told *Daily Trust*, that the ABUTH brought them into the scene after they had sacked Safiya. Imam Ikara however said they would do their best to see that Safiya's case did not result into religious crisis in the hospital and Zaria at large.

When *Daily Trust* visited the hospital yesterday afternoon staff of the hospital were seen, despite the Easter break, peacefully carry out their normal duties.

# NEWS



Governor Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe State (fifth from right) in a group photo with participants of Senior Executive Course 31 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPS), Kuru, when they paid a courtesy call on him at the Government House, Damaturu, recently.

## Pursuit of vanity, cause of Nigeria's backwardness

— Jonathan

Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday identified the pursuit of mundane things by both leaders and followers as the cause of the Nation's under-development.

Jonathan said this in his Easter message at the Easter Sunday service held in the Aso Rock Villa Chapel, Abuja.

"Having worked in the government for almost 10 years now, I know that most of the problems we have are because of the vain and trivial things that charm us most.

"Why is it that in this country, nothing works irrespective of our abundant resources?"

"What make us to remain the way we are, what make us to be backward is that we value those things that matter less to the society," he said.

Jonathan said that some years back, in terms of development, Nigeria was in the same level with India, Brazil, Indonesia and Singapore, but regretted that those countries had left us behind.

He blamed past leaders for looting the treasury and stashing funds meant for the country's development in banks outside the country.

Jonathan said: "Nigeria has so much money stashed outside this country, most of the money stolen from the public treasury.

"If 50 per cent of this fund is brought and kept in Nigerian banks they would have enough fund to give as loan. Our banks will not need to send girls to go and hustle for deposits.

"We find out that all the fund stolen, sometimes they do not even need 10 per cent of it until they died. Some of them they hide the money and their children will not even see it."

He urged Nigerians to use the Easter period to purge themselves of mundane things and pursue things that would be beneficial to the uplifting of the Nation.

"I pray that for us the Nigerian Nation, these vain things that charm us most, we should sacrifice them to the blood of Christ.

"I believe that if we sacrifice most of these artificial and mundane things that are not critical to us to the blood of Christ, this country will be a better place," he said. (NAN)

## Sultan calls for reform of education system

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar, has called on policy makers in the country to reform the educational system in line with modern day reality.

Abubakar made the call yesterday in Yola, while inaugurating the Lamido Zubairu Education Centre

Golden Jubilee House" named after the Fourth Lamido of Adamawa.

He said that the system should be reformed in such a way that it could produce quality graduates who could face the challenges of the modern world.

Abubakar urged teachers to encourage the teaching of

religion in schools to promote moral values and to curb all sorts of decadents in the society.

He commended the incumbent Lamido, Alhaji Aliyu Musdafa, who is also the 11th Lamido of Adamawa, for his foresight in establishing the centre.

Abubakar said that the

centre would promote the legacy left behind by the first Lamido, Modibbo Adama.

Also speaking at the occasion, Governor Murtala Nyako, expressed dismay over the dwindling status

of the emirate compared to what was obtained during Northern Regional Government.

Nyako, represented by his Chief of Staff, Alhaji Bello Tukur, rated the contribution of the emirate to national development at five per cent compared to its previous 90 per cent in all sphere of endeavours.

He promised that in spite of the lean financial status of the government, it would ensure that the emirate recovered its lost glory. Nyako urged the centre to liaise with the Farming Skills Acquisition Centre established by the state government to boost educational and agricultural sectors of the state.

The centre was set up by the emirate to promote learning, unity and development of the people of the state.

It has an E-Library with rich collections of archival materials and other historical documents that could be accessed by scholars all over the world.

## First Bank Director Ngama, Kazir get traditional titles

Executive Director of First Bank (North) Dr. Yerima Lawal Ngama has been installed the Mutawallen Bade while the former chief of Army Staff retired Major General Alwali Kazir is the new Madakin Bade in an elaborate ceremony which took place on Saturday in Gashua, Yobe State.

Emir of Bade Alhaji Abubakar Umar Suleiman said the two were bestowed with the traditional titles because of "their track record and services towards the development of the Bade Emirate, Yobe State and Nigeria in general".

The Wazirin Bade Alhaji Musa Duci Kura who spoke on the historical antecedent of the emirate which was characterized by "hardwork, bravery and love" told the new title holders to keep on working hard and urged them to fear God and see their new responsibility as a call to service and a way of bringing development to the emirate.

Among the dignitaries that witnessed the turbaning

From Hamza Idris, Damaturu

ceremony were minister of state for foreign affairs Alhaji Ibrin Maigari, former minister of state for agriculture Alhaji Adamu Maina Waziri, Senator Ahmed Lawal, Senator Adamu Talba, Commandant of the Nigerian Defence Academy Major General

M.M. Yerima and the Chairman of the First Bank Alhaji Umar Mutallab and Managing Director Sanusi Lamido Sanusi.

Others include retired Brigadier Abba Kyari, Alhaji Aliyu Shinkafi, Ambassador Bunu Sherrif Musa, many traditional rulers from Nigeria and Niger including members of the diplomatic corps.

A mini durbar was staged in honour of the new title holders.

General Kazir and Lawal Ngama thanked the Emir of Bade for finding them "worthy" to be turbaned as traditional title holders in the emirate and promised to use their new responsibilities for the development of humanity.

## Easter: Mark tasks leaders on harmony

Senate President David Mark has charged political and religious leaders in the country to inculcate in their followers the virtues of peaceful co-existence, love and mutual cooperation needed to guarantee socio-economic growth.

In an Easter message signed by Chief Press Secretary to the Senate President, Mr. Paul Mume, Senator Mark said "Only an environment of peace, tolerance and harmonious living amongst the people irrespective of religious and

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Turaki A. Hassan

political differences could lead to meaningful development.

We have to inculcate into our younger generation the virtues of peace, love and spirit of good neighbourliness. We should emulate the teachings of Jesus Christ which preaches love, humility and selfless service".

The Senate President called on Christians to use the period of Easter celebration to pray for the unity and renewed faith in the country, saying

"The challenges ahead call for total support and co-operation to the present administration."

Mark enjoined leaders at all levels to always put in the front burner the yearnings and aspirations of the people, stressing that the welfare of the citizenry is paramount.

While reflecting on challenges of the global financial crisis, Senator Mark harped on the need to diversify the economy and focus on agriculture as the panacea to the crisis.

He urged Nigerians to rally round the present

administration in the task of actualizing the lofty objectives for the good of the people through the seven point agenda.

He promised that the National Assembly on its part will continue to be guided by the needs of the citizenry, saying that all that would be needed to lay a sound legislative background for the executive to perform would be done.

He reiterated the covenant with the electorate and pledged to cooperate with the executive in the task of delivering democratic

dividends but would not compromise its oversight functions on them.



Senate President David Mark

## NEWS

# 'Arms cache intercepted in Jos'

Continued from Page 1

by security agencies to maintain peace, there were still a few elements bent on destabilising the state. He added that the activities of some people in the state were sabotaging his efforts of maintaining peace.

Jang urged all residents of the state to embrace peace. "Those who love Nigeria must ensure that there is peace on the Plateau because anything that concerns Plateau is

of great concern to the entire country because of the enviable position of the state as a home of peace and tourism," Jang, who spoke extensively on peace in Plateau State, said.

COCIN Vice President Rev. Soja Bewarang spoke on the lessons of Easter and the significance of Christ rising from the dead. Bewarang chastised Christians who do not believe in the resurrection, saying such persons cannot truly lay claim to the faith because this was the foundation of all Christian beliefs.

# Reps dump power probe report

Continued from Page 1

and or whether the monies were wrongly or corruptly disbursed."

Daily Trust learnt that the ad hoc committee has now resolved to pursue the same mandate as the one earlier given to the Committee on Power, which was to "carry out a comprehensive and thorough investigation and conduct a public hearing into how the huge sums of money was expended on power generation, transmission and distribution without any commensurate result."

The Tambuwal committee was given a week to submit its report, but it asked for additional one week to be able

to get fresh evidence from some agencies and officials. The additional time elapsed last week, but the committee did not present any report and no official explanation was publicly given.

"It was part of the problem that caused the delay in submitting our report as mandated by the House," a member of the review committee told our reporter "You'll recall that the House had given us seven days but later extended it with another week. But we underestimated the job, as we found out during our sittings that the report was incoherent. We had to request for fresh documents from the principal actors, that's the Minis-

try of Power, Central Bank of Nigeria and host of other stakeholders."

Consideration of the report of the Elumelu Committee became controversial in the House as majority of lawmakers rejected it.

One of the Elumelu committee members who disowned the report, Rep Ajibola Muraina (PDP, Oyo State), had said "All these noise about spending huge money without commensurate results are mere propaganda. I humbly refer you to the whole gamut of the committee's verbatim report and particularly the evidence of the Central Bank Governor that no money is lost, that the

remaining monies remain intact in the form of LC (Letters of Credit) as the various contracting companies only drew monies from the LC on the strength of their performance."

Another member, Dr Ahmed Salik, also said he did not participate in writing the report.

The Elumelu committee recommended further investigation by anti-graft agencies of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Cross River State Governor Liyel Imoke and former Governor of Ondo State Olusegun Agagu for their roles in the award of contracts for the power projects.

# Shell shuts flowstations after fire

Royal Dutch Shell said yesterday it had shut down flowstations feeding into its Trans-Niger oil pipeline in southern Nigeria as a precautionary measure after a fire at a manifold. The Anglo-Dutch giant said it had shut down some production while firefighters tried to extinguish the blaze at the Bomu manifold in Ogoniland, in the restive Niger Delta region.

"We have shut down all flowstations that feed into the pipeline. It is a long stretch of pipeline that conveys production from (Shell's Nigerian joint venture) SPDC and third parties," Shell spokesman Precious Okolobo said. "We have shut in some production as our firefighters do all they can to extinguish the fire," he said. The cause of the blaze was not known.

The Trans-Niger pipeline crosses Ogoniland, a region where Shell closed its production operations in 1993 due largely to popular protests over pollution and lack of development. President Umaru Yar'Adua announced last year that the government would give the oilfields to another company after Shell abandoned them.

Shell said not long afterwards that it would not mount a legal challenge to the plan, but villagers last year staged protests against the company, accusing it of trying to force its way back into the area. Acts of sabotage against oil pipelines are common across the Niger Delta.

Some are carried out by militants who say they are fighting for a fairer share of the region's natural wealth, others by thieves who tap into the pipelines to try to siphon off oil.

# Economic recession affects beggars' fortunes

The economic meltdown is affecting the fortunes of beggars in Kaduna as they now complain of low patronage, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports. "We have shifted our day-to-day activities of begging for alms to request for medical assistance to survive the situation," Malama Hadiza Barau, a beggar told NAN.

An investigation conducted by NAN revealed that the street beggars have also changed their mode of begging from outright asking for money to seeking for one form of assistance or another. They request for health related help, food items, school fees for their children or rent.

They usually besiege worship places during prayer times asking for the assistance in a very passionate and persuasive language, which easily move religious faithful to grant such requests.

Some of the beggars pose as travellers who have lost their transport money or robbed on a journey.

Some ask for medical as-

sistance by displaying hospital cards or doctors prescription forms, most of which were found to be fake or expired.

Barau explained in Hausa that "faduwan tattalin arziki ya shafi samun mu" (the strategy was necessary, because the current economic crisis has affected our income).

Malam Ya'u Shehu also told NAN that people had stopped giving them alms either because of the prevailing economic hardship or they were fed up with the beggars, saying "that is why we resorted to the new method and it is working".

Speaking with NAN on the development, an official of the Center for Women Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation (CEWEPA), who pleaded for anonymity, said the NGO had trained 50 physically challenged persons.

He regretted that the beneficiaries, trained on soap making, knitting, tailoring, tie and dye in conjunction with NDE have been found in mosques and other public places begging for alms. (NAN)

# UN Security Council: Nigeria insists on an Africa veto power

Nigeria has reaffirmed its stand on an African Union (AU) resolution for two permanent and five non-permanent seats for Africa in a reformed UN Security Council. Nigeria's position was contained in statements it presented to the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the expansion of the Security Council at the UN headquarters in New York.

The statements, obtained by NAN at the UN, also stated that the two permanent seats should come with all the "prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto". Nigeria's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Amb. Bukun-Ola Onemola, who read the statements, said: "Nigeria reiterates that any reform of the Security Council should include a fundamental increase in the size and composition of the council".

He said, "both the permanent and non-permanent seat categories should reflect the current global trends".

Onemola also noted that "such an expansion should cater for the interests of those currently not represented in the permanent seat category, as well as those under-represented in the non-permanent seat category".

The Nigerian diplomat said Africa remained the only region without a representation in the permanent seat category of the council. "As such, Nigeria will like to restate that Africa's demand for permanent representation in the security should be given special considerations," he stressed.

Onemola also pointed out that "in this regard, Africa re-

quires two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats in an expanded security council of 26 members". This, he added, would go a long way in addressing the current imbalance in the present composition of the UN Security Council. He expressed the readiness of Nigeria to adhere to the work plan for the negotiations, noting that, "Nigeria has contributed immensely to the fight against colonisation, resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping and peace building on the continent and beyond".

NAN recalls that the AU decision on the two permanent and five non-permanent seats was agreed in 2005 by African leaders at an extraordinary session of the AU in the South African resort of Ezulwini. Also, at Sirte in Libya, the African leaders adopted a declaration, which reaffirmed their "common position" to get Africa two permanent UN security council seats with all attendant privileges, including full veto rights.

The declaration also called for a "comprehensive reform of the United Nations system". The declaration proposed enlarging the UN security council from 15 to 26 member countries, with the 11 additional seats distributed to different continents. They are two seats for Africa, two for Asia, one for Latin American and Caribbean states, and one for Western European and other states.

Currently, only the U.S., France, UK, China and Russia have permanent seats and veto powers in the Security Council, while developing nations share among themselves rotational, non-permanent roles with no veto rights. (NAN)

# FG pledges prudent budget implementation

Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly matters, Senator Abba Jaji, yesterday said that the Federal Government would ensure prudence in the implementation of the 2009 budget.

Both chambers of the National Assembly in February passed a harmonised budget of N3.1 trillion which

had been assented to by President Umaru Yar'Adua.

Of the amount, N1.627 trillion was voted for Recurrent Expenditure, N1.002 trillion was allocated for Capital, N283.649 billion was set aside for Debt Service and N168.620 was approved for Statutory Transfers.

The total figure of the annual budget of the nation

was predicated on 45 dollars per barrel of crude oil.

Abba Aji told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that the government would strictly monitor the implementation of the budget to ensure adherence to due process and accountability.

He said that the yet-to-be inaugurated Fiscal Re-

sponsibility Commission (FRC) was set up to ensure prudence, accountability and transparency in the management of the nation's resources.

"The fiscal commission board is yet to be inaugurated because one of the nominees representing South West, Mr Adewuni Abitoye, has not been

cleared by the Senate. But we are confident that as soon as the Senators return from their Easter recess, the confirmation of the last person will be considered so that the inauguration can take place," he said.

Abba Aji said that the government through the commission would ensure budgeting relationship

that cut across the federation, from the federal, state and local government levels.

"Since we all have one macroeconomic and running the same economy system as a nation, there is the need to secure greater accountability within a medium term fiscal policy framework," he said.

## NEWS

## Withdrawal of Atiku's police guards, a vendetta – AC

By Muideen Olaniyi

The withdrawal of the security aides attached to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar by the police authorities is an act of political vendetta, the Action Congress (AC) alleged over the weekend.

AC's National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed said in a statement that the action was a throwback to the days of political vindictiveness as a tool of governance under former President Olusegun Obasanjo. "We had thought the administration of President Umaru Yar'adua, based on its avowed commitment to the rule of law and due process, will toe a different line from its predecessor, but how wrong we are!" AC said.

The party said it has no doubt that the withdrawal of the police aides was a direct fallout of Atiku's criticism of the administration's electoral reform and absolute absence of governance.

AC said the defence by the presidency raises more questions than answers, especially in trying to distance President Yar'adua from the decision of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) to withdraw police orderlies from those who do not deserve it.

"Whether the President was present at the meeting of the FEC or not, he remains the chairman of the council and must take responsibility for its actions. Also, nowhere in the FEC decision was it stated that a former Vice President or President are among those undeserving of using police security. "In any case, how many former Vice Presidents or Presidents have had their police orderlies withdrawn or trimmed as argued disingenuously by the PDP Police Force? Is President Yar'adua aware that, by the withdrawal of the police security of a former VP under his watch, he is setting a dangerous precedent that may come back to hunt him after leaving office?" the party queried.

## FG urged to mitigate economic meltdown

By Abbas Jimoh

The Federal Government has been called upon to initiate policies and programmes that will minimise the effects of global economic meltdown on Nigerians.

In their Easter messages, the Primate of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide (CLAW) Ayo Ositelu and the national chairman of the Citizens Popular Party (CPP) Maxi Okwu urged Nigerians to leave in peace, love, tolerance and patriotism to enhance the development of the country.

"Nigerian leaders should rule with the fear of God, by having policies and programmes that will minimise the effect of the global economic meltdown," Primate Ositelu in a statement signed by Rev. Badejo said. While commending the Federal Government on the rebranding of Nigeria exercise, he said that there is an urgent need for re-orientation, attitudinal change and positive mindset in our value system.

"Obedience to the word of God is the key to rebranding Nigeria as a righteous nation," he said.

For his part, Okwu called on Nigerians to participate actively in the affairs of the nation as power resides in the people.

"Today, our economy is in trouble, the political process in disarray, security of lives and property jeopardized and the populace impoverished and disillusioned. We urge President Umaru Yar' Adua to sit up and take governance serious. Since the world has become a global village and watches our progress with cautious optimism, it is time to justify our sovereignty through effective political reengineering, economic restructuring and social reorganization. This is the only way to re-brand Nigeria and uplift the living standards of the people.

"We call for greater vigilance and urge the citizenry to strongly challenge the actions of government that are not in tandem with their security and welfare which is the primary purpose of government as provided for in the Constitution, Okwu said.



Wife of the Vice President Mrs Patience Goodluck Jonathan with the less privileged after presenting some food items to them during the Easter Soup Kitchen held at the Reachout Foundation in Gwarinmpa, Abuja, at the weekend.

Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

## Heavy storm: Taraba community flees into Cameroon

From Fidelis Mac-Leva, Jalingo

Following a heavy downpour that wreaked havoc in Mbamnga, a border community on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba state, over four hundred victims who were rendered homeless by the disaster are now migrating to neighbouring Cameroon in search of succour.

Village head of Mbamnga, Jauro Usmanu Abubakar, speaking to our correspondent who visited the community at the weekend called on both Sardauna Local Government Council and the State government to

urgently come to the aid of the victims in order to stop them from migrating to Cameroon.

According to Abubakar, the heavy downpour which occurred on April 1, 2009, was preceded by large pellets of ice crystals which descended from the skies and caused damage to homes and public buildings.

Having lost their homes and valuables to the disaster, the victims are relocating to Cameroon in search of farmlands to cultivate and continue with their lives,

Jauro Abubakar said.

Although no human lives were lost, the destruction caused by the rain disaster at Mbamnga was said to have affected over four hundred and twenty four houses.

Buildings that were affected by the downpour which lasted for several hours include the Mbamnga Police station, the Central Mosque, Redeemed Peoples Mission, RPM Church and primary and secondary schools.

Chairman of Sardauna local government Council, Ismaila Yahaya Bappa, who described the disaster as

shocking said the local government had never experienced that kind of rainfall in the past.

Bappa who said the situation was beyond the local government council to handle appealed for urgent assistance from the Taraba state government in order to prevent further migration into Cameroon.

The member representing Mbamnga constituency in the State House of Assembly, Abel Diah, promised to take up the matter with the state government with a view to providing relief and assistance to the victims.

## Benue, C/River shift ground on boundary dispute

By Abbas Jimoh

Benue and Cross River states have both agreed to shift ground to resolve a running boundary dispute which has claimed lives among the border communities in Vandeikya, kwande, Obudu and Obanliku local government areas.

The compromise was achieved recently during a five-day field work led by the Director General of National Boundary Commission (NBC), Sadiq Marafa Diggi to flash points areas along the interstate boundary.

Explaining why the principle of give and take must be applied as a practical solution, Diggi said, "Our just concluded field exercise gave our commission an insight into the problems on this boundary, especially areas of claims and counter claims by both states which created a contested overlap area in which only technical solution with the spirit of give and take can solve."

He said that the vandeikya/Obudu axis of the boundary was defined by a faulty legal notice 126 of 1954 which wrongly put the Cross River State's Obudu town inside

Benue State, a problem, he explained, his commission has addressed.

He appealed to the border dwellers not to remove or destroy pillars laid by the commission that were meant to define their boundary and advised them not to chase out the contractor engaged by the commission to erect pillar on the boundary over disagreement where pillars should be placed from the field.

Diggi explained to both states, especially their farming border communities that, "The fact that our technical line cuts a farm land, does not mean that the farmer has lost either half of his or her farmland to another state, my commission will not create any environment of blood shedding or out to cede land from one state into another, we are only here to be fair at defining and demarcating this boundary in order for local, state or Federal Government not to place social facilities wrongly that is meant to benefit a particular state."

Governor Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa State Governor has called on the people of the state to imbibe the virtues of peaceful coexistence, saying such was the everyday life of Jesus Christ whom

## Easter: Sylva sues for peace

By Muideen Olaniyi

Christians the world over are celebrating at Easter period.

The governor made the

call in his Easter message to Christians and other residents of the state.

A statement issued by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Doifie

Ola, quoted Sylva as saying that "the man whom we are celebrating this day was a man of peace."

"Peace for Jesus Christ, whom we serve and celebrate,

was not a mere trademark or slogan, but a defining attitude. As we celebrate Him, we must learn to pursue after the virtues He lived for. We must imbibe

the virtues of tolerance, respect, and accommodation without which our commemoration of His suffering on the cross and resurrection to glory this Easter period would be in vain," the governor added.

## NEWS

## Fuel price hike curtails movement in Otukpo

The hike in fuel prices in Otukpo, Benue State, has curtailed movement in the town as motorists are paying between N80 and N100 for a litre of petrol. Before the Easter season, it usually sold for between N70 and N75. Correspondents report that most of the residents who went to church yesterday resorted to trekking even to long distances to avoid the burden of increased transport fare. "We can trek to every part of the town, it only depends on the weather and since the motorcyclists have increased their fares, we only need to endure the sun and trek," Amina Odeh said. Amina who works with a private clinic said the fuel supply to the town had been relatively stable until the Easter week. On the major Ahmadu Bello Road, a long stream of worshippers was seen trekking to various churches in the early hours and after service and in the heat of the sun, they were seen lumbering back home. "We don't lose anything trekking," Odeh said, "rather we gain because it actually helps us to exercise". A commercial motorcyclist, Ekwo Adeyi, told newsmen that the fares had to be reviewed upward because the few fuel stations selling in the town altered prices on their fuel pumps from N70 to N100. "It would have affected our business for the season, but we are lucky that there are so many visitors in town, so we are even making more money", he said. The hike in pump price also took a toll on prices of foodstuffs in the market, with most foodstuffs sellers adding a little percentage to make up for the hiked transport fares. "I just bought a chicken for N1,800 and my budget was initially N1,300," a housewife, Echib Amodu, said. Amodu said she had to review her purchase list as she paid more for all the items she had to buy. A fuel attendant in one of the fuel stations on Federal Road, Achetu Onyejefu, told newsmen that the review in pump price was because of the delay in supply from the depot in Makurdi. She said, "fuel sells for N70 to N75 when there is steady supply, but a little shortage in supply will trigger the rates to N80, N90 or more because every fuel dealer wants to sell and make a gain". Some motorists who were only visiting for Easter said they filled their tanks from Makurdi so as to avoid paying higher rates in Otukpo. "Our friends and relations sent us SMS messages to ensure that we buy enough fuel from Makurdi for our stay and return to Makurdi, after the Easter," Uloko Ogwiji said. Otukpo is 100 kilometres from Makurdi, which is about an hour's drive. (NAN)

## Fishermen seek govt assistance on fish imports

Fishermen operating in Akwa Ibom shoreline have appealed to state and Federal Governments to extend assistance to them to reduce Nigeria's dependence on imported fish. The fishermen, who operate under the auspices of Artisan Fishermen Association of Nigeria, said that it was regrettable that in spite of the nation's enormous maritime resources it could not achieve self-sufficiency in fish production. Akwa Ibom chapter Chairman of the association, Rev. Samuel Ayadi, told newsmen at Ibeno in Akwa Ibom on Sunday that his members were facing many obstacles in meeting the domestic demand for fish. "We are unable to meet the huge demand for fish in Akwa Ibom and neighbouring states because we use traditional methods. "We will do better if we are supported with modern fishing input and methods to improve fish supply in the country," Ayadi said. He said there was the need to train fishermen on improved methods of fishing in addition to building their capacities in sustainable fishing practices to preserve the environment. He attributed the present scarcity of fish to delay in rainfall and frequent oil spills from the Qua Iboe oil fields. The chairman said that the dwindling catch from the sea had diminished the income of about 6,000 fishermen in Akwa Ibom. Ayadi said: "We usually experienced this type of scarcity whenever the rains delay in coming or when there is insufficient rainfall. The last time we had this type of experience was in 2001. (NAN)

## ...as price of frozen fish rises

There has been a 15 per cent increase in the price of frozen fish in some major towns in Delta. A survey by newsmen in Asaba showed that the price of frozen fish increased from N7,000 a carton to N8,050 in Warri, Asaba, Ughelli and Sapele. Some traders who spoke with newsmen attributed the increase in the price to increase in the exchange rate of the dollar. Mrs Josephine Chukwudi, a fish seller in Asaba told newsmen that a carton of frozen fish, which had been selling for N7,000 in the last one month, has increased to N8,050. Chukwudi explained that the increase in the price had affected patronage, adding that "people that normally buy at least three cartons now buy two because of the price." Some customers who reacted to the increase in the price of fish said that they were not comfortable with the new price. But Mrs Rita Odili said: "No matter what, we will still eat fish, we cannot eat our money." Similarly, the price of brown beans recorded a 23 per cent increase, as a custard bucket of brown beans now sells for N650 as against N500 in the previous week. Meanwhile, a market survey by Delta Ministry of Economic Planning made available to NAN showed that the prices of some foodstuffs recorded slight decreases in the last one week. The price of fresh tomatoes recorded eight per cent decrease, as a custard bucket of the commodity, which was selling for N600 in Asaba, Warri and Ughelli now sells for N550. The prices of some foodstuffs have remained stable in the last one week in Delta as a custard bucket of onions still sells for N500 in Warri, Asaba and Sapele. The price of dried pepper has not changed as one kilogramme still sells for N1,200 in Asaba. The stability in prices was noticeable in garri, Okro and beef. (NAN)

## Mimiko challenges youths on electoral reform

Governor of Ondo State, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko yesterday challenged Nigerian youths to lend their voices to current electoral reform process.

This, according to him, is to guard against imposition of leaders without the mandate of the people. Mimiko charged them to participate actively in politics and ensure that people's votes count during any democratic exercise.

The governor who was represented by his Special Adviser on Special Duties, Mr. Saka Lawal at the State

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

Youth Consultative Forum (OSYCF) held at Rufus Giwa Polytechnic (RGP) Owo reiterated that the collation of bio-data identity card for all Ondo State citizenry would soon commence.

This he said was to enable the present administration become familiar with the numerical strength of the people in order to come out with holistic approach on how to tackle their problems. The forum which is an umbrella body of National

Youth Parliament (NYP) initiated in Abuja by President Umaru Yar'adua has its centre in RGP, Owo comprising that of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAU) chapter covering Ondo North Senatorial District.

Mimiko said the "Caring-Heart" programme of his administration particularly on agriculture was to re-direct youths towards self-employment. While calling for support of the present government especially during this present era of economic meltdown, Mimiko lamented that

his administration was collecting half of the monthly allocation the immediate past administration of Dr. Olusegun Agagu got during its tenure monthly. He stressed that the development prompted the directive on the reduction of remuneration of political office holders in the state by 25 percent to cater for other pressing needs. The governor pledged the determination of his administration to attract rapid development to the state through people-oriented programmes



Refuse dumped on the road divider in Karu, a suburb in Abuja. Pic: Felix Onigbinde

## Adamawa pledges cooperation with traditional rulers

The Adamawa State government says it would continue to recognise the place and the role of the traditional institution in modern governance as it has made traditional rulers partners in social and economic development programmes. The state governor, Murtala Nyako dropped the hint while speaking at a ceremony to celebrate the bicentenary celebration of the Adamawa emirate in Yola. He said for years, Nigerians had debated the issue of a constitutional role for traditional rulers, hence the debate should be resolved in favour of a formal constitutional role

From Ibrahim Muhammad, Yola

for them, saying that those who sit on the thrones today are highly educated professionals.

"We have top military, police and customs officers, university professors, lawyers, accountants and journalists as traditional rulers and they have been contributing to nation building, we should please accord them the necessary support to succeed," the governor said.

Governor Nyako noted that denying them constitutional role was like denying the country the rulers' vast experiences that should help

in social and economic development, stressing the need for traditional rulers not to engage in any act capable of denting their image as custodians of culture and values.

Celebrating with the Adamawa paramount ruler, the governor said; "The Lamido Adamawa and his colleagues on the thrones in other parts of the country must take due credit for the transformation of the traditional institutions into a modern institution capable of responding to the changing social, economic and political circumstances in the society". He stated that the present administration in

the state had instituted a people empowerment programme as the flagship of its social and economic development with the view to conquering poverty by exposing every segment of the society to their potentials for self development.

The governor told the gathering that negotiations had reached an advanced stage with the Republic of Cameroon to tap electricity from the Lagdo dam to Yola, while working on converting the Kiri dam to a hydro-electric project that can generate up to 35 megawatts that could provide enough electricity for Adamawa and neighbouring Taraba.

# NEWS

## Saraki approves Kwara varsity council

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

Kwara State Governor, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki has approved the composition of an Interim Governing Council for the Kwara State University, Malet. A statement signed by the press secretary to the State Ministry of Education, Alhaji Nurudeen Dauda stated that the new council has the Chairman, Federal Character Commission (FCC) Professor Suahib Oba AbdulRaheem as its chairman. Other members include, Prof. Sheu Jimoh, Prof. H.I. Abubakar, Dr Ali Ahmad, Dr Femi Ajayi, Alhaji Abiodun Yusuf, Mr. Ibrahim Yinka Yahaya and Engineer R.k. Shittu. Also in the Governing Council are Mr. Adetunji Fagbemi, Mrs. Jumoke Akinwunmi, Architect Salihu Sulaiman, and Mr Mudashiru A. Oladapo representing the State Ministry of Education. The interim Governing Council will be inaugurated by the Commissioner for Education, Alhaji Bolaji Abdullahi at the Ministry's conference room on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 11 am. Meanwhile, the appointment of Professor Shuaibu Oba AbdulRaheem as Chairman of the Governing Council of the University has been described by a former commissioner in the state, Alhaji Adebayo Ayodele as a move that would aid rapid development of the university.

## Goje may revoke contract over poor work

From: Aliyu M. Hamagam, Gombe

Governor Danjuma Goje of Gombe State has threatened to revoke the 18.5 kilometer Hashidu/Malala road contract awarded to AYU Construction Company for poor quality of work and failure to complete the road within the stipulated period. The governor who could not hide his displeasure at what he saw during an inspector tour of the site told the Managing Director of the company that government would not hesitate to revoke the contract, saying the present administration would not condone laxity from any contractor. "I will revoke this contract, because I am not happy with what I saw. And at the pace at which the construction is going the project will not be completed within the stipulated duration period", Goje said. He further warned that failure to comply with the specifications and guide lines of contract agreement by any contractor would no longer be tolerated.

## Farmers seek loans in Bauchi

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

Farmers in Bauchi State have asked that the \$200 million said to be made available by the Central Bank of Nigeria as credit facility to big farmers in the country be disbursed to peasant farmers in the rural areas, hinging their argument on the fact that this category of farmers had proved to be more committed to agricultural activities than the so called big farmers. Farmers said that those who need the loans and are seriously committed to farming and agricultural activities are the small or subsistence farmers. Dr. Ibrahim Waziri, a US trained Political Economist turned farmer who owns over 14 square kilometers of agricultural land said for the loans to have any effect they must be given to the peasant farmers in the rural areas. "I want the Federal Government to spread the money to all small scale farmers in the country because they are the real farmers. Most of the so called large scale farmers, who have access to such loans are not actually using the loans for farming activities; they divert the money to other areas. As an Economist who came from a more Marxian economy I believe that when you take just a million dollars, roughly about N160 million and distribute to 10 microfinance banks in the rural areas and dedicate that amount to serious farmers I think at the end of the day the volume of production will be higher. For example, if you give N50, 000 to the rural farmer through a microfinance bank in his locality you are sure of three things: full supervision, recovery and high production.

## Easter: Fashola harps on religious tolerance

As Nigerian Christians join their counterparts world wide to celebrate the Easter, Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola has called for more commitment to religious tolerance, saying it was the only way to ensure harmonious existence in the country. Governor Fashola, in a message of goodwill to Christians in the country and Lagos State, said the nation, more than ever before, needs the values of tolerance, sacrifice and love for fellow human being as exemplified in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ if she must take her proper place in the comity of nations. A Government House statement quoted the governor as saying; "That in His infinite wisdom God has brought us together in one world and nation, irrespective of our diversity of faiths, cultures, tongues and tradition, is a testimony of the limitless greatness of the Almighty who is the source of all existence", adding that it behoves us as His creation to utilize it as a source of strength to build a safe and secure country.

# Hajj: Committee begins screening of 2009 intending pilgrims

To ensure equitable distribution of the hajj (pilgrimage) slots allocated to the 34 local government areas in Katsina State, a committee has commenced screening intending pilgrims.

Speaking with newsmen yesterday in Funtua, the chairman of the committee, Alhaji Danyaya Mashi, said it was instituted by government following complaints over the

## intending pilgrims

distribution of the slots. Mashi, also the Head of Service (HOS) said the committee aimed at instilling sanity into the distribution process to ensure that only the indigenes benefited. He said the 2008 hajj slots were distributed on local government basis but the

2009 allotment would be based on political wards.

A cross-section of intending pilgrims who spoke with newsmen earlier alleged that politicians and community leaders had hijacked the slots and given them out to their associates. The slots had been shared

among the 34 local government areas based on population figures, while various councils established committees to ensure that only indigenes benefited from the process.

Investigation shows that the issue of 70 per cent slots for first time pilgrims, has been flouted as many who have registered, have gone on pilgrimage one or more times. (NAN)



A broken down tricycle being pushed away at Berger junction Abuja.

Pic: Kennedy Egbonodje

# Hypertension accounts for 20% of pregnancy problems - UNICEF

Hypertensive disorders have been identified as the commonest medical problems in pregnancy, accounting for about 20 per cent of maternal deaths worldwide.

This is contained in the 2009 State of the World's Children's Report, a UNICEF publication, which was made available to newsmen yesterday in Lagos. According to the report, hypertension can result in "elevated blood pressure, the least severe, to cerebral haemorrhage, which is fatal.

"It can result in fatal death, preterm delivery and low birth-weight in newborns." The report said that although efforts were still being made to unravel the causes of hypertension, obesity, high salt intake and genetic dispositions were factors, and in some cases the biology of the pregnancy itself. "Pre-eclampsia, which develops after the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, is defined as pregnancy-induced hypertension accompanied by excess protein in the urine, and brings the greatest risk to maternal and foetal health. "It is a leading cause of premature births," it said. The report said sev-

eral factors predisposed mothers to the disorders, including first pregnancy, multiple pregnancy, history of chronic hypertension, maternal age over 35, gestational diabetes, obesity and foetal malformation.

"Researchers have also proposed that hormonal imbalances, calcium deficiency and insulin resistance are possible causes," it said.

It explained that calcium

supplementation was an effective intervention in developing countries where pregnant women might be calcium deficient, reducing the incidence of pre-eclampsia by 48 per cent. It said that care should begin before conception, so that a reproductive woman's medical history could be tracked and her options for managing hypertension known. "Hypertensive women also need

information about their risks in pregnancy and changes in their lifestyle that illness may require," it said.

The report suggested bed rest for hypertensive pregnant women, while regular examinations by skilled health personnel would also be required to monitor the onset and development of pre-eclampsia and other hypertensive conditions. (NAN)

## 66 vehicles impounded in Kaduna for breaking regulation

The Kaduna State Directorate of Vehicles Inspection has impounded 66 vehicles for not complying with the registration and painting of commercial vehicles law. Mr Nehemiah Abet, the Director of the Directorate, told newsmen yesterday in Kaduna, that the offenders were apprehended in parts of Kaduna metropolis and Zaria during an "enforcement operation" in one week. He said 37 vehicles were arrested in Kaduna metropolis, while 31 were impounded in Zaria. Abet also disclosed that "16 violent drivers and their thugs" were facing prosecution at a law court for breaking into the VIO yard in Zaria

and releasing some impounded vehicles forcefully. He added that two underage drivers caught among the protesters were, however, caned and subsequently released by the court as a deterrence.

"Our worry is that the protest took place after wide public enlightenment and deferment of the exercise to enable them raise money to comply. We are equally disturbed that after consulting and securing blessings from the Police, NURTW and the Emir of Zazzau before commencing the operation, we were attacked and being frustrated by some miscreants," he lamented.

The director said the ex-

ercise had been suspended in the spirit of the Easter celebration, "but we are resuming in full force after Easter break". He explained that the law was established for "security reasons and to enhance the revenue profile of the state.

"With the introduction of this law, commuters can now differentiate between private and commercial vehicles easily," he said. Abet explained that: "The bold registration numbers and the deep green and yellow colours prescribed for taxis and buses will also assist in the area of security".

The operation would continue in Kaduna and Zaria senatorial districts next week, while Kafanchan would join later, he said.

## NEWS

## Rebranding: Nigeria should start from

## family —Islamic Group

The current efforts at re-branding the country's dented image may be in vain unless emphasis is placed on the already collapsed family unit as a component of society, an Islamic has said.

The National Amira of Al-Mu'Minaat, an Islamic

By Hussein Yahaya

women group, Hajia Munirat Salisu-Ibrahim, made the assertion in a lecture at the group's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Forum held at Government Science Secondary School, Pyakasa, Abuja.

Hajia Munirat whose lec-

ture was titled 'the role of women in societal reformation' observed that the family system has collapsed, thus putting the country's morality in jeopardy.

"Before a Nation can be re-

branded, I think it should start from the family level, and at this level you know women are the home makers, which means no re-branding efforts can succeed without considering the roles women can

play in the process," she said.

Hajia Munirat called on Muslims to always strive to acquire knowledge, be it Islamic or western, while those in the position of authorities should pay more attention to

the family for the country's lost glory to be reclaimed.

Earlier, the Amira of the Abuja branch of the Group, Hajia Rashidat Abdurrahman, said this year's programme which has its theme as 'Our Nation, Our Role' is aimed at reminding Muslim women of their roles to the children, husband and the society at large.

## ECOWAS experts to meet on mining sector growth

National experts on mining from Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) will meet in Abuja from tomorrow to consider the ECOWAS draft on the Harmonisation of Guiding Principles and Policies in the mining sector.

A statement by ECOWAS commission said the meeting is ahead of Ministers of Mines Conference at the close of the week and the draft document is the first of three documents whose adoption would lead to the harmonization of the regimes in member states.

It added that the other documents are the draft Regional Mining Policy and the draft Mining Code.

"Areas of the draft directives the experts are expected to consider are the harness-

By Aisha Umar

ing of mineral resources for growth and development in the region, equitable mining regime, improving governance in the mining sector as well as the institution of some mechanisms to ensure intergenerational equity" it stated.

The statement added that others include enhancing the value chain and linkages between the mineral resources sector and other sectors of the economy, participatory ownership of the minerals sector by all stakeholders, enhancing institutional and human capacities for the development of the minerals sector and the institution of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the impact of mining activities on the citizens of West Africa.

## Bayelsa picks holes in UK travel advice

Governor Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa State has faulted the travel advice issued last week by the British government warning its citizens against travels to the Niger Delta calling it "misleading."

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Doifio Ola described the warning as "unaccept-

By Muideen Olaniyi

able misrepresentation" of the situation in the Niger Delta.

The governor regretted that such "false designation" of the region as a risk zone was capable of sabotaging the peace process in the region.

He said Bayelsa State is

safe and secure as evident from its hosting of the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) which attracted artistes and guests from across the world without any breach of security.

The governor said the British government would be doing humanity a lot of good if it takes conscious steps to assume a wider role

in the peace process as the crisis in the region has international implications for global energy security.

News report last week said the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in an online travel advice cautioned British citizens "against all travels to the Niger Delta states of Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers."



Commuters in Lagos going through tough times as workers of the state government's buses popularly known as Fashola have embarked on an industrial action. Pic: Oladipupo Odenewu.

## Frequent road crashes: FRSC to evaluate Hawan Kibo

Officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission in Abuja said they will carry out technical evaluation of the Hawan Kibo along Jos-Akwanga road, in which frequent crashes occur and advise the Federal Government on ways to avoid them.

The Corps Marshal of the FRSC Osita Chidoka made the assertion at a press briefing. He said the Commission will hire the services of a private firm to conduct technical evaluation on some spots on the Nigerian roads noted for frequent occurrence of accidents including Hawan Kibo in Plateau State and advises the Federal Government on more alternative ways. He said the increase in fatal road crashes in places like Hawan

By Misbahu Bashir

Kibo has led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people and an alternative has to be made available to halt further occurrence of accidents.

Hawan Kibo is a steep slope that rises several meters above sea level and has a bent in the middle. Motorist ascending or descending the slope find it difficult to control their vehicles particularly articulated vehicles.

The Corps Marshal had said while 'human factor' accounts for majority of road traffic crashes, accidents caused by poor road infrastructure and the dearth of befitting road furniture have the highest fatalities.

## Stakeholders want youth's involvement in decision making

The federal government has been called upon to empower Nigerian youths by involving them in processes of decision and policy-making to reduce youth delinquency and utilise their potentials.

This was contained in a communiqué at the end of a workshop on 'Youth Vulner-

By Abbas Jimoh

ability and Exclusion in Nigeria (YOYEX)' organized by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) in collaboration with Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG), King's College, University of London, held in Abuja over the weekend.

"The Nigerian National Youth Policy should be fundamentally reviewed in the context of present realities and the needs of the youth, the communiqué jointly signed by Dr. Funmi Olonisakin, Director, CSDG, London and Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), Executive Director, CISLAC said.

The goal of the YOYEX study was to examine how socio-economic, political and

cultural factors make youth in West Africa vulnerable, and how they have been trying to overcome vulnerability.

The workshop was organized to disseminate and popularise the key findings of the Nigerian Case Study, share ideas on way forward and kick-start constructive engagement between youth and key stakeholders, including Government, Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations with participants drawn from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), government ministries, departments and agencies and the Media among others.

The workshop observed that Nigerian youth are alienated and aggrieved; excluded from policy and decision-making processes, and there is little support by government and the private sector, for

youth self-empowerment and development projects.

It also said that government has not deeply appreciated the enormous challenges confronting the Nigerian youth, which includes the alarming youth exodus to Eastern Europe and North America, more as economic migrants.

It calls for a National Youth Rights Bill to be proposed at the National Assembly to integrate youth issues and engage youth in policy processes.

The communiqué said, "Name-calling and stereotyping of youth should be stopped; there is need for new values and disposition towards the youth. An Inter-Generational Dialogue between youth and adults should be held; new attitudes and values should be cultivated towards youth; there is need to mainstream youth-related issues in all aspects of governance and development programmes.

## Labour Ministry, ILO to organise employment summit

The Federal Ministry of Labour and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have concluded arrangements for a "high level experts' national employment summit."

With theme, "meeting the employment challenges of the global economic and financial crisis in Nigeria" the summit will look at ways of "meeting the employment creation challenges and prospects" of Nigeria in "agriculture, commerce, industry, energy and

By Francis Okeke

power."

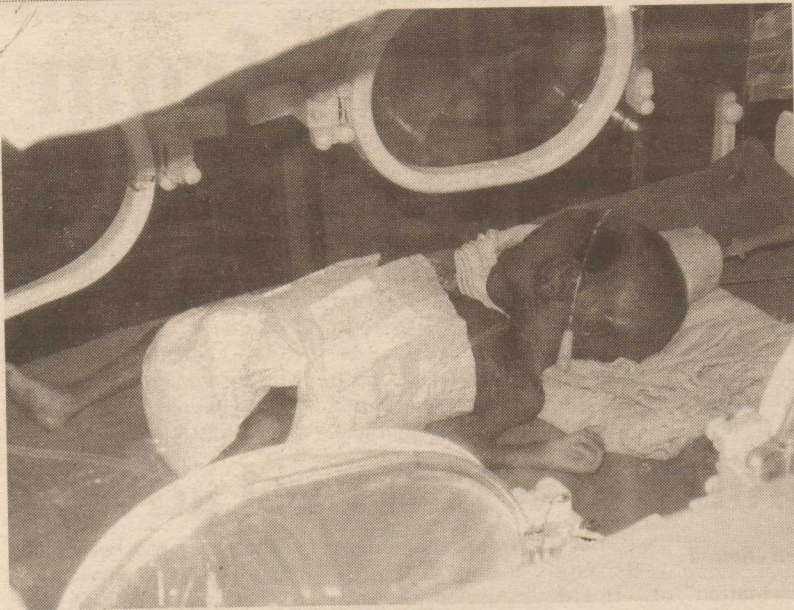
Statement by the Assistant Director of Press in the ministry, Olowookere Samuel quoted the Minister of Labour and Productivity, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode as saying that the summit which will last from April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 23<sup>rd</sup> aims to find ways of also meeting the employment creation challenges in "transportation-

land, water, and air-, communication and information."

The stake holders will also look at ways of improving employment in the informal sector, education, health, culture, tourism, entertainment and sports.

Experts from government and the private sector as well as nongovernmental organisations are expected to deliver papers during the summit.

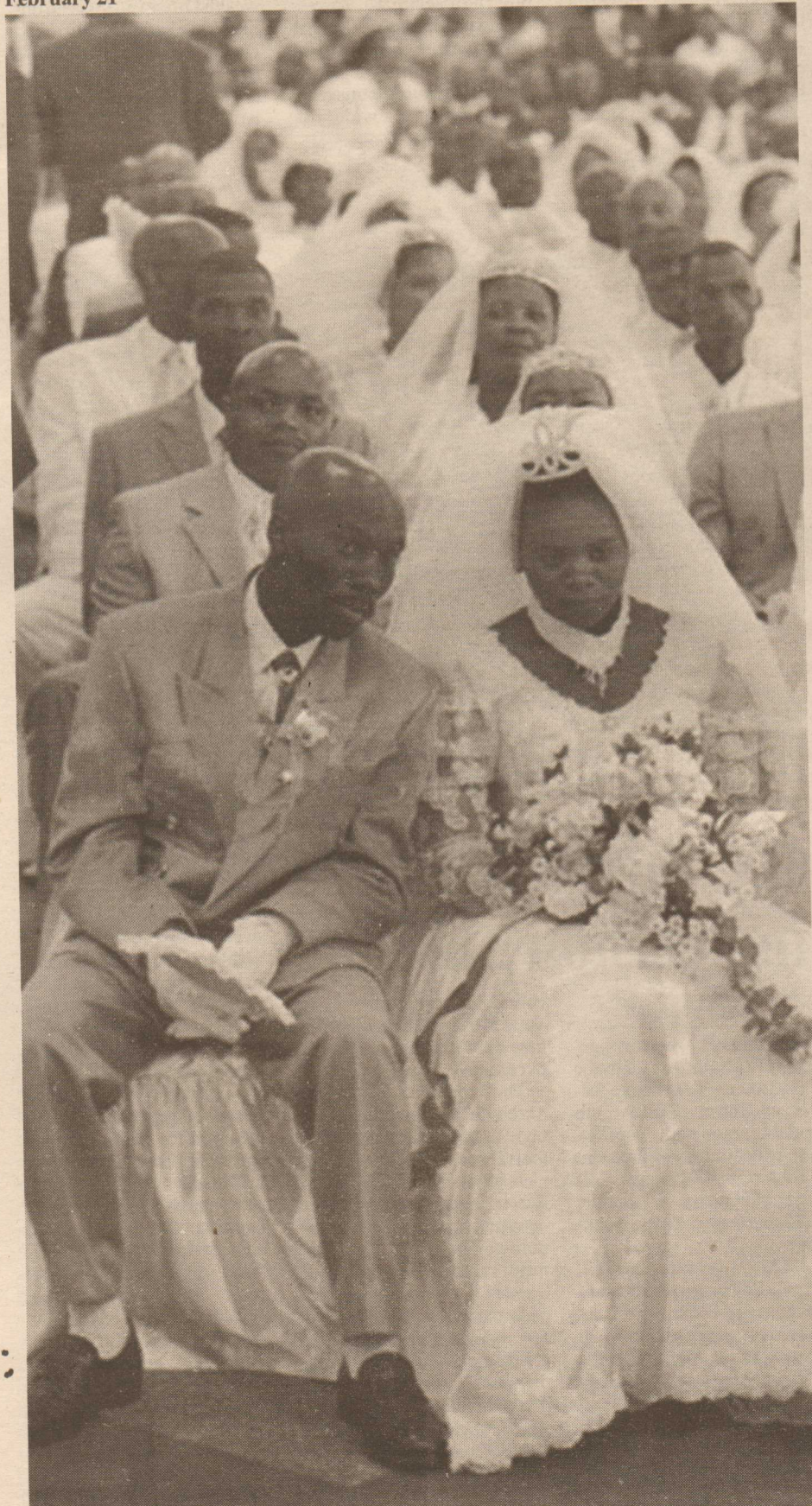
# PHOTO NEWS



One of the two female surviving sextuplets inside an incubator at Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital, Sagamu. They were delivered February 21  
Pic: NAN



Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Alhassan Zaku (right) with Minister of Information and Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili (middle) and Director-General, National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), Prof. Bamidele Solomon, at the Opening Forum Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB) in Abuja recently.  
Pic: NAN



200 brides and grooms seated during the mass wedding service at the Pentecostal Church in Zurubekom, South Africa yesterday.  
Pic: AFP



Mr. Young Arabame, Chief Executive Officer, LASTMA (left) and Mr. Akin Hanson, Permanent Secretary, Motor vehicle Administration Agency, during the 2009 ministerial briefing in Lagos ...recently  
Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu



Injured people are being treated in a temporary hospital set up outside San Salvadore Hospital, two days after a violent earthquake in Abruzzo, capital of L'Aquila, Italy.  
Pic: AFP

# NEWS

## FG builds fish hatcheries in Delta

The Federal Government is constructing two fish hatcheries in Delta, Dr Ogaranya Tabs-Tabowei, the state Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, has said. The commissioner made this known in Asaba on Saturday when Dr Isaac Ikoyo-Eweto, National President, Association of Fish Farmers and Aquaculturists of Nigeria (AFFAN), visited him.

He said that the hatcheries were located at Ekpan in Uvwie Local Government Area (LGA) and Oguma in Ndokwa-West LGA. Tabs-Tabowei stressed the determination of the state government to make Delta the largest fish-producing state in Nigeria. He said that the state government had earmarked N100 million in this year's budget for the resuscitation of the 240-hectare Aviara Fish Farm in Isoko South Local Government Area.

He said that another fish

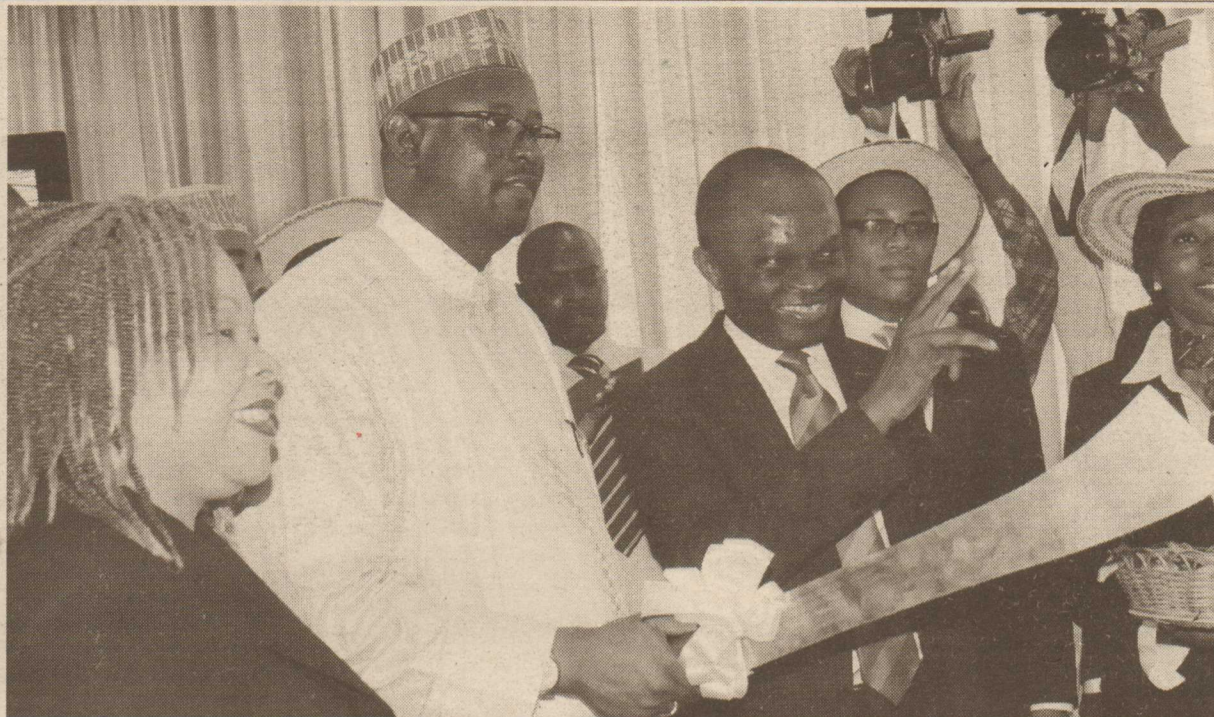
From Andrew Agbese, Jos

hatchery, with a capacity for producing one million fingerlings annually, had been constructed in Mosogar by Agip Oil Company and donated to the state government.

Tabs-Tabowei said that more farmers and youths would be empowered this year under the state's Youth Empowerment through Agriculture and Farmers Support Programme.

Earlier, Ikoyo-Eweto said that Nigerians consumed about 1.36 million tonnes of fish annually, adding that domestic fish production only accounted for 605,507 tonnes. He noted that about 740,000 tonnes of fish were annually imported into the country.

Ikoyo-Eweto, however, noted that Delta had a great potential for aquaculture development and that it was also the foremost state in fish farming. (NAN)



Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Dr. Sayyadi Abba Ruma (middle) inaugurating Agi-Nigeria project in Abuja on Thursday. With him are Managing Director of Fidelity Bank, Mr. Reginald Ihegiah (right) and Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance and other Financial Institutions, Senator Nkechi Nwogu (left). Pic: NAN.

## Communities protest construction of Kafin Zaki Dam

Farmers, fishermen and herders along with their families from Borno, Yobe and Jigawa States yesterday thronged to the palace of the Emir of Bade in Yobe State in protest against the proposed construction of the Kafin Zaki dam by the Bauchi State in collaboration with Dangote Group of Companies and called on President Umaru Yar'adua to come to their aid.

Our correspondent gathered that people who came from over 30 local government areas in the riverine communities from the three states carried banners and placards with various inscriptions, called on the Federal Government and the National Assembly not to allow the construction of the dam which according to them would impoverish the communities in the three states.

The protesters took advantage of a turbaning ceremony of some children of the Bade Emirate including a former Chief of Army Staff, retired Major General Alwali Kazir and the Executive Director (North) of the First Bank, Dr. Yerima Lawal Ngama which was well attended by key government functionaries to express their grievances over the proposed dam.

Some of the placards read; "Kafin Zaki dam is a killer project; democracy is about respecting the wishes of the majority; Kafin Zaki dam an extinction agenda". The leader of the protesters, Alhaji Magani Inuwa from Yobe State said there was the need for the di-

From Hamza Idris, Damaturu

rector of Chad Basin Development Authority, Dr. Garba Iliya to offer explanations on the proposal, effects and consequences of the proposed dam on farming and fishing in Yobe, Borno and Jigawa States for people to appreciate the project.

"We also want our elected representatives to tell us their contributions towards discouraging Bauchi State government to rescind its decision on the construction of the dam", Magaji said.

Senator Ahmed Lawan, representing zone 'C' senatorial district in Yobe State told the protesters that a lot was being done at the National Assembly to discourage the construction of the dam. "We want to assure you that we will defend your interests at any given time and anywhere. So, be rest assured of our support and commitment to this course which is to see that the rights of our people are not only respected but protected", he said.

According to him, "the construction of Chalawa and Tiga dams in Kano State years ago had denied our people farming and fishing activities, we will not allow this to happen again", adding; "this peaceful demonstration has rekindled our zeal to fight this monstrous project which constitutes serious threat to the lives of our people and their economies. We will do that to its logical conclusion".

## Speakers to intervene in Ogun Assembly crisis

A one day forum of the Conference of Speakers of State Houses of Assembly ended in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital at the weekend with a resolve by the Speakers to wade into the protracted political crisis that has engulfed the Ogun State House of Assembly.

The resolution was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of the forum which was presided over by the Speaker, Taraba State House of Assembly, Istifanus Gbana who is the new chairman of the conference.

From: Fidelis Mac-Leva, Jalingo

Gbana who read out the communiqué at the end of deliberations expressed the forum's displeasure with the situation at the Ogun State Assembly while also stressing the need for cordial working relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government in the state.

Lauding the appointment of former Speaker of Kwara State Assembly as the current Transport Minister, the forum com-

mended Taraba State Governor, Danbaba Suntai "for embarking on viable projects that impact positively on the lives of the people." Governor Suntai had earlier declared open the forum which later went into a closed door session during which burning national issues were said to have been discussed.

In a related development, the 49th general assembly of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria ended in Jalingo the weekend with a resolve to support legislations by the National Assembly to criminalize non-payment of debts owed by advertisers and advertising agencies.

A 10 point communiqué issued at the end of the meeting

signed by Abubakar Jijiwa and Osita Nweke, BON chairman and executive secretary respectively the delegates in session noted with concern, the inability of the NUJ to hold its elections as earlier scheduled and called for restraint in the overall interest of media practitioners in Nigeria.

While advising broadcast stations to desist from seeking sponsorship of newspaper reviews, BON also maintained that press reviews should be handled by mature and experienced broadcasters only while also pledging to intensify capacity building on how to handle newspaper reviews to avoid conflict with NPAN.

## LG spends N225m on capital projects

The Bida Local Government Area of Niger State spent N225 million on capital projects in the last one year, its Chairman, Alhaji Sharu Mohammed, ha said.

Mohammed told newsmen in Bida yesterday that projects executed included sinking of boreholes, establishment of new primary schools, buying of transformers and building of administrative offices and a modern park. He said the council

spent N140 million on the construction of a modern park, consisting of 85 lock-up stalls, eight warehouses, a bank, post office, fire service post, police post, public convenience and a clinic.

"The park which will be named after the Estu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, is expected to be a major revenue earner for the council and a befitting shopping plaza for the town as obtainable in other towns," he said.

Mohammed said N28.9 million was spent on the construction of offices for federal outfits such as immigration, NSCDC, and NYSC as well as construction of duplex office to house the chairman, his deputy and the secretary. He said the council also established new primary schools at Salawutsu, Kangi and Ndaypayi areas, at a cost N221 million. Mohammed added that the council also spent N20.9 million on the sinking of 22 boreholes across the council to improve on water supply. (NAN)



Niger State Gov Mu'azu Aliyu

## DISCLAIMER

**ANDREW ALI MBULA (ACP Rtd)**

The General Public is hereby notified of the abscondment from duty since December 2008, of the above person who used to be Director, Operations of AZA-TUM SECURITY LIMITED, and consequent upon which he is no longer in the employment of the company.

THEREFORE, any person (s) who transact any business with him on behalf of the AZA-TUM SECURITY LIMITED does so on his / her own peril.

C.S.P B.S.A TONACK (RTD)  
For AZA-TUM SECURITY LIMITED

# NEWS

## Gov's aide tasks youths on development

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

The Special Assistant to Governor Bukola Saraki on Youth Affairs, Alhaji Nasir Lubair has charged the newly inaugurated executive members of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) Kwara State chapter to engage themselves in activities that would enhance development of the state. He described the council as a veritable platform on which efforts of government in repositioning youths could better be consolidated and charged the members to let the interest of the state supersede their personal interests. In his speech, the chairman, Mohammed Haruna Magidansanma described the council as an umbrella body of all Nigerian youths in the state, adding that it was the authoritative voice of all Kwara youths to mobilize them for peaceful co-existence. The members inaugurated comprised two ex-officio and a legal adviser. They will run the council's affairs till 2012. Magidansanma promised to organize workshops and seminars where issues concerning youth development in the state would be discussed.

## Jigawa awards N1.8bn contracts

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

The Jigawa State government has awarded contracts worth N1.8 billion for the execution of various projects under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Speaking while signing the contracts, the Commissioner for Finance, Alhaji Hannafi Yakubu said the MDG was an initiative aimed at providing the states the opportunity to secure grants for the execution of projects and programs that would enhance the condition of the people. Alhaji Hannafi further said the state government was fully committed to any program or projects that would improve the socio-economic well being of the people. The commissioner noted that the 2008 MDG projects to be executed include the construction of 30 basic health clinics, renovation and expansion of four general hospitals, procurement of X-ray and scanning machines as well as various types of drugs for onward distribution to hospitals. Other projects include construction of 200 hand pumps in rural communities, 20 motorized solar boreholes in 20 boarding secondary schools and rehabilitation of seven abandoned motorized water schemes. The Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Aminu Abdullahi Taura reiterated government's commitment towards ensuring implementation of Millennium Development Goals in the state. Dr. Taura further said Jigawa State was among the top 10 states that excelled in executing MDGs projects.

## Haji: Medic attributes pregnancies to govt attitude

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

A member of the federal medical team (FMT) and head of Nigerian nursing services in the 2008 hajj operation, Hajiya Murjanatu Wambai has blamed state governments for reported pregnancies during hajj operations. Speaking to Daily Trust in Katsina, Mrs Wambai criticized some state officials for ignoring medical reports prepared by nurses, this situation she said, resulted in national disgrace. Calling on both state and Federal Government to intensify efforts to save the image of the country during subsequent operations, Wambai proposed stiffer punishments on any nurse whose area of screening produced an intending pilgrim that attempts to beat the hajj rules. She called for rotation of nurses across states or senatorial districts to avoid favouritism and disgrace to the country. She also blamed most of the problems encountered on lack of continuity in the management of pilgrim affairs in the country and how they are re-deployed before they fully understand their working environments. On intending pilgrims who are HIV positive, Mrs Wambai asked states to advise them against embarking on the trip because of the consequences.

## New Yandakan Katsina emerges

By Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

The eldest son of the late Yandakan Katsina, Balangogo Mohammed Sada, Alhaji Sada Mohammed Sada has succeeded his father as the new Yandakan Katsina and district head of Dutsinma. The appointment was approved by the state government after ratification by the Katsina emirate council and the endorsement of the Dutsinma council chairman, Alhaji Bashir Tanimu Gambo. Katsina State governor, Ibrahim Shema who paid a condolence visit to the family of the late Yandakan Katsina at the weekend presented the letter of appointment to the new district head and charged him to follow the steps of his father. The letter of the appointment which was signed by the Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Abdulmumini Kabir Usman said the appointment was in response to his application dated 1st April 2009 which was endorsed by the local government chairman.

The Benue State Science and Technology Ministry is preparing students for the Science and Technology competition for junior students in China, saying its target was to expose creative Benue indigenes to the outside world.

The Commissioner in the Ministry, Mr. Chris Aondo Dura who hosted the Science and Technology Week which ended at the weekend also disclosed that the state was billed to host a similar event for the entire country this week when participants who emerge as flag bearers would go to China for the international event.

Governor Gabriel Suswam described the event and the Ministry's preparedness for the international competition as one of the most successful initiatives of the present administration.

A press statement signed by his Special Assistant on

## Benue prepares students for Science & Tech competition in China

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

Science and Technology, Mr. Garshagu Atovogba, quoted the governor as expressing delight with the performance of the students, while disclosing government's plans to further develop Science and Technology in the state. The Ministry of Science and Technology was established in June 2008 for the purpose of developing the field in the state. About N1 billion was provided for it in the 2009 budget. The statement said Chris Aondo Dura noted with delight that the state had great potentials in Science and Technology.

Aondo however said government alone could not achieve the feat and challenged corporate institutions, individuals and the international community to invest in the state's Science and Technology sector. He added that investment could come from award of prizes, scholarships and donation of science laboratories.

The commissioner said it was part of the acknowledgement by the Federal Government on the commitment of Governor Suswam to develop the field in the state that the government cited in Makurdi, the North Central Zone's Science and Technology Park. He described the Federal

Government's initiative as "an added impetus to stimulate the Benue people to come to terms more practically with the issues of Science and Technology. Already, the governor has approved funds for the construction of incubation centres at the park".

75 students participated in the science examinations category while 16 participated in the science debate. The model display candidates were five from St. Peter's Secondary School Vandeikya, one from St. John's Day Secondary School Gboko, four from Wesley High School Otukpo and one from Bristow Secondary School Gboko.



Air Vice Marshal Sonni Enemuadia (right), Commandant, Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFSC), Jaji, presenting a certificate to RSM Alexander Ebiloma, during the graduation ceremony at Army Peacekeeping Centre in Kaduna on Thursday. With them (middle) is Brig-Gen. Emeka Onwuamaegbu. Pic: NAN

## Disagreement as Hameed Ali knocks politicians on dev

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

A mild drama took place Saturday at the Arewa House in Kaduna during a book launch when the immediate past Secretary General of the Arewa Consultative Forum, retired Colonel Hameed Ali said politicians were responsible for the socio-economic problems of the country.

In a swift reaction to Ali's utterances, politicians present at the occasion led by the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari protested as they pushed the blame back to the military.

Hammed Ali who was a military administrator of Kaduna State had while rep-

resenting Dr. Adamu Fika, the *Waziri Fika* during the book launch said; "Our politicians and leaders cannot see beyond their noses, they are not good forecasters, they are selfish and self-centered people and they are responsible for the teething poverty in the country". He urged Nigerians to, as a matter of urgency, rise up to the challenge of ensuring that their leaders work towards the transformation of the society rather than cornering the country's resources for their selfish interests.

He also challenged the

politicians to stop paying lip service to sensitive issues in the country like poverty, saying it was time to start to work.

Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari disagreed with Colonel Hameed Ali, insisting that it was the military that created the problems in the country, and not the politicians.

"Sir, I stand to disagree with you on your statement that we politicians in the country are responsible for the shortcomings in Nigeria. All the problems we find ourselves in this country now are as a result of the continued take over of government by the military. Since the return of democracy in the

country in 1999, we have witnessed monumental development," he said.

The former speaker, who launched the book with a N2 million, said Nigerian politicians had contributed a lot in the development of the country when compared to the military.

Representatives of Governor Mohammed Namadi Sambo of Kaduna State and that of Katsina State and other politicians at the venue did not hide their disagreement as they told Ali that the military caused the nation's problems. As the argument became hotter, Hameed Ali left the hall, saying he had another function to attend.

# OPINION

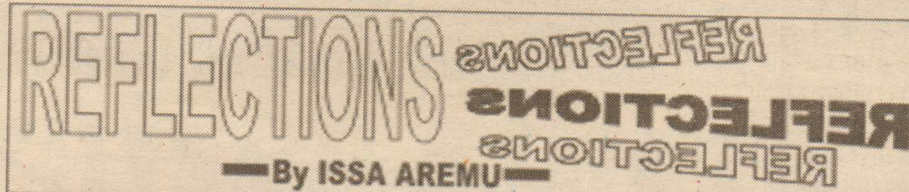
## Speaker Bankole: Who does he speak for?

"The follies of Africa's leadership ... are the bane of our continent"

--Late Joseph Nanven Garba, CFS, Major General, New York, 1994.

Every effort at some additional explanatory notes for his ever incoherent, embarrassingly scandalous, clumsy and provocative invitation of the military for Ekiti governorship re-run election further brings to the fore the intellectual bankruptcy of Mousier Bankole's leadership of the House of Representatives. Interrogating Bankole's intellectual credentials even proves more urgent and relevant. It would be recalled that the unofficial charge against his predecessor, Madam Etteh, was her clearly exhibited intellectual deficit which suddenly dammed the prospect of the first women speaker of the House, well before the curtail was raised. Mediocrity plus notoriety in sleazy-spending of N.6 billion (sorry, N.23 billion only according to Madam Speaker!) on "renovation" and "upgrading" of official houses of herself and her deputy was just enough to send her packing without any public sympathy. Conversely, good diction and paraded paper certificates (including NYSC's) (even without any known antecedent in legislative activism) generously conferred Bankole an advantage in the messy battle for the House leadership. Proverbial (not-so-clean) water has since passed under the bridge of the House, which carry dirt of another renovation scandal under Bankole's leadership that in turn confirms the point that what a woman makes badly, a man makes worse. A year after Bankole took over, Nigerians bear testimony that a gap exists between taunted certification and genuine intellectual depth anchored on common sense (not so common nowadays), integrity, wisdom, democratic principles and virtues. Certainly "book" knowledge is different from political sagacity.

Immediately President Yar Adua expressed



sadness and regrets over Nigeria's conspicuous non-invitation to the recently concluded G-20 London meeting, PDP chieftains rose, (in deference to national sobriety), from their party meeting not to commission power project (the pet project of the President) but to turn into electoral foot-soldiers in Ekiti re-run. On the very same partisan platform (note: not on the floor of the House he was elected to speak for) Dimeji Bankole played to the gallery. No thanks to sheer demagoguery reminiscent of the late Adedibu politics, (or is it a fall out of his advertised British public education?) he worked on a rented crowd into some frenzy urging them on to mentally prepare for troop deployment in case of possible break down of law and order in the state. Global outrage understandably trails the clearly nonsensical and unhelpful infantilism of Speaker Bankole. Understandably! His Ghanaian counterpart, in spite of the palpable tension that characterized Ghanaian presidential (note: not state) election re-runs last December did not betray democratic principles as such nor prove so cheaply trigger-excited as Bankole was in Ekiti. On the contrary, Ghana's visible democratic actors, including its Speaker campaigned for civil electoral behaviour which made Africa witness an unprecedented free and fair transition election. Alas the global resentment of Bankole's opportunistic call for militarization of civil politics in Ekiti state only pushes him into messier reactionary rationalisation of a false consciousness in place of timely sobering apology. According to him he had responsibility to maintain law and order. Pray, is he the elected Commander-in-Chief? Even as a speaker, was it the resolution of the House that troops'

deployment is inevitable in every civil contest? Who does he speak for, the House or the party? Bankole's verbal haemorrhage has further underscored crisis of governance under Yar Adua in which authoritative pronouncements are so casually deregulated on the alter of partisanship and at the expense of nation-building.

In desperation for self defence, Bankole played historical card alluding to the political crisis of 1966 in the West and the recent Jos carnage to rationalize why troops, (not electorate) must defend votes.

Granted that his historic excursion is valid, is it a backward jump to the despicable past via militarization of the polity that is desirable or wholesome forward looking electoral behavioural reform that must make for free and fair peaceful elections? What does it say of governance that we are back to 1966 and the same siege mentality in the age of global democratic renewal that records the election of the first African American in USA? When on earth will Nigeria make election a free expression of electoral preference rather than do or die affair eliciting a shameless call for supervising troops by a Speaker elected to speak for civility and nothing more? The truth is that all the historic examples offered by the Speaker are self serving and simply not applicable to today's Ekiti. Bankole compares like with unlike. The Ekiti whose people had commendably peacefully and tortuously passed through two-year judicial process in the face of electoral perfidy perpetrated in 2007 cannot be compared to systemic national break down of the 60s.

Indeed the House of Representatives, both under Bankole and his predecessor had raised

the spectre of the 60s than the present democratically active people of Ekiti. Not long ago, many observers of the assembly witnessed the abysmal lowest point of the House of Representatives since the return to democracy eight years ago. No thanks to the televised "free-for-all" fights! The fights were paradoxically not over legislations on health or education but about who occupied "juicy" committees. Pray if Nigerians tolerated the House and did not call for troop's deployments in the wake of "shameful" throwing chairs on the floor of the House and suicidal primitive bouts, why a re-run election should raise the spectre of war and invasion?

J.S. Mill, that singular authority on representative government had long underscored the significance of legislature as law-making arena. While law-making function matters, Mill could however not have envisaged that law makers would transfigure into proud law breakers and non-respecters of due process who are trigger happy at the slightest democratic as Bankole recently did through his pronouncement. Mill conceptualises legislature as a vent for public grievances not a vent for anti-democratic utterances such as encouragement of politicisation of the military. The past week has revealed the fact that there is still much to be done on democratization process. If there is any arm of democratic structure that must loath the military in any forms in governance, it must be the legislature precisely because the assembly is the first causality once constitutionality and due process is trampled upon. The point cannot be overstated that the legislature is "useful organ of public opinion, 'the nation's committee of grievances and its congress of opinions', and not an arena some law makers could openly verbally put pressures on democracy out of sheer fear of free and fair elections and in the process assault public morality without apology. Who really does Bankole speak for?

ISSA AREMU (issaaremu@yahoo.com)

## Rebranding Nigeria begins with renaming Nigeria

By Pius Abang

If you believe that there is something in a name, it means that you really understand why people do not give birth to children and call them Judas. If you purchase a second-hand property, may be a vehicle, house, etc, you would want to do a change of ownership because you want to change the name of its first owner to your own name being that it is the only way you would feel that the property is now yours and totally too. Many cases when you marry a woman, she changes to bear your name as her husband instead of her father that gave birth to her.

There is not just something in a name, but everything can be found in a name. Turn the pages of newspapers you find columns specially designated for change of name. I, formally known and addressed as master or Mrs. This or That, wishes to be known henceforth as Mr. or Mrs. So and So. There is everything in a name. But to what extent does Nigeria as a country understand this?

Nigeria was named "Nigeria" by the idiosyncrasy of a British girl called Flora Shaw. In a sweet romance with the former Colonial Governor General of Nigeria, Lord Frederick Lugard, Flora Shaw overseeing the River Niger from their bedroom and very perturbed by the noisy waves of the River while trying to rest in the afternoons. She suggested to Lord Lugard who later became her husband, that the name of this great country, is "Nigeria", meaning 'Niger Area! That was how my country was named. In the prevailing circumstances, that was a good name. A good name indeed because we respect the geographical significance of River Niger and River Benue as can be found on the Nigerian map and the Nigerian Coat of Arms.

Fellow countrymen and women, my heart bleeds when our Professors talk about rebranding Nigeria inside the nomenclature that was suggested by a small British Girl who had barely known how to write her name correctly to be the one to name this great African country.

"NIGERIA" is not the correct name for the dream land of our ancestors.

If you are from the "Niger Area" as the name implies, may be you are from Kogi State, Niger State, F.C.T., Benue State and may be Kaduna State. What will you say about somebody from Kebbi State, Zamfara State, Sokoto, Borno, Gwagwada, Lagos, Osun, Ogun, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, etc in all your elementary sense of geography, do you think that all these states are affected by the River Niger? Unequivocal NO. If Flora Shaw knew about River Benue, she could as well have suggested that our name is "Nigerbenuerea" meaning Niger- Benue area.

I make this analysis as self evidence to the fact that the colonial masters designated their colonies based on their natural resource and ecological circumstance. Ghana was called "the Gold Coast" but at independence and the wisdom of their Nationalist Leaders like Kwameh, Nkrumah, the Gold Coast was renamed "Ghana". That makes the name indigenous and independent.

Ivory Coast, at independence under Houphout Boigny, was renamed Côte d'Ivoire as a deviation from the idea of their colonizers. The Late Captain Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso renamed "Upper-Volta" which was the colonizers. Such changes are necessary to indicate total liberation. What if I tell you that Nigeria with the name "Nigeria" is still under British control, will you say No? Let me quickly tell Nigerians at home and abroad that if we do not change our name from Nigeria, we are still going to loose more Bakasi-Peninsulas.

The agreement which was tendered as evidence at the international court at the Hague was entered into between Britain and Germany when Cameroon was still under the influence of the Germans, before the fall of Adolf Hitler.

The agreement was between the European powers when they needed to demarcate their territories to forestall a possible war amongst themselves. If Nigeria had changed her name at independence to a nomenclature that is not contain in that agreement, that evidence would not have been tenable at the international court of Justice. You do not need a Senior Advocate to defend that anywhere. The name Nigeria was privy to the agreement and if Nigeria had been renamed before now that would have rendered the agreement useless. It would have been clear therefore that it was an arrangement by the imperialist powers and not the indigenes. There are such other agreements lying elsewhere waiting for oil to be discovered in those areas and those neighbours will rise to claim the area just the way Cameroon claim the Bakassi peninsula.

You may be wondering what kind of name would be suitable for Nigeria. For the benefit of doubt, any name will be suitable. Call it anything apart from Nigeria. 'Not in any Language, Ibo, Hausa, or Yoruba like they choose to interpret the Nigeria currency only in these three Languages out of 250 Languages. All I want is that we should be proud of ourselves as a united people. We have a Nobel Laureate in this country, erudite Scholars at home and abroad, Elder-statesmen and women of integrity. Call them together to coin a name for this great edifice. That is what I hold against --Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir, Ahmadu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro (still alive), and others. Why did they not rename their independent nation like their counterparts in other parts of Africa? I can only but offer a clue that will lead to our new name.

First, let us agree that Nigeria is a union located in Africa South of the Sahara. Secondly, let us also agree that such unions exist in other parts of the world and they are not named after any river. Like the United States of America, the former Soviet Union, South Africa, United

Kingdom and so on. I love the Nigerian flag of Green-White-Green.

It was designed by a Nigerian. I love the new national anthem; it was put together by a Nigerian. But I take exception to the name Nigeria because it was suggested by a stranger. In case you do not know, the name Nigeria is responsible for our political instability, religious crisis, ethnic militancy, fraudulent elections and several other vices that have hindered the development of this great nation.

We face no more serious challenges in our democracy than the challenges of self identification. We do not yet know who we are and where we are going to.

Little wonder we have witnessed attempts to break up this entity. This country is better the way it is. Break this country into two, three, four, five or which ever way, and you will experience more ethnic militancy than you would ever imagine. Our present size and composition is why the formation of the Biafra Republic failed. It is why the Maitasine insurgency failed. It is why the Igbesu boys cannot extend their influence beyond the Niger Delta region. It is why the Odua People's Congress (OPC) boys cannot operate beyond the Oduduwa's ancestral Land. It is why it is possible and cheap to carry food stuffs from the north to the south. It is why Oil can be refined in Kaduna with crude gotten from the South. It is why we are at peace with one another after every election no matter the fraudulence associates with it. We sent troops for peace keeping to other parts of the West African Sub-region. How would you feel if it were the other way round? Never say die and never say break Nigeria. Think of changing the name Nigeria and as soon as that is done, you will prefer to remain in this country than going to the United States of America. We are as united as the United States.

Abang is a lecturer with the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. otuabang@yahoo.com

## EDITORIAL

# Yar'adua's lamentation

At the 47<sup>th</sup> National Executive meeting of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Umar Yar'adua bemoaned Nigeria's exclusion from participation in the Group of 20 (G 20) meeting in London over the global financial meltdown. He said: "I must say that today is a sad day for me. And I think it should be for all Nigerians, when 20 leaders of the leading countries in the world are meeting and Nigeria is not there. This is something we need to reflect upon." The G20 meeting in London was held to seek for a coordinated solution to the recession into which the world economy has fallen.

The president's reaction is understandable. For far too long Nigeria's ruling elite has sold the false notion that being awash with petro-naira to which everyone in power helps himself selfishly, rather than using it to lay the foundation for an economically virile country; and a huge population qualify the Nigeria to join those that have actually earned to be called developed. Indeed he underscored our huge population and potential as qualities that should have entitled Nigeria to be invited into the G20 talks in London. True, Nigeria has the potential to harness and husband its huge population and other resources to catapult itself into any group it chooses to be—G8 or G20—but have we been able to do so? Sadly not and if previously such an invitation had been extended to Nigeria it was because the world recognised Nigeria's potential to be anything it chose to be. It is a way of saying "you too can make it". Well, after waiting several decades and it has shown no sign of making any appreciable effort such recognition is now being withdrawn.

Indeed Nigerians, being fair minded people would be the first to agree to our exclusion from any comity of nations based on an index of social and economic development. The leadership can continue to delude itself about the greatness of Nigeria but the facts stick out like a sore thumb. They do not bear out this greatness. Indeed they underscore a squandering of resources which in other countries would result into phenomenal economic progress. Rehashing our monumental failures can be painful but it cannot be avoided if we ever have to wake up from our slumber. Years of cynicism in governance have rendered moribund once thriving agriculture and manufacturing sectors. A tell tale sign of this is that Nigeria has become a net importer of food and companies formed in Nigeria from which goods were produced and sent across West Africa and indeed Africa are now relocating one after the other to other better managed economies—namely Ghana. And what is more Ghana has long since become the destination for many a Nigerian parent wishing to give his children or wards befitting education since our schools and universities have long gone to seed. They are held down in a vice grip of cultism, teacher apathy as a result of lack of motivation and sundry other inadequacies that have turned them into a shadow of themselves. Yet the rulers are looking on seemingly unperturbed and could not care less if they all go to dross.

The picture is even bleaker in the area of social infrastructure exemplified by railways that have been abandoned and a road network that perennially contributes to mortality of the people. Similarly, the health sector that was once the envy of many countries has become the butt of costly and sardonic jokes, making those who can afford it to seek good health from hospitals of less endowed neighbouring countries.

With all this does anyone need convincing why Nigeria was excluded from the G20? To merit and earn invitation to the club of the developed or even the developing group of countries those running the government must prove they are capable of resuscitating and sustaining many of the social and economic infrastructures that can elevate the wellbeing of Nigerians. Right now not much is being done to bring that about and the world is telling us in no uncertain terms that unless we put our acts together we will remain the outsider, our potential notwithstanding.



## Your Letters

### FERMA and the state of our roads

Last month, March precisely, I travelled to Niamey the capital of Niger Republic by road. To my surprise the roads there are very good compared to the roads in my dear country. It is unfortunate that in Nigeria

nothing appreciable is happening to the condition of our roads, especially the federal roads.

Many have gone to their untimely graves through these roads. Alas! Those in authority only respond when great disaster befall the

important personalities. We should know that, as human beings, everybody is important in the sight of God. Should we wait until catastrophes occur where lives and properties are lost before we act?

The present state of

decaying roads infrastructure has made travelling on our roads unbearable. Travelling on roads like Gombe-Yola is very pathetic. One is compelled to ask if Nigeria is really the giant of Africa. The story is the same in northern axis as well as in the eastern states and Niger Delta area.

Bad roads lead to frequent accidents. Armed robbers have also taken advantage of the state of our roads to rob. Let our government look into the deplorable condition of our roads across the country please. The Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) is the body charged with the maintenance of our roads. As the agency's new leader, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure should pay serious attention to the state of our roads.

Zainab Tijjani Hashim,  
Department of Mass  
Communication, Bayero  
University, Kano (BUK).

### Letter to Gov Shekarau

The people of Sumaila local government area of Kano State are suffering as a result of the total dilapidation of Sumaila General Hospital. The hospital, built by Governor Hamza Abdullahi in 80s, has now become a shadow of its former self.

When rehabilitated and well qualified medical personnel are deployed, the hospital would alleviate the hardship faced by the people of Sumaila, Garfa, Rumo, Gani, Sitti, Massu, Gediya, Kanawa, Rimi, and Magami among others, most of whom are farmers.

Rehabilitating the

hospital will improve the health status of the communities. Today residents have to pay over N 400 to go to Wudil/Kano to obtain medical care.

Your Excellency, as farmers the people of Sumaila can contribute immensely to food security in the state, but due lack of good health care system the resident fall sick every day and hour leading to low productivity of product which lead to poverty and hunger.

We are therefore appealing to Governor Malam Shekarau of Kano State to expedite action on

the rehabilitation of the hospital to avert the rising rate of maternal and child mortality.

We appreciate those that have been complementing government efforts in providing some facilities to the hospital, people like Hon S. A. Kawu, member representing Sumaila Takai Federal Constituency, Hon. Bako Mamuda Sitti, member Kano State House of Assembly and Hon Zubairu chairman Sumaila local government.

Muhammed Arabu,  
Mandawari, K/Kudu,  
Sumaila Local  
Government, Kano State.

### Text us on 08059100257

#### Living the Abuja dream

There is so much to be done to place the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja on its rightful place as the most beautiful city in the West African sub-region and Africa as a whole. The FCT Minister should rise to the challenge.

Terhemba Tor, Makurdi, Benue State, 07064786850

#### Let them be arrested

Those homosexuals who led a protest to the National Assembly should be arrested and jailed for constituting public nuisance. That will be good for them and the nation because they are likely to call the names of their backers.

Bello Idris Zaria, Kaduna State, 08033176752

#### Appreciating Katsina emir

The people of Katsina emirate really appreciate what His Royal Highness, the emir of Katsina, Alhaji Dr. Abdulmumin Kabir is doing for them. May Allah continue to guide, shower His mercy upon you. *Allah ja zamanin sarki.*

Babangida Lawal G Manchi, 08037046211

#### Haba Chief Servant

There seems to be no diploma holders in the list of your recent appointments of youths in Niger State. This is not fair to this category of the unemployed and underemployed. Think again please.

Usman, Bida, 08051270794

#### Mega party or lazy politicians?

The recent gang-up by the opposition to fight the PDP has shown how lazy our so-called politicians are. They cannot work as hard as the PDP in terms of politicking unless through a gang-up. That shows their inordinate ambition

for power and their insincerity.

Danlami Baban Takko, Bauchi, 08030539506

#### Police may go on strike

Since January 2009 our salaries have not been regular. Therefore, the talk of a planned strike action by the police force is true. We may have to do that to press home our demand.

PC John A. Central Police Station, VI, 07063580544

#### Ogbulafor, watch out

Chief Vincent Ogbulafor was quoted as saying that the PDP is a democratic party, and if there is anything undemocratic in her constitution it should be removed. How comes the party considered giving automatic tickets to PDP National Assembly members for 2011 elections?

Edeh James Kano, 07030150959

#### A case for agriculture

Since the Federal Government is now turning to agriculture as a possible way out of the present economic meltdown, states like Zamfara should be supported in order to provide the nation with an alternative to oil.

Armaya Dalhatu Yahuza, Gusau, 08065958581

#### Still on BBC A Karkara

I hope our political leaders had the opportunity of listening to the BBC Hausa programme titled BBC a Karkara. The revelations by the villagers were stunning! We now know why state governors insist on retaining state electoral commissions – to control funds meant for local governments. The President should have a rethink.

Mainasara Yusufu Sayaya, 08037879547

# Opinion

## Fatima Sheriff and challenges facing Borno women

Women across the 27 local government areas of Borno State have over the years been faced with numerous challenges which border on maternal mortality which has reached alarming rate in the state, Vesico Vaginal Fistula, VVF (leading to urinary incontinence) low girl child education, absence of economic and political empowerment and most disturbing, ignorance about issues concerning reproductive health amongst many others. Numerous women in the state lived in agony as they had little or no options because many of them neither knew the problems confronting them nor did they know solutions to them.

Passionate about women and children, wife of the Borno governor, Her Excellency, Mrs Fatima Ali Sheriff was determined to serve as a bridge between recovery of what was lost by women in the state and what should come to them in the future. Indeed, the kind hearted and goal driven first lady wasted no time at all to set the ball rolling soon after her husband, Governor Ali Modu Sheriff took the mantle of steering the affairs of Borno in 2003 before his triumphant re-election in 2007.

Since coming on board, Mrs Sheriff has long proved to be a worthy ambassador of women as the content of her character has been that of advanced motherhood where the lyrics, the chorus, the dance steps and the rhythm of her democratic songs focus on eight words only: 'improving- the- living- conditions- of- women- and- children'.

Simply put, she has touched the lives of many. Starting with the most recent landmark, the Borno first lady, Mrs Fatima Ali Sheriff in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, organised a 3-day workshop with the theme: maternal mortality reduction and improving women's reproductive health rights which was held in Maiduguri, the Borno capital. The workshop which had as special guest of honour, the first lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Hajija Turai Umaru Yar'adua, represented by the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Salamatu Hussaini

By Nancy Brian Mbaya

Suleiman, was widely attended and applauded by all and sundry. Participants were drawn from the rural and urban areas cutting across men and women, old and young. Various groups; the National council of women societies, academia, the mass media, NGOs, civil servants, public office holders, school pupils, security personnel and virtually all existing groups were invited and they honoured the workshop which was the first of its kind in the state. Significantly, the forum highlighted numerous problems of women and their causes: maternal mortality, VVF, breast cancer, gender based violence, poverty, educational challenges for the girl child amongst others. But most importantly, an action plan was developed to serve as road map for governments and other stake holders to immediately swing into action to address the problems. The targeted period for most of the recommendations, is short term. Mrs Sheriff has since pledged to mobilise and facilitate appropriate stakeholders, i.e state and local governments, to ensure the speedy implementation of the action plan.

Indeed the women in Borno have every reason to trust because for many years, Mrs Sheriff has deployed her personal resources in offering help to women. Unique amongst her interventions, is the provision of free maternal health care in six designated hospitals in the state with 2 selected in each of 3 senatorial zones. The centres offer: free ante natal cards, free hospital folders, free medical consultancy, free laboratory investigations, free drugs and infusions, free supervised deliveries, free treatment for miscarriages and free operations and other pregnancy related problems. So far, over 274, 393 women have benefited in the scheme which aims at combating maternal mortality (death of women during delivery) as well as fighting the scourge of VVF which often arise from lack of ante natal care, leading to unsupervised labour by skilled health workers which in turn leads to obstructed labour; the mother of VVF, according to health experts.

In fighting VVF, the first lady has established VVF counselling and treatment centres in some parts of the state so as to assist those who can not afford treatment.

No wonder the unique gestures of Mrs Sheriff have continually been acknowledged by health experts themselves. For instance, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) Borno state chapter has equally recognised Mrs Sheriff's landmarks. The association's chairman, Dr Babagana Bako, a consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist with the UMTH, had while accepting his election as NMA chairman, showered encomiums on the Mrs Fatima Ali Sheriff for what he called her ingenuity in initiating and sustaining a free maternity care programme for pregnant women in the state. He noted that the gesture will certainly ameliorate the deplorable maternal mortality record of the state. He went further to say that the first lady was following the exemplary foot prints of governor Ali Sheriff, whose administration has accorded unprecedented and historic priority to the health sector in the state.

Not only the NMA, a Non Governmental Organization, Network for the Prevention of Maternal Mortality, had at a health function, commended the first lady for sponsoring and providing free maternal health services to numerous pregnant women in different parts of the state.

Dr. Buba Mshelia, team leader of the NGO had remarked that the governor's wife has done so much in assisting women in need of maternal health across the state, pointing out that Mrs Sheriff deserves a national honour given the fact she offers such help as personal sacrifice which he said has helped in the fight against maternal mortality.

The first lady, who enjoys routine visits to hospitals, has on copious instances offered on the spot sponsorship of medical bills of patients, mostly women and children faced with financial problems and live threatening ailments, often requiring surgeries. Virtually any time she sees media messages, seeking financial help for any one with medical challenges, the ever sympathetic mother, readily offers help to the needy.

Mrs Fatima Ali Sheriff is a leading campaigner against the deadly HIV/AIDS as well as discrimination against people living with the virus. Not long ago, the first lady offered a well furnished apartment and business start up capital to a young girl living with HIV, who was hitherto, driven away by her own relations, making her and her mother, homeless and helpless. Her fault, it was gathered, was haven been infected by HIV. She was embraced and comforted by a compassionate supporter of those in search of hope.

The first lady has also been engaged in empowering women economically through distribution of enterprising tools such as sewing and weaving machines, spaghetti making machines etc to thousands of women so they can be self employed. She has equally advocated for the appointment of numerous women to partake in governance so that policies bothering women and children receive priority.

Perhaps, it was for this and many other significant strides in changing the plights of women, that numerous groups presented series of awards to her. The most recent of such awards came from the Christian Association of Nigeria in the North-East zone, which conferred its highest title of gold award to Mrs Fatima Ali Sheriff for her continuous role in assisting women and children, cutting across religious groups within and outside Borno State.

For Mrs Sheriff, she views the recognitions as challenge to propel her into doing more and more for women, children and the generality of the people particularly in Borno State and from the rest of Nigeria. She enjoys doing that as she once said in her words; "my concern is on assisting women with free maternal health care and also helping VVF patients. But what I love most is paying unscheduled visits to hospitals, identifying under privileged patients with poor health conditions and personally taking care of their medical bills, I enjoy doing that and I hope to sustain it through out my life time".

*Mbaya is Special Adviser on Media to the Borno State Governor.*

## Albinos, albinism and voodooist profanities

"What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare".

Unless there is 'Clausula Rebus Six stantibus' [Fundamental change of circumstance], a dialogue of civilizations, cultural renaissance, educational reorientation and strategic repositioning of our socio-economic, political and religious values our world will soon be cascading down the abyss of Neanderthalism, because of man's diabolically murderous quest for wealth, power and fame by any means. Man's depraved and desperate capacity for evil in his quest for material abundance has now attained a frightening proportion as albinos are now objects of ritualistic paraphernalia in the 21st century. What a shame!

An albino is an animal or man with a dermatological condition reflecting in skin pigmentation. An investigation into genetic engineering revealed that albinism is either hereditary or caused by chromosomal and hormonal defects. Albinos are very intelligent people but are mostly vulnerable to eye and skin problems when exposed to too much sunshine. Albinos are prone to skin cancers, radium burns, and X-ray may result in malignant tumors which may occur several years after their over exposure to radiation. Albinos who are out door workers and sunbathers need to be very careful.

Contemporary history have shown that albinos especially in Africa are socially

By Bobson Gbinje

stigmatized, traditionally rejected, considered to be outcasts, jinxed, cursed, an anathema to society and fit as sacrifices to the gods. More recently, findings have revealed that they are now being used by ritualists for money-spinning juju, love potions, power accelerators, long life, fame and success elixir etc. Most albinos and parents of albinos live under fear of their child being kidnapped by ritualists.

The albatross of societal rejection and taboo notwithstanding, albinos have against all odds grown to become professors, business men and politicians etc. They are successful in their own right. But most of them have not been able to rise to the apogee of their God-given potentials because of societal animadversions. They have because manic-depressive and dementia praecox reflected in involuntal Melancholia, hebephrenic mien, Catatonic and paranoid Schizophrenia.

In the Ibo speaking part of Eastern Nigeria albinos have a sordid tale to tell. In Tanzania, Kenyan, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Ivory Coasts, Burkina Faso, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Angola etc the story of horrendous woe continues to remain the portion of albinos. Their body parts are sold in market places and bought by ritualists sponsored by success-seekers etc.

We do weep for a sanguinary and wicked humanity, especially Africans that luxuriate in such murderous nightmares that debase humanity. The killing of albinos, hunch backs, little children and women lunatics smacks of the moral degeneracy into which mankind has sunken itself in the 21st century. In his 1945 speech delivered posthumously on 'JEFFERSON'S DAY' Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "Today, we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relations - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world of peace, love, equality and friendship".

Where do we go from here? The United Nations, African Union and the Common Wealth must immediately make it statutorily obligatory for the Albinos to be recognized as a special group of people to be literarily kept under 'protective custody' by oil nations where they exist. They should be given free education, free medical care and free shelter for life. They should enjoy free and comprehensive insurance policy and anybody attempting to kidnap an albino should be sentenced to death. All forms of discrimination against albinos should attract jail sentence.

Society and the citizenry at large should be enlightened on the basic truism that albinos are just like any human and there should be aggressive education to mentally

re-orientate the cerebral darkness which most people display when they come across albinos. All nations must set up an 'Albino Day' yearly and an Albino Welfare Association (AWA). Governments at all levels must be prevail upon to see the albino group as catchments area for immediate and privileged appointment for quality jobs and any albino without a job should be paid allowances by government. The basic problems they face are poverty, lack of education, health vulnerability, taboos based on apocryphal and anachronistic customs and traditions etc.

We must all realize that unless we show love to our fellow human beings all our claim to godliness through Christianity, Islamism and free thinkers forum will be in vain when we do not show love and concern for our fellow man. The continuous and on-going decimation of albinos for rituals in Tanzania must be condemned in no uncertain terms by the whole world. Albinos must stand up and assert themselves in the scheme of things. They should stop putting on kid gloves and get more vociferous for their rights. The great patriot Mohandas Gandhi posited that "the moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental State". Albinos must stand-up for their rights.

*Gbinje is of Bogep Oils Ltd, Warri. bogepoilsltd@yahoo.com*



## **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFTING OF SOCIAL SECURITY POLICY FOR NIGERIA**

His Excellency, Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'adua, GCFR, President and Commander - In - Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has approved the setting up of a National Working Committee To Draft a National Social Security Policy for Nigeria with the following as members:

1. Dr. (Gen.) Yakubu Gowon, GCFR - Chairman
2. Prof. Dayo Akeredolu-Ale - Vice Chairman
3. Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour
4. Representative of Vice President
5. Representative of the Governors' Forum
6. Representative of the ALGON
7. Representative of Federal Ministry of Finance
8. Representative of the National Planning Commission
9. Representative of Federal Ministry of Youth Development
10. Representative of Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
11. Representative of Economic Adviser to the President
12. Representative of SSA to the President on MDGs
13. Executive Secretary, National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)
14. Director General, National Pension Commission (PenCom)
15. A Representative of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
16. A Representative of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC)
17. A Representative of Nigeria Employers Consultative - Association (NECA)
18. A Representative of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO)
19. Dr. (Mrs) Chinyere Asika
20. Comrade Pascal Bafyau
21. Dr. Tayo Dairo
22. Chief Michael Obayan
23. Dr. Osita Ogbu
24. Dr. Eukora Joe Okoli, Managing Director/CE, Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF)- Secretary

#### **Technical Partners**

1. ILO Representative
2. ISSA Representative
3. World Bank Representative
4. UNDP Representative
5. Director General, Nigeria Institute of Social & Economic Research (NISER)

The Committee's Terms of Reference are as follows:

- i) To propose a National Social Security Policy which

will cover both the formal and informal sectors of the Nigerian economy.

- ii) To recommend an Integrated National Social Security Scheme which benefits will be adequate and available to the entire population (urban/rural/informal) with a view to creating a caring and inclusive society.
- iii) To recommend a robust and sustainable financing options for an integrated National Social Security Scheme (NSSS)
- iv) To recommend an administrative structure for the implementation of an Integrated National Social Security Scheme with a view to harmonizing the overlapping function of MDAs carrying out various social protection intervention measures.
- v) To ensure that recommendations are generally in accordance with international best practice without losing sight of Nigeria's peculiar diversity.
- vi) To look at the adequacy or otherwise of Section 71 (2) of the Pension Reform Act 2004, Section 16 of NSITF Act 1993, the draft Comprehensive Poverty Avoidance Social Security Scheme (COMPASS) Bill and the mandates of the MDAs carrying out overlapping social insurance and social protection programmes in the quest for an integrated National Social Security Scheme (NSSS).
- vii) Any other recommendation(s) that maybe useful for the realization of National Social Security Scheme (NSSS).

The Committee has three months from the date of its inauguration to complete its assignment.

The general public is therefore invited to the formal inauguration of the Committee by the Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Labour, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode, SAN.

Date: Thursday, 16th April, 2009

Venue: Ladi Kwali Hall, Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Abuja.

Time: 10:00a.m.

*Signed.*

**ALHAJI SULEIMAN D. KASSIM, mni, OON**  
Permanent Secretary  
Federal Ministry of Labour

# TRUST INTERNATIONAL

## AFRICA REPORT

### NGO leading talks to free aid workers in Sudan

A French aid group is leading talks to free two of its foreign workers snatched in Sudan's Darfur region more than a week ago, after kidnapers told the government to stay out, an official and the group said.

The women, one Canadian and the other French, from Aid Medicale International (AMI) were seized from their compound in the south Darfur settlement of Ed el Fursan on April 4.

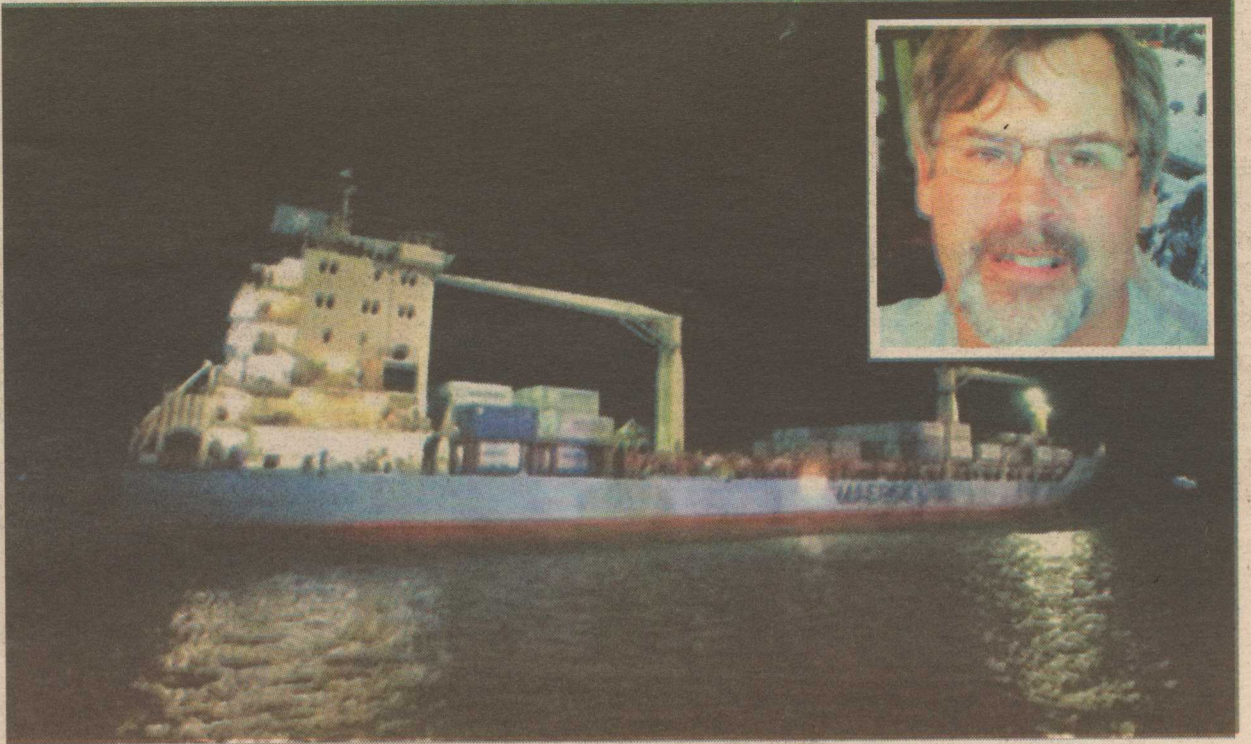
Last month, four members of Medecins Sans Frontieres were held for three days and released after the direct involvement of the Sudanese government in negotiations.

A foreign ministry official told Reuters the kidnapers had demanded the government be excluded from these talks that were being conducted directly with the aid group, adding that he expected the issue to be resolved peacefully soon.

"It is the NGO that is receiving the demands and answering and we are completely out of the picture," said Ali Youssef Ahmed, head of protocol at Sudan's Foreign Ministry.

AMI confirmed yesterday they were leading the talks but declined to give further details "given the delicate nature of the affair and out of respect for the families concerned".

Tensions have risen in Sudan since the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir over alleged war crimes in Darfur. Bashir responded by ordering the expulsion of 16 aid groups.



The Maersk Alabama is seen docked at the port of Mombasa, Kenya, at the weekend. Inset is freed Captain Richard Phillips. Photo: Reuters

## US captain held by pirates freed

The captain of a US container ship taken hostage by Somali pirates has been released, the US Navy said yesterday.

Three pirates are reported to have been killed in the operation to free Captain Richard Phillips, who had been held in a lifeboat for several days.

Capt Phillips is said to be unhurt and aboard the USS Bainbridge, a warship sent to track the pirates holding him. He was taken hostage after pirates briefly hijacked his

ship, the Maersk Alabama, on Wednesday.

On Friday he failed in an attempt to swim free.

An unnamed US official told the Associated Press news agency that Capt Phillips was freed in what appeared to be a swift firefight. Reports say he jumped overboard for a second time, and the pirates were shot and killed before they could take action to get him back.

US forces apparently took advantage of the fact one of the pirates was negotiating on

the USS Bainbridge when the incident happened.

Somali elders had been trying to resolve the standoff but most recent reports had suggested the talks had stalled.

Media reports say his family was informed of his release several hours ago.

The head of Maersk Line Ltd., the company that owns the ship, thanked the Navy, FBI and others for helping in the release.

"We join Richard's family, his crew and his colleagues

ashore in celebrating this wonderful news," John Reinhart said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming him home in the coming days."

The BBC's Karen Allen in the Kenyan port of Mombasa says there will be relief among the ship's crew, who are currently being questioned by US federal agents there.

Crew members have hailed Capt Phillips as a hero, saying he offered himself as a hostage in order to save them when the Maersk Alabama was attacked.

### Crisis talks fail in Madagascar

Supporters of the former President of Madagascar, Marc Ravalomanana, have pulled out of talks aimed at bringing an end to the ongoing political crisis.

Their senior spokesman accused the UN special envoy to the country, Tiebele Drame, of not fulfilling his role as an impartial mediator. Another large demonstration has been held in the capital Antananarivo.

More than 10,000 people gathered to call for the return of Mr Ravalomanana, ousted in a military-backed takeover.

The senior spokesman for Mr Ravalomanana's supporters launched a scathing attack on the way the negotiations were being run by the UN envoy.

He accused Mr Drame of being partial, hav-

ing his own agenda and attempting to impose his own solutions on the crisis. He concluded that the talks were a waste of time.

For his part, Mr Drame denied the accusations. This is not the first time the UN's role in the crisis has been called into question.

The UN controversially helped protect Andry Rajoelina from arrest just weeks before he overthrew the government.

This development will be a blow to those who hoped that the talks would bring an end to the political crisis which continues to beset the country. They had brought together representatives of Mr Rajoelina and also the country's three previous presidents, an indication of just how complex and longstanding the country's political grievances are.

### Mummies found in ancient Egypt burial chamber

Archaeologists working in an Egyptian oasis have found a necropolis containing dozens of brightly painted mummies dating back as far as 4,000 years, the country's antiquities chief said yesterday.

"The mission found dozens of mummies in 53 rock-hewn tombs dating to the Middle Kingdom" from 2061-1786 BC, Zahi Hawass told

AFP. "Four of the mummies date back to the 22nd Dynasty (931 to 725 BC) and are considered some of the most beautiful mummies found," he said.

The linen-wrapped mummies are painted in the still-bright traditional ancient Egyptian colours of turquoise, terracotta and gold.

The necropolis was uncovered near the Ilahun pyra-

mid in Fayoum oasis south of Cairo.

Abdel-Rahman el-Ayedi, who headed the mission, said that a Middle Kingdom funerary chapel with an offering table was also found, and that it was probably used up to the Roman era which lasted from 30 BC to 337 AD. The team also found 15 painted masks, along with amulets and clay pots, Hawass said.

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# Trust International

## AFRICA REPORT

### Egypt state-controlled paper denounces Hezbollah

An Egyptian state-controlled newspaper escalated a row with Lebanon's Hezbollah yesterday by calling its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, a "monkey sheikh".

Tensions between Egypt, a predominantly Sunni country, and Hezbollah, a Shi'ite group backed by Iran, have been running high since Nasrallah in December accused Cairo of complicity with Israel in its siege of the Gaza Strip. Cairo said on Wednesday it had detained 49 men linked to Hezbollah, accusing them of planning attacks in Egypt.

Nasrallah responded saying one of those held was a member but he and up to 10 others were trying to supply military equipment to Hamas-run Gaza.

"We do not allow you, Oh Monkey Sheikh, to mock our judiciary, for you are a bandit and veteran criminal who killed your countrymen, but we will not allow you to threaten the security and safety of Egypt...and if you threaten its sovereignty, you will burn!" al-Gomhouria newspaper wrote.

The editorial, by editor Mohamed Ali Ibrahim, covered the front page and carried the headline "A criminal who knows no repentance" over a picture of Nasrallah.

"I say to you what every Egyptian knows, that you are an Iranian party," Ibrahim wrote. "Are there instructions from Iran to drag Egypt into a conflict?"

Egypt and Iran have not had full diplomatic relations since shortly after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, when Iran cut ties after former President Anwar Sadat hosted the deposed Iranian shah in Cairo.

Ties were further strained during the conflict in Gaza in January, when Tehran criticised Egypt for not doing enough to help Palestinians and for closing its border with the strip, which Egypt shut to most traffic after the Islamist group Hamas took control of the area.



Zimbabweans queue outside a bank due to the ongoing cash crisis.

Photo: AFP

## Zimbabwe sets team to drive constitutional reforms

Zimbabwe set up a parliamentary team yesterday to spearhead the writing of a new constitution which President Robert Mugabe's opponents say will be key to holding free and fair elections.

Critics say Mugabe, 85 and in power since independence from Britain in 1980, has used tough security and media laws to stifle opposition to his ZANU-PF party, and has rigged polls in the last 10 years to remain in office.

Yesterday, Zimbabwe's Speaker of Parliament Lovemore Moyo announced that a new unity government, which Mugabe formed with opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai in February to try to break a post-election crisis, had assembled a 25-member parliamentary committee to lead the process of writing a new constitution.

The process would include consultations around the country, and the new constitution would have to be approved by a national referendum to be held by mid July next year, Moyo said.

In February 2000, Mugabe's government lost a referendum for a new constitution which Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said was meant to tighten ZANU-PF's grip on power.

Moyo said the new drive by ZANU-PF and the two wings of the MDC which dominate parliament was more inclusive and would lead to "a people-centered, inspired and democratic constitution."

"We commit ourselves to ensuring that the process will be as credible as possible," he said.

Political analysts say although there are tensions between Mugabe and Tsvangirai in the new unity govern-

ment over rights abuses and continuing seizures of white-owned farms by ZANU-PF officials, the power-sharing agreement is likely to hold until the next elections, which are expected to be called in 2011.

Mugabe stoked tensions again at the weekend when he transferred the supervision of the telecommunication industry from MDC cabinet minister Nelson Chamisa to a ZANU-PF official.

"There are all these tensions, and we should expect to see quite a number in the coming months," said Eldred Masunungure, a political science professor at the University of Zimbabwe. "But that announcement of the select committee on the constitutional issue is a demonstration that on the big issues, the (power-sharing) agreement is going to hold," he said.

"There are no viable alternative options for both the MDC and ZANU-PF outside this agreement," Masunungure said.

Moyo said the government was still working out a budget for the constitutional reform program, but appealed to foreign donors to give some support.

"Those who wish us well must come on board, and I know there is a lot of goodwill out there," he said.

The government has crafted a short-term emergency program to help revive an economy battered by ten years of contraction and hyperinflation under Mugabe's controversial policies.

It says the program will give greater emphasis to political and economic reforms which analysts say will be critical to unlocking financial aid from Western donors.

### Zimbabwe shelves own currency for a year

Zimbabwe will not use its own local currency for at least a year, a state newspaper reported yesterday, while it tries to repair an economy which critics say was destroyed by President Robert Mugabe.

The southern African state has allowed the use of multiple foreign currencies since January to stem hyperinflation which had rocketed to over 230 million percent and left the Zimbabwe dollar almost worthless.

The state-controlled *Sunday Mail* said the unity government of Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai decided the Zimbabwe dollar should only be reintroduced when industrial output reaches about 60 percent of capacity from the current 20 percent average.

"The Zimbabwe dollar will be out for at least a year. We resolved that there will be no immediate plans to (re)introduce the money because there is nothing to support and hold its value," the newspaper quoted Economic Planning and Development Minister Elton Mangoma as saying.

"Our focus is to first ensure that we have a vibrant industry. If we try to reintroduce the local currency now, it will face the same fate of being wiped out of its value within weeks." On Thursday, Zimbabwe's Central Statistical Office (CSO) said consumer prices fell for a third straight month in March after the government abandoned its worthless currency.

The CSO said inflation stood at -3.0 percent month-on-month in March compared with -3.1 percent in February, as food prices fell.

Critics say Mugabe, who has led Zimbabwe since independence from Britain in 1980, has destroyed one of Africa's most promising economies through controversial policies, including the seizure of white-owned commercial farms for redistribution to inexperienced black farmers.

## Madonna still keen to adopt Malawian child

U.S. pop star Madonna is still keen on adopting a second child from Malawi, despite a court ruling in the southern African country preventing her from doing so, a local newspaper reported yesterday.

Madonna, who lost an appeal against a High Court decision refusing her bid to adopt a four-year-old girl named Mercy James, said she wants to provide education and a family environment for the young girl.

"I want to provide Mercy with a home, a loving family

environment and the best education and healthcare possible. And it's my hope that she like David, will one day return to Malawi and help the people of their country," Madonna told the *Nation on Sunday* newspaper in an emailed response to questions.

"Though I have been advised that I cannot publicly discuss the pending appeal regarding my desire to adopt Mercy, I do want to say how much I appreciate the level of support that I have received from the people of Malawi and

my friends around the world."

Malawi's government came under fire after Madonna adopted a 13-month-old child, David Banda, in 2006, with critics accusing it of giving her special treatment by skirting laws that ban non-residents from adopting children.

Madonna's lawyer, Alan Chinula, has already lodged a notice of appeal against the decision earlier this month but by last week the courts had not yet granted a date for the hearing.

# Trust International

## MIDDLE EAST

### Ahmadinejad dismisses demand to halt atom work

Iran's president expressed openness for talks with the United States but again dismissed demands to halt nuclear work the West fears is aimed at making bombs, in an interview with Germany's Der Spiegel news magazine. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also called for "fundamental changes" in Washington's policies, echoing comments by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior Iranian officials.

"If the behavior of the United States changes, we can expect to see important progress," he said in the interview posted on Der Spiegel's website, referring to decades of mistrust between Tehran and Washington.

The new U.S. administration of President Barack Obama, in a reversal of George W. Bush's approach, has offered a "new beginning" of diplomatic engagement if the Islamic Republic "unclenches its fist."

Breaking with past U.S. policy of shunning direct talks with Tehran, Washington last week said it would join discussions with Iran on its disputed nuclear program from now on.

Der Spiegel said the interview was conducted about a week ago, before the United States and five other world powers said they would invite Iran to a meeting on the nuclear

issue. An aide to Ahmadinejad has said Iran would review the offer.

Iran has reacted cautiously to Washington's overtures, saying it wants to see a real shift in U.S. policy from the Bush administration, which spearheaded a drive to isolate Tehran over its refusal to stop enriching uranium.

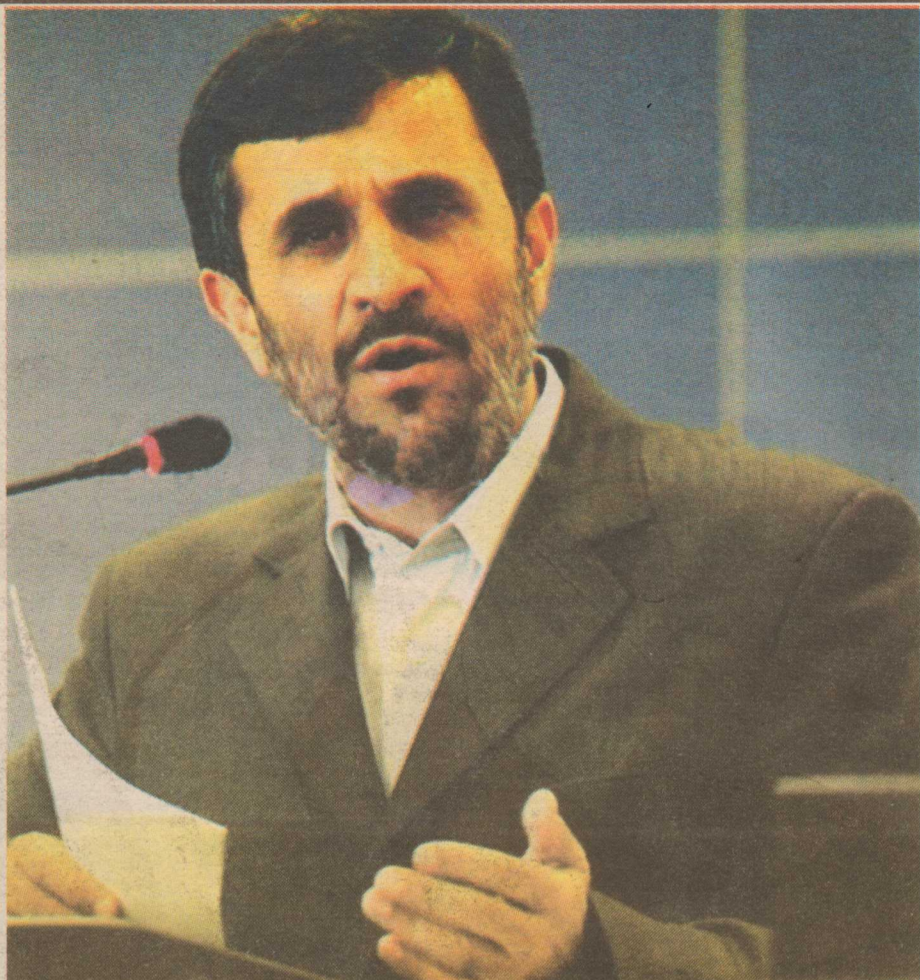
"We support talks on the basis of fairness and respect. That has always been our position. We are waiting for Obama to announce his plans, so that we can analyze them," Ahmadinejad said in an English translation of the interview.

"We speak very respectfully of Barack Obama. But we are realists. We want to see real changes," he said. "We feel that Obama must now follow his words with action."

While seeking to engage Iran, Obama's administration has also warned of tougher sanctions if it continues to defy United Nations demands to halt sensitive nuclear work.

Ahmadinejad made clear once again Iran would not bow to such pressure and suspend uranium enrichment, which can have both civilian and military uses.

"These discussions are old. The time for this is over," he said.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

### Iraq Sunni leader eyes Shi'ite alliance

A senior leader in a Sunni Arab movement founded to combat al Qaeda in Iraq is edging away from the military activity of the past, toward a once unthinkable alliance with the country's Shi'ite prime minister.

Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha is head of the Awakening Conference, a political party born out of an armed movement that uprooted al Qaeda and other militants from Anbar province in western Iraq, once the deadliest place for U.S. forces in Iraq.

Abu Risha's renunciation of armed struggle and steps toward working with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki could be a landmark in new political cooperation between Iraq's majority Shi'ites and minority Sunnis after years of blood-

shed.

"The prime minister's initiatives have been positive," said Abu Risha, who is considering an alliance with Maliki's State of Law coalition, which like the Awakening Conference made major gains in provincial elections in January.

Such an alliance before parliamentary polls in December could add momentum to nationalist political sentiment in Iraq, which helped propel Maliki to victory over religious groups. "If we want a unified Iraq, we must work in that direction, on unifying Sunnis and Shi'ites to build one country," he said.

The sheikh, dressed in Arab head dress, robe and aviator sunglasses, fired a rifle into the air with one hand to herald his party's confirmation

as head of a new coalition dominating Anbar's provincial council.

Abu Risha inherited the movement from his late brother, Sheikh Abdul Sattar, who from 2006 onwards rallied thousands of Sunni Arab supporters to take up arms against al Qaeda in Anbar.

The Sunni Arab militias, dubbed Awakening Councils or Majalis al Sahwa in Arabic, quickly found U.S. backing and spread across Iraq. The militiamen, who numbered up to 100,000, are credited with helping curb violence across Iraq.

Abu Risha says the time for militias has ended. "We are a political, not an armed, group," he said, even as his supporters' celebratory gunfire echoed across the countryside.

### Jordan king calls for serious Mideast talks

Jordan's King Abdallah has called for an immediate and unified Arab move to relaunch "serious" Arab-Israeli peace negotiations on the basis of the two-state formula.

The king issued the call during a meeting with six Arab foreign ministers and the Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa, who met in Amman earlier to review the Middle East peace process in the light of the right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu coming to power in Israel.

King Abdallah stressed the need to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state formula

and in accordance with the agreed references, particularly the Arab peace initiative, a royal court statement said.

"The monarch underscored the importance of the time element in the negotiation process which should unequivocally seek the implementation of the two-state solution, the establishment of comprehensive peace, regaining all Arab rights and setting up an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian soil," it added.

King Abdallah also called for evolving a unified Arab stance so they could speak to the world community, particularly the United States, in a single language in compli-

ance with the resolutions adopted at the March Arab summit in Doha.

Arab leaders backed anew the Arab peace plan which envisaged recognition of Israel by all Arab states in exchange for Tel Aviv vacating all Arab territories it occupied in the Six-Day War in 1967, including East Jerusalem.

During their meeting, Moussa and the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon agreed to continue coordination to arrive at a unified approach in dealing with world powers, official sources said.

### Israeli, Palestinian leaders make first phone call

Israel's new prime minister spoke to the Palestinian president yesterday for the first time since taking office, telling him that he seeks close cooperation to drive peace efforts forward.

Talk of cooperation alone, however, is unlikely to satisfy the Palestinian leadership, which wants Israel's new government to make an unambiguous endorsement of the idea of an independent Palestinian state.

While repeatedly saying he wants peace with the Palestinians, Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to support the internationally backed idea of a Palestinian state alongside Israel since taking office as premier on March 31. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has said there is no reason to negotiate if Netanyahu doesn't support a "two-state solution."

Netanyahu's office said yesterday's conversation was initiated by Abbas, who called the Israeli leader to send him greetings for the Jewish Passover holiday. It added that Abbas said both sides must work

for peace.

Describing the conversation as "warm and friendly," Netanyahu's office said the Israeli leader recalled past talks and cooperation with Abbas and said he intended to maintain a similar relationship in the future. Netanyahu was also prime minister from 1996-99 and served as foreign minister from 2002-2003.

Abbas' office said yesterday's call was a gesture of courtesy to the new Israeli prime minister and it lasted a few minutes. It said it was the first time the two men have spoken since Netanyahu took office.

During his campaign, Netanyahu said it was premature to talk of an independent Palestinian state. Instead, he offered the Palestinians "economic peace," a plan to build up their economy. Netanyahu's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, has dismissed peace efforts by the previous U.S. administration and says the previous Israeli government's endorsement of Palestinian statehood is not binding.

### Palestinian prisoner dies in Israeli jail

An elderly Palestinian prisoner serving a twenty one and a half year term died in an Israeli prison, Israeli sources said.

The Israeli Ynet news service said that the 50-year-old prisoner collapsed and died at the Sharon Prison. Ynet added that the man had been in jail since 1989 for illegal residency, indecent acts, robbery and assault.

According to the report, a team of Israeli wardens at-

tended to the prisoner, but the Magen David Adom (Israeli medical service) emergency crew dispatched to the jail was forced to proclaim him dead. The Israel Prison Service launched an investigation into the incident.

The Palestinian Ministry of Detainees said in a recent report that around 1,300 of around 10,000 Palestinians in detention are suffering from severe medical problems for which Israeli Prison Service

refuses to provide treatment. Around 194 Palestinians have died in Israeli prisons since 1967 due to torture or medical negligence.

According to the ministry, their conditions of detention are extremely poor, and in some cases, life-threatening.

The majority of these detainees are being held in violation of the IV Geneva Convention in prisons outside of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

# Trust International

## PHOTO NEWS



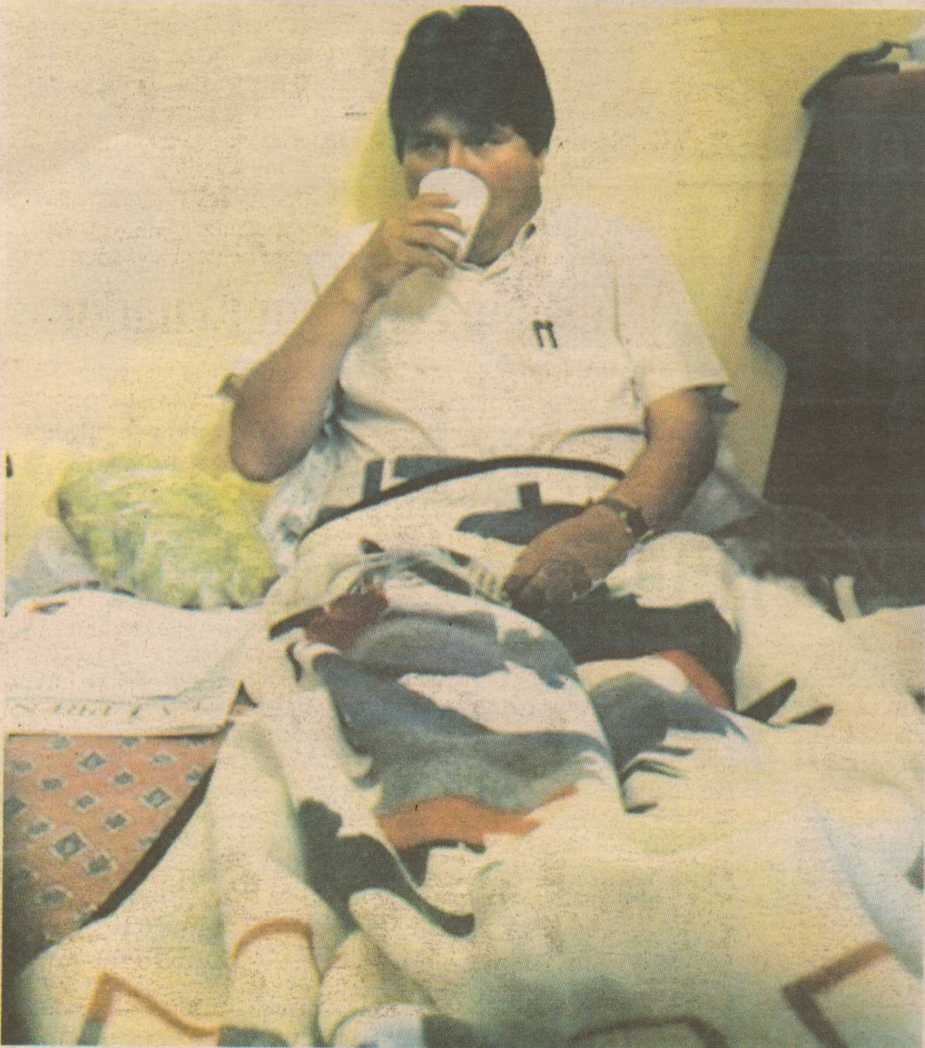
Television crew interview a crew member of the Maersk Alabama at the Kenyan coastland sea port of Mombasa at the weekend.

Photo: Reuters



A supporter of ousted Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra shouts as soldiers block a road near the venue of the 14th ASEAN summit in Pattaya at the weekend.

Photo: Reuters



Bolivian President Evo Morales drinks during the second-day of his hunger strike, at the presidential palace in Las Pas at the weekend.

Photo: AFP



President of South African ruling African National Congress (ANC) Jacob Zuma (right) greets members of the congregation after a Pentacostal Church in Znurbekon yesterday.

Photo: AFP



Georgian opposition supporters who want President Mikheil Saakashvili to resign look on during a meeting in front of the parliament building yesterday.

Photo: AFP



Supporters of Pakistani political party Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) gather during a protest rally in Karachi yesterday against the killing of three local leaders.

Photo: AFP

# Trust International

## WORLD REPORT



A polar bear attacks a woman after she jumped into its enclosure at a Berlin Zoo at the weekend. Zoo keepers managed to push the bear away and carry the woman from the cage. Photo: Skynews.co.uk

## Easter: Pope urges end to war, poverty

Pope Benedict XVI said yesterday that reconciliation was the only way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and said the entire world needed to rediscover hope to end wars, poverty and financial turmoil.

In his Easter Sunday message, delivered from the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica, Benedict noted that he plans to travel to the Holy Land in just a few weeks and said he would bring a message of hope and love to the region. The 81-year-old pope tripped as he climbed up to his gilded chair on the loggia, but recovered without incident and delivered his speech to the crowds below.

"Reconciliation — difficult but indispensable — is a precondition for a future of overall security and peaceful coexistence, and it can only be achieved through renewed, persevering and sincere efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," he said.

Benedict delivered his "Urbi et Orbi" speech — Latin for "to the city and the world" — at the end of his Easter Sunday Mass, attended by tens of thousands of people who packed St. Peter's Square and the boulevard leading up to it.

The piazza, decorated with yellow tulips, azaleas and other spring flowers, overflowed with the faithful who came out on an overcast day to celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection, the most joyous and important day in the Christian

church calendar. The crowd shouted "Benedetto" — Italian for Benedict — as they waited for him to appear at the loggia. They cheered as they awaited his Easter blessing, this year being delivered in 63 languages.

In his first greeting — in Italian — Benedict offered special Easter wishes for the victims of Italy's devastating earthquake, praying that they have "the courage necessary to go forward together to build a future open to hope."

In his speech, Benedict said it was "urgent" to find hope around the globe, despite mounting reasons for despair.

"At a time of world food shortage, of financial turmoil, of old and new forms of poverty, of disturbing climate change, of violence and deprivation which force many to leave their homelands in search of a less precarious form of existence, of the ever present threat of terrorism, of growing fears over the future, it is urgent to rediscover grounds for hope," he said.

He recalled his recent trip to Africa in urging the faithful to keep up hope to combat poverty and wars.

"Africa suffers disproportionately from the cruel and unending conflicts, often forgotten, that are causing so much bloodshed and destruction in several of her nations, and from the growing numbers of her sons and daughters who fall prey to hunger, poverty and disease," Benedict said.

## Rebels kill 13 soldiers in Peru

Peru's Shining Path rebels have killed 13 soldiers in two ambushes in the south-east of the country, the country's defence minister says. Antero Flores Araoz said the rebels had used dynamite and grenades to attack one military patrol on Thursday.

A captain and 11 soldiers died in that attack which left two other soldiers wounded and one is still missing.

It is one of the deadliest operations by the once-formidable guerrillas in the past

decade.

Mr Flores said the incidents had taken place on Thursday, but news had been delayed by poor communications with the region.

"Most of the soldiers plunged over a cliff," he added, without giving further details.

Prime Minister Yehude Simon condemned the ambushes as "desperate responses by the Shining Path in the face of advances by the armed forces".

"I have no doubt that in the next years this zone will

be free of leftover terrorists," he added. Both attacks occurred in the same area of the Ayacucho region, 550km south-east of the capital, Lima.

In the first ambush, one soldier was killed and at least three were wounded.

Last year, the Shining Path sprang back from relative obscurity to launch a series of deadly attacks, killing some 25 soldiers and police officers in ambushes and gun battles.

But the group is believed to be a fraction of its

former size and is split between two cocaine-producing zones of Peru, some 500km (310 miles) apart.

It is made up of a few hundred guerrillas who did not lay down their arms when the group's leader, Abimael Guzman, declared the armed revolution at an end after his capture in 1992.

Its fighters are considered expert in guerrilla warfare from years of resistance in some of Peru's remotest and wildest country and are well-armed from the profits of the cocaine trade.

## Obama seeks new relationship with Latin America

U.S. President Barack Obama will try to establish a cooperative new relationship with Latin America this week, but U.S. resistance to change on highly symbolic issues like Cuba and immigration could undercut the effort, analysts said.

Obama travels to Mexico on Thursday for his first visit to the region as president and heads to Trinidad and Tobago on Friday for the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

As he did at the G20 summit of major economic powers in London this month, the president plans to emphasize listening to regional leaders and working on shared goals.

"With all that is at stake today, we cannot afford to talk past one another," Obama said on Saturday in

his weekly radio speech. "We have to find, and build on, our mutual interests."

Jeffrey Davidow, Obama's special adviser for the summit, said there had been a push to establish a new tone with pre-summit consultations and diplomacy. Obama met Mexican President Felipe Calderon before taking office and several Cabinet officials have visited Latin America.

"I think coming so early in the administration," Davidow said, "this ... legitimately can be seen as a new beginning."

Obama's popularity, compared to former President George W. Bush, and his performance at the G20 give him tremendous goodwill among fellow leaders as

he begins the visit, analysts said, but much hinges on his pledge to listen and learn.

## Volcano erupts in Ecuador

Ecuador officials say a volcano is erupting in the Galapagos Islands and could harm unique wildlife.

The Galapagos National Park says La Cumbre volcano began spewing lava, gas and smoke on uninhabited Fernandina Island on Saturday after four years of inactivity.

The park says in a statement the eruption is not a threat to people living on

nearby Isabela Island.

But it says lava flowing to the sea will likely affect marine and terrestrial iguanas, sea lions and other fauna. The Galapagos are home to unique animal and plant species that became the basis for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Scientists say Fernandina is the island with the most volcanic activity in the archipelago. La Cumbre last erupted in May 2005.

## Obama's brother refused entry to UK

U.S. President Barack Obama's half-brother was denied entry to the UK after being accused of a serious crime on an earlier visit, the Home Office has confirmed.

Samson Obama, who lives in Kenya, was on his way to the US presidential inauguration in January when he was stopped at East Midlands Airport.

According to the *News of the World*, fingerprint tests linked him to an alleged sex attack on a British girl.

He was questioned but not charged over the incident in Berkshire, it added.

A Home Office spokesman said Samson Obama was denied a visa after immigration officers noticed one of his documents was false. That led them to further inquiries.

Samson Obama, who runs a mobile phone shop outside Nairobi, had been planning to make a short break in the UK on his way to Washington.

He eventually took a connecting flight to the US without formally entering the UK.

A UK Border Agency spokesman said in general, Britain would oppose the entry of individuals where their presence was "not conducive to the public good".

Samson Obama is one of several half-siblings of the US president.

Barack Obama Sr left his son when he was two years old and lived most of his life in Kenya, where he fathered a number of other sons and a daughter with three other wives. He died in a car crash in 1982.

# Trust International

## ASIA REPORT

# Wen says China seeing gradual recovery Riots trail Thailand emergency patrols

China's economy is showing some signs of recovery from the global financial crisis, the country's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has said.

The economy is showing "positive changes" but still faces "very big difficulties", he said on the sidelines of Thailand's cancelled Asean summit.

China has already implemented a 4tn yuan (\$585bn) stimulus package to boost economic activity.

Mr Wen also said he would spend more if necessary to boost the economy.

Despite its problems, China's economy - the third biggest in the world - is forecast to grow by at least 5% this year, in stark contrast to many major global economies that are shrinking.

The economy showed "better than expected positive changes in the first quarter," Mr Wen said.

Citing improved investment, consumption and trade figures, he said that

some sectors of the economy "are in the process of gradual recovery".

He added that while the global crisis was deepening, China had perhaps seen the worst of it.

"As the crisis has not touched its bottom, we can hardly say that the Chinese economy alone has got out of the crisis."

But he explained that China was prepared to implement further measures to ensure that the economy continued to stabilise: "What we should do is exert our utmost efforts to minimise the effects of the crisis."

Mr Wen's comments come just days after President Barack Obama said he saw "glimmers of hope" in the US economy.

On Sunday, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, also said it would ensure the financial system has sufficient liquidity for economic development.

Soldiers and tanks have appeared in Bangkok after Thai authorities declared a state of emergency, a day after protests stopped a major Asia summit.

But protesters broke into the interior ministry and at one point attacked a car they thought was carrying PM Abhisit Vejjajiva. He was not inside.

They have blocked a number of busy road junctions and at least one railway, and taken buses and two armoured vehicles. The prime minister has threatened "tough measures" to end the protests.

But the army has so far not moved against the crowds. Hospitals have been asked to prepare for casualties in case they do. Protesters have been blocking access to key government offices in the capital for the past week, but the collapse of the summit was a huge embarrassment to Mr Abhisit and he has vowed to restore order, says the BBC's Jonathan Head in Bangkok.

Our correspondent says that what began as a show of strength by the government's opponents two weeks ago has turned into a battle for control of the capital which neither side feel they can afford to lose.

One of the leaders of the protests was arrested after the PM vowed to prosecute them.

Arisman Pongruengrong, who spearheaded the protests by supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, was arrested on Sunday after returning to Bangkok from the resort of Pattaya - venue of the cancelled summit talks.

Under the state of emergency, gatherings of more than five people can be banned, media reports can be censored, and the army can be deployed to help police maintain order.

But protesters have continued roaming around the streets. "It's not right. To declare the state of emergency is only to hurt the country more than before," one woman protester said. Earlier, there were chaotic scenes at the interior ministry, where protesters forced their way into the building as Mr Abhisit was delivering a televised address to announce the state of emergency.

They then attacked a car they thought was carrying the prime minister, hitting it with sticks and concrete slabs and throwing rocks and furniture at it.

The protesters have been demanding the resignation of the prime minister, and have been urged by their leaders to attack him and his government at every opportunity.

Soldiers fired warning shots as red-shirted protesters stormed the ministry, but initially made no attempt to stop them. In a new address, Mr Abhisit said: "I want to tell protesters that you have no right to break the law or to restrict other people's rights."

"Otherwise the government must implement further measures under the state of emergency."

His deputy warned against excesses by the security forces. "Authorities, policemen and soldiers, please practise your authority accordingly, and strictly within the law. Otherwise, it will bring more damage to the country," he said.



Soldiers and tanks have appeared in Bangkok after Thai authorities declared a state of emergency, a day after protests stopped a major Asia summit.

## Key nations agree N/Korea draft

Key UN countries have agreed a draft statement condemning North Korea's rocket launch, diplomats say. The text, agreed by the Security Council's five permanent members and Japan, said that the launch had contravened a UN resolution.

The statement is considered a weaker response than the resolution initially sought by Japan and the US.

China and Russia had rejected that idea, calling on the international community to act with restraint.

They fear that a strong response could harm prospects for resuming stalled six-party talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions.

The full 15-member Security Council held a closed-door meeting later on Saturday to discuss the draft. Diplomats suggested they could vote on it as early as Monday.

North Korea says the purpose of its rocket launch was to put a satellite into orbit as part of its peaceful development of space.

But its neighbours say it was testing long-range missile technology - in violation of a UN resolution.

The Security Council met earlier in the week but failed to agree a unanimous response.

The apparent agreement came after envoys from permanent members the US, France, China, Russia and UK - plus Japan - held two-hour talks in New York.

US Ambassador Susan Rice said that the presidential statement would send a "clear message" to North Korea.

The council "condemns the 5 April 2009 launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is in contravention of Security Council resolution 1718", the draft says.

The resolution, passed in 2006, bans North Korea from conducting ballistic missile or nuclear tests.

The statement urges North Korea to refrain from further launches and calls on the UN sanctions committee to better enforce existing sanctions against the communist country.

## Fiji coup leader restored as PM

Fiji's leader has restored his military chief, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, to the post of interim prime minister a day after suspending the constitution. President Ratu Josefa Iloilo acted after a senior court ruled that Commodore Bainimarama had come to power illegally through a coup in 2006.

The president's actions have been condemned by the US and Australia.

Commodore Bainimarama was sworn in at a ceremony at Fiji's Government House, from which foreign

media were banned.

The president declared on Friday that he had taken over the government after the Appeal Court ruled that the current government was illegitimate, and he dismissed the judges.

Appearing on TV, he said he had appointed himself as "head of state in the new order" and that his choice of interim prime minister would serve for five years to allow time for necessary reforms before elections could be held.

Mr Iloilo has been a staunch supporter of Mr

Bainimarama, who has repeatedly ignored international demands to restore democracy, says the BBC's Phil Mercer in Sydney.

The three-judge Court of Appeal panel had upheld a challenge to Mr Bainimarama's rule by ousted Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. The court said the military government was illegal and should be replaced with an interim government, led by neither Mr Qarase nor Mr Bainimarama.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the political upheaval in Fiji was

"grave and unwelcome".

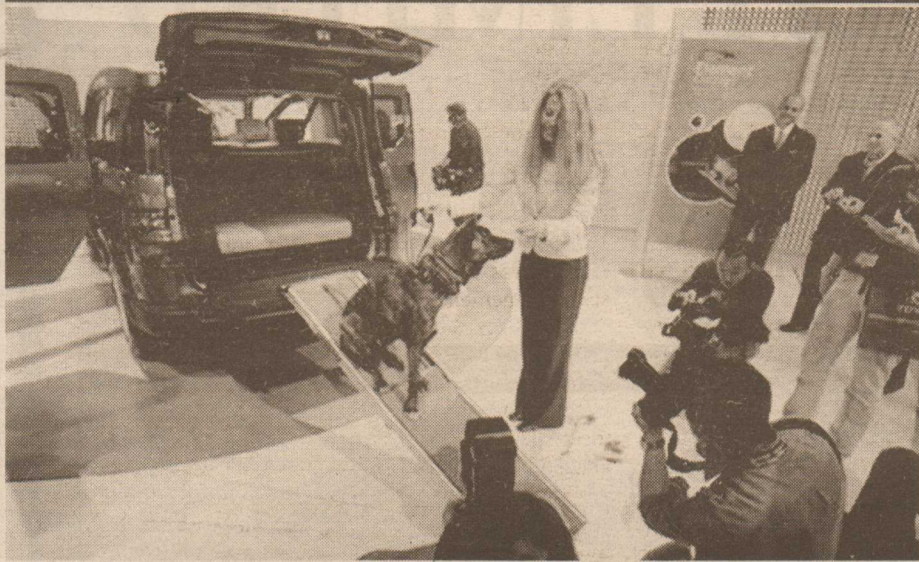
The US also expressed its "deep disappointment", while UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for the "restoration of a legitimate government" in the troubled South Pacific nation.

The army uprising in December 2006 was the country's fourth coup in 20 years. The military said it had been forced to remove a corrupt and racist administration led by Mr Qarase.

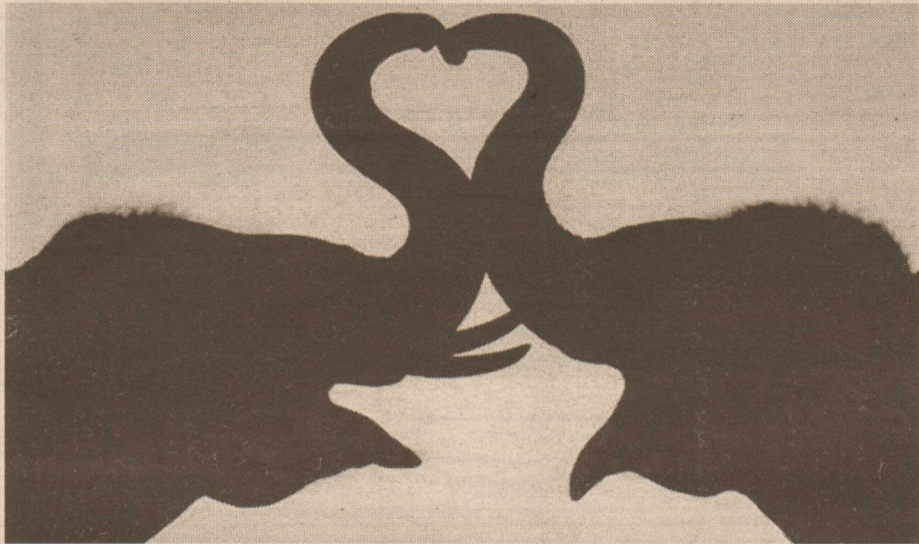
But critics of Commodore Bainimarama have accused him of being a "power-hungry dictator".

# Trust International

## ODD WORLD



Heather Cammisa with the Humane Society and a dog named Sammy demonstrate dog friendly features of a Honda Element Dog Friendly Concept vehicle at the 2009 New York International Auto Show on April 9.



Elephants form a heart shape with their trunks while the sun sets in the background at an elephant camp in the former Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya, 70 km north of Bangkok on February 12, 2006.



An Indian Border Security Force soldier displays empty bullet cartridges in Jammu on May 9, 2008.

## Woman unknowingly had bullet in head for 12 years

An Albanian woman went around for 12 years with a bullet lodged below her cheekbone without her noticing it, the woman said Friday.

Mrike Rrucaj told Reuters she was shot in her sleep in 1997 at a time when the Balkan country was plagued by anarchy and chaos amid protests against fraudulent pyramid schemes, but a doctor said the bullet had passed through her. At the time many Albanians fired bullets into the air in frustration.

"I was covered in blood and I thought I had been killed," Rrucaj said of the incident in 1997. "The doctor at the hospital said the bullet had gone in and come out and he just cleaned the wound. I was 28, and did not feel a thing for 12 years."

But one week ago she collapsed from pain when she bent her neck and an X-ray revealed the bullet, which was 2.8 cm long.

"The unique thing about this case is not the operation, but the fact she kept it un-

knowingly for 12 years in her head," said Fatos Olldashi, chief neurosurgeon at Albania's military hospital.

He did not blame his colleague for not being more attentive in 1997, when an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 people were killed.

"It is easy to judge the doctor now, but it was quite different back in 1997. He thought it had come out. And they were treating seriously injured people, not someone standing up and talking to them," he said.

## Honda unveils dog-friendly car

Dog-crazy Americans will soon be able to buy a pet-friendly car with a cushioned dog bed in the trunk, fitted with a built-in water bowl and fan and a ramp to help less agile dogs climb in.

With the help of a rescue dog named Sammy, Japanese car maker Honda Motor Co unveiled the pet friendly version of its Element utility vehicle at the New York Auto Show.

It features easy-wash seat covers, a fitted dog bed with restraints to keep Sammy safe in the event of a crash, and a paw logo on the side. Honda

said the car would go on sale across the United States from the fall of this year.

Honda spokesman Sage Marie said it was designed with both safety and comfort in mind. "(It's) a car we think is of interest to many of today's dog-crazy consumers," he said.

Senior product planner James Jenkins said Americans spend \$41 billion a year on their pets, a figure forecast to rise to \$52 billion in two years, indicating a big market for the car.

"Pets have become more like family, more important to households than ever be-

fore," Jenkins said.

The current model of the Element starts at a little over \$20,000 and Honda has yet to determine how much the pet friendly features will add on to the price tag, Jenkins said.

Sammy's owner, Heather Cammisa of the Humane Society of the United States, said she had borrowed the car for two weeks and found the ramp especially useful.

"Sammy actually needs a ramp. Before I adopted him he ended up at a shelter having been hit by a car and he needs that ramp," she said. "Otherwise I lift him to get into my car."

## Politician fumes over 'gay' elephant in zoo

A Polish politician has criticized his local zoo for acquiring a "gay" elephant named Ninio who prefers male companions and will probably not procreate, local media reported Friday.

"We didn't pay 37 million zlotys (\$11 million) for

the largest elephant house in Europe to have a gay elephant live there," Michal Grzes, a conservative councillor in the city of Poznan in western Poland, was quoted as saying.

"We were supposed to have a herd, but as Ninio prefers male friends over fe-

males how will he produce offspring?" said Grzes, who is from the right-wing opposition Law and Justice party.

The head of the Poznan zoo said 10-year-old Ninio may be too young to decide whether he prefers males or females as elephants only reach sexual maturity at 14.

## Saudis ban 'lewd' license plates

Saudi Arabia has banned vehicle licence plates which are seen as "offensive" in English when Arabic letters are given in the Latin alphabet, reports say.

Saudi newspaper *al-Watan* said the banned words included "sex" and "ass", but the list was topped by "USA".

*Al-Watan* said 90,000 ex-

isting plates were to be replaced.

Personalised plates are popular with wealthy young Saudis. One plate recently sold at auction for 6m riyals (\$1.2m), the newspaper reported.

Newer Saudi plates include three Arabic letters that are also shown in the Latin alphabet.

The growing fashion is

for car owners to buy personalised "vanity" plates that deliberately read "nut", "but", "bad", or "bar" in English.

The latter presumably has been deemed offensive as it relates to alcohol, which is banned in the Islamic kingdom, AFP news agency reports. The first on the list, for unexplained reasons, is the combination "USA".

## Man divorces wife by text message

A Saudi man has divorced his wife by text message, a newspaper said on Thursday.

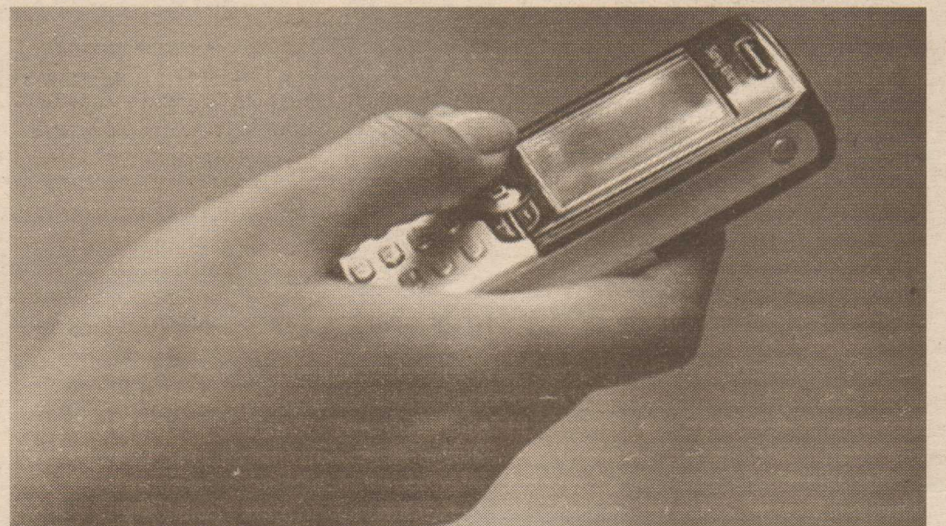
The man was in Iraq when he sent the SMS informing her she was no longer his spouse. He followed up with a telephone call to two of his

relatives, the daily Arab News reported.

A court in the Red Sea city of Jeddah finalised the split — the first known divorce in Saudi Arabia by text message — after summoning the two relatives to check they had received word of the

husband's intention, the paper said.

Saudi Arabia practises a strict form of Islamic Sharia law, and clerics preside over Sharia courts as judges. Under the law a man can divorce his wife by saying "I divorce you" three times.



A woman uses her mobile telephone to send a text message in a central Sydney shopping mall on September 15, 2003



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10"x5 cols	183,600.00	9,180.00	252,000.00	12,600.00
10"x4 cols	147,600.00	7,380.00	198,000.00	9,900.00
10"x3 cols	135,000.00	6,750.00	180,000.00	9,000.00
9"x6 cols	212,760.00	10,638.00	279,000.00	13,950.00
9"x5 cols	176,400.00	8,820.00	243,000.00	12,150.00
9"x4 cols	135,000.00	6,750.00	194,400.00	9,720.00
9"x3 cols	129,600.00	6,480.00	176,400.00	8,820.00
8"x6 cols	201,600.00	10,080.00	273,600.00	13,680.00
8"x5 cols	169,200.00	8,460.00	234,000.00	11,700.00
8"x4 cols	126,000.00	6,300.00	187,200.00	9,360.00
8"x3 cols	122,400.00	6,120.00	169,200.00	8,460.00
7"x6 cols	153,000.00	7,650.00	198,000.00	9,900.00
7"x5 cols	144,000.00	7,200.00	187,200.00	9,360.00
7"x4 cols	122,400.00	6,120.00	180,000.00	9,000.00
6"x6 cols	147,600.00	7,380.00	188,400.00	9,420.00
6"x5 cols	135,000.00	6,750.00	183,600.00	9,180.00
6"x4 cols	118,800.00	5,940.00	176,400.00	8,820.00
6"x3 cols	72,000.00	3,600.00	97,200.00	4,860.00
6"x2 cols	63,000.00	3,150.00	81,000.00	4,050.00
5"x5 cols	126,000.00	6,300.00	180,000.00	9,000.00
5"x4 cols	113,400.00	5,670.00	178,200.00	8,910.00
5"x3 cols	68,400.00	3,420.00	171,000.00	8,550.00
5"x2 cols	54,000.00	2,700.00	91,800.00	4,590.00
4"x6 cols	126,000.00	6,300.00	73,800.00	3,690.00
4"x5 cols	115,200.00	5,760.00	171,000.00	8,550.00
4"x4 cols	104,400.00	5,220.00	163,800.00	8,190.00
4"x3 cols	63,000.00	3,150.00	82,800.00	4,140.00
4"x2 cols	48,600.00	2,430.00	68,400.00	3,420.00
3"x2 cols	30,600.00	1,530.00	45,000.00	2,250.00
3"x3 cols	45,000.00	2,250.00	54,000.00	2,700.00
2"x2 cols	21,600.00	1,080.00	36,000.00	1,800.00
1"x1 col	4,500.00	225.00	5,400.00	270.00

SPECIAL POSITIONS	RATE (N)	VAT (N)
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Back Page Strip	324,000	16,200
Front Page Earpiece	120,000	6,000
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Centre Spread	1,360,800	68,040
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# BUSINESS TRUST

●Yar'adua govt. makes foray into agriculture —Page 26

●Kaduna identifies 11 hydropower locations —Page 32

●CBN to licence one more ATM consortium —Page 32

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## Flight Schedule

### Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 10.00, 13.10, 15.30, 16.45  
Lagos-Kad: 10.00  
Lagos-Owrr: 08.00, 10.00, 14.30  
Kad-Abj-Lagos: 10.30, 11.45  
Abj-Lagos: 08.10, 13.40, 15.00

### IRS Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 09.45, 11.45, 12.45, (Mon-Fri) 09.30, 12.45(Sat & Sun)  
Lagos-Kano: 06.15(Mon-Fri), 16.30(Sat & Sun)  
Kano-Lagos: 07.30(Mon-Fri), 10.30(Sat & Sun)

### Aero Contractors

Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30;16.30; 19.45(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16:45 (Sat).  
Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30;14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30(Sat).  
Lagos-Ben: 07.45; 11.00; 15.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).  
Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun)  
Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun)  
Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun)  
Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00(Sun)  
Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)  
Lagos-PHC: 07.30; 09.30; 15.00(Mon-Fri/ Sat/ Sun)  
PHC-Lagos: 11.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 18.00 (Fri)  
Lagos-Warri: 07.45; 16.00 (Mon-Fri/sat) 09.15 (Sun)  
Warri-Lagos: 09.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 10.45(Sun)

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Lagos-PHC: 07.40, 09.30, 10.00, 12.20, 13.30, 14.00, 16.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
PHC-Lagos: 10.50, 11.20, 12.45, 15.30, 16.15, 17.15 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Abj-Kano: 18.00 (Mon-Fri)  
Kano-Abj: 08.20 (Mon-Fri)

### Bellview Airlines

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Abj-Lagos: 07.40, 14.50, 18.25 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Lagos-Kano: 06.50(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Kano-Lagos: 10.10(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)

### Arik Air

Lagos-Abj: 07.30, 10.20, 14.20, 16.45 17.45, 18.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Abj-Lagos: 09.20, 09.30, 10.30, 12.15, 16.20, 17.45, 20.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Abj-Cal: 10.25, 17.25(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Cal-Abj: 08.50, 15.50(Mon-Sat) 19.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Abj-Ben: 10.35(Mon-Fri)  
Ben-Abj: 12.00(Tue-Fri)  
Lagos-Ben: 08.00, 11.45, 15.30(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Ben-Lagos: 09.15, 13.35, 17.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Lagos-Cal: 07.00, 14.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Cal-Lagos: 12.00, 19.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Lagos-Enu: 07.30, 14.30, 16.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Enu-Lagos: 09.30, 18.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
Lagos-Jos: 11.30, (Mon-Fri/Sat/sun)  
Jos-Lagos: 13.15(Mon-Fri)  
Kano-Lagos: 15.30(Mon-Fri/Sun)  
Lagos-PHC: 07.20, 07.50, 09.15, 1130, 12.30, 15.10, 15.55, 16.45, 17.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)  
PHC-Lagos: 07.00, 08.30, 09.15, 11.10, 13.40, 14.30, 15.00, 17.05, 17.50(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)

## Food prices soar by 20% -Survey

Prices of food staples have soared amidst Easter celebration by the Christians, *Daily Trust* survey has shown.

The market survey conducted in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, neighboring Nasarawa and Niger States revealed that prices of food staples and other condiments have increased by an almost 20% since the last quarter of 2008.

Economists have painted a gloomy picture for the country's economy in 2009.

At the popular Wuse market in Abuja, a bag of caprice rice which used to sell at N8,200 few months before the Easter has risen to an all time high price of N9,300, while a bag of Stallion rice now goes for N8,600 as against the initial price of N8,000.

A bag of local rice which was N7,300 has now risen to N7,700, while a cartoon of Spaghetti now maintained a price of N1,900 from the previous price of N1,800.

Another family delight during periods of festivities, "beans" has equally skyrocketed to N18,000 from its previous price of N15,000, an almost 10% rise which buyers have to contend with.

A bag of semovita has also increased to N1,400 from the initial price of N1,300; and a bag of red Garri which was N7,500 initially has risen to N7,900.

Speaking on the reason for the increase in the prices of food stuff, Malam Sani Hussein who is a grain dealer said that the climb could be attributed to the short supply of dollar which has consequently caused an increase in cost of importation.

"The increase is not sudden. It has been like this for the last 6 months since the country

By Abubakar Buba

started experiencing the negative effect of the meltdown. Importers have increased their prices in order to break even. We have to increase our own price too", he added.

Another trader, Malam Aliyu Mohammed attributed the increase to the Easter celebration which often comes with increase in virtually all spheres of life.

festivities of Sallah and Christmas has now dropped to N600, while a basket of onion now goes for N500 as against N700.

A kilo of beef which was N700 before has reduced to N600, while a small sized stocked fish now goes for N800 from the previous price of N1,000.

Malam Nura Aliyu, a tomato seller said that the reduction is as a result of the raining season,



The market place

"The Easter is coinciding with the recent rise in cost of transportation due to the artificial fuel scarcity experienced. We have no choice other than to increase our prices too", said Mr. Emeka, another trader in Wuse market.

However, some food items have dropped in price despite the mad rush for profit maximization by sellers.

A medium sized basket of tomatoes which was sold at N900 during the last two

adding, "cost of perishable goods tend to be low during the raining season".

Investigations by *Daily Trust* in the popular Maraba food market in Nasarawa state revealed a rise in prices of food items too.

A small bowl of beans which was N150 before the Easter celebration has increased to N250, while a "mudu" of sugar now sells for N200 as against N220.

The story is the same in Niger State as well with prices of staples and other condiments.

Investigation carried out by *Daily Trust* across major markets in Lagos weekend revealed that prices of food stuffs have been jerked up slightly compared to prices before the Easter festival.

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## Daily Trust food prices survey (April)

S/N	Food stuff	Present price (N)	Previous price (N)
1.	Bag of Rice (Caprice brand)	9,300	8,200
2.	Bag of Rice (Stallion brand)	8,600	8,000
3.	Bag of local Rice	7,700	7,500
4.	Bag of Beans	15,000	18,000
5.	Bag of Semovita	1,400	1,300
6.	Bag of red Garri	7,900	7,500
7.	5 tubers of Yam	2,000	1,800
8.	A cartoon of Spaghetti	1,900	1,850
9.	Turkey vegetable Oil	1,000	1,200
10.	Grand soya Oil (3 litres)	1,300	1,300
11.	1 gallon of red Oil (4 litres)	1,100	900
12.	1 kilo of Meat	700	600
13.	Bag of Maize	6,500	6,000
14.	Frozen chicken	1,000	900
15.	Medium sized basket of Tomatoes	600	700
16.	Medium sized basket of Pepper	500	700
17.	Small basket of Onion	500	700
18.	Maggi seasoning	250	250
19.	1 Crate of Egg	650	600
20.	1 Mudu of Sugar	200	200

# AGRIC BUSINESS

## Yar'adua govt makes foray into agriculture

### \*Targets commercial farmers

By Jibrin Abubakar

Owing to the global economic crisis that is melting down Nigeria's financial sector and the crashing oil prices at the international market, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua government has begun to make a significant foray into the agricultural sector, *Daily Trust* can report.

Agriculture is one of Yar'adua government's seven-point agenda, though oil has hitherto contributed over 90 per cent revenue to the country's coffers.

The budget proposal made conservative assumptions on oil revenues, setting the benchmark oil price at \$45 against \$59 last year and forecasting oil output of 2.29 million barrels per day, down from 2.45 million bpd in the 2008 budget.

The country's revenue shared by the three tiers of government last month had fallen to N250.04 billion and \$1.5 billion from Foreign Excess Crude.

To this end, President Yar'adua is making funds available for commercial farmers.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had last week submitted a comprehensive blueprint for the disbursement of N200 billion loan facility to farmers across the country.

The release of the funds which has been approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) is expected to address issues of food security in Nigeria.

The CBN said that the blueprint had received the nod of NEC and would this week be presented formally to the Federal Executive Council for final approval and onward implementation.

The N200 billion is being provided by the Government through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture as special package to mitigate the effects of

the global financial crisis on the economy.

Soludo said the provision of the funds is part of efforts by the government to fund large-scale agriculture production, including processing and marketing, in the country.

"We have put together the special fund to be used for this particular purpose. And this is for on lending to commercial farmers, large-scale commercial farms that will actually help government to meet the demands of the food requirements of the economy," he said.

He said the prevalent subsistent farming widely practiced by Nigerian farmers would not get the country anywhere near food sufficiency, hence the need to give boost to large-scale farming.

The loan is expected to be accessible only to big time commercial farmers. The CBN said details of the guidelines would be published in the press soon so that prospective beneficiaries could start applying.

Nigerian banks have started introducing agricultural financing into their products. *Daily Trust* can report.

The fund which will be disbursed to selected banks for onward transmission to farmers, accordingly, will help to provide the necessary boost for the agricultural sector, bringing about a diversification of the economy, thereby contributing to the growth and development of the economy.

CBN Acting Director, Banking Supervision Mr. Dominic Eke said the banks are acting only as investors.

Although First Bank, Unity Bank and Union Bank have been over the years financing agricultural projects

in the country, other banks have just begun of recent, *Daily Trust* can report.

In February, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc floated a N50 billion Agric Support Scheme. The scheme is said to be one of the largest private sector initiatives to support agricultural development in Nigeria.

Deputy Managing Director, UBA Plc Mr. Phillips Odouza said the agric support scheme is part of cumulative efforts by the bank to jumpstart the agricultural sector.

While their are speculations that the banks might have been gingered by mouthwatering policy of the CBN, the UBA director said: "Given the decline in petroleum prices and the current global economic challenges, it has become imperative to be-

gin to channel resources into the agric sector because of the multiplier effect it has on the economy."

In the same vein, Fidelity Bank Plc is also stepping up its support for the sector.

To demonstrate her commitment to this sector, Fidelity Bank has recently developed four distinct financing products aimed at addressing the yearning needs of farmers in the country. The products are characterized by single-digit interest rates and good repayment tenures.

Also last year, Alhaji Lamis Dikko, Chief Director of Unity Bank said the bank has committed N1 billion to assist some farmers in Katsina, Niger, Zamfara, Bauchi, Kano and Kaduna and that 95% of the loan has been recovered.

Union Bank which won the CBN award on agriculture last year has also introduced



Minister of Agriculture Sayyidi Abba Ruma

new products as a way of strengthening its channels of credit to customers, including the Civil Service Farming

Scheme. It has also added the patronage of the Trust Fund Model introduced by the CBN.

## ... 'Small scale farmers should benefit too'

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

Farmers have called on the Federal Government to include small scale farmers among the beneficiaries of the N200 billion loan scheme.

The peasant farmers in the rural areas hinge their argument on the reason that these category of farmers have so far proved more committed to agricultural activities than the so called big farmers.

This is coming as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) commences the disbursement of proceeds from the N200 billion Agricultural bond to farmers in the country soon.

Daily Trust investigation which sought to know the views of popular farmers in the state discovered that they all agreed that those who need to get the loans and are seriously committed to farming and agricultural activities are the small or subsistence farmers.

Dr. Ibrahim Waziri, a US trained Political Economist turned farmer that owns over 14 square kilometers of agricultural land said for the loans to have any effect they should be targeted at the peasant farmers in the rural areas.

He said: "I will wish the federal government to spread the money to all small scale farmers in the country because they are the real farmers. Most of the so called large scale farmers, who have access to such loans, are not actually using the loans for farming activities; they will divert the money to other areas. As an Economist I believe that when you take just a million dollars, roughly about N160

Million, and distribute to 10 Microfinance banks in the rural areas and dedicate that amount to serious farmers I think at the end of the day the volume of production will be higher. For example, if you give N50, 000 to the rural farmer through a microfinance bank in his locality you are sure of three things: full supervision, recovery and high production. There will be a multiplier effect of a marginal agricultural

output. The higher the multiplier effect, the higher the standards of living of the people."

He said this was because it is this category of farmers that have really produced what Nigerians consume over the years. He advised state governments to focus on making agricultural inputs readily available to farmers to ensure that there is increase in production and therefore food security in the country.

"My advice to state governments is that they should

focus more on inputs such as combined harvesters, tractors with full implements, boom sprayers, insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers. If state governments focus on these alone there will be a marginal increase in output. In Bauchi State, for instance, we don't have a single combined harvester for people to hire. No boom sprayer. No land clearing machines like bull dozers, etc. if I have a subsidized bull dozer I will rather use it than manual labor. We also don't have correct seedlings of anything."

## ... It's meaningless without small farmers -AFAN

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

The N200 billion is meaningless without small famers, Alhaji Balarabe Doma, Bauchi State chairman of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) has said.

He said it would only benefit the North if the small scale subsistence farmers have access to the loan, adding that there are no big farmers in the North.

Alhaji Balarabe Doma, aged 77 was a 1950 graduate of Middle school and a United Africa Company UAC retiree who owns a 5 square kilometer ranch along Maiduguri in Bauchi as well as a farmer of crops.

He said: "We don't have large scale farmers in the North. What we have are subsistence farmers and they have always been our strength. If there is any assistance it should go to them through the associations and microfinance banks. As far

as I know a tractor is counter productive to the rural peasant farmer because it removes the fertile top soil and leaves him with the one below that is less fertile. Give the small time farmer enough money to buy two bulls and a plough and you have done half of his work for him, the other half is giving him access to other inputs such as herbicides and fertilizers."

Alhaji Doma, who praised the Sasakawa Global 2000 programme for its effective introduction of new farming techniques and describing it as the best that has ever happened to the Nigerian farmer, advised that any loan should be targeted to the small scale farmer and the money made available to them by the Microfinance banks through their associations. He accused

big banks of too much bureaucracy saying in dealing with rural farmers the loans should be made less cumbersome.

Also speaking in the same vein another renowned farmer in the state, Alhaji Ahmadu Tillaye, while welcoming the idea advised that the loans should be given to small scale and committed farmers through associations that know those who are really into serious farming.

"I heard about the loan on radio but I am skeptical about its seriousness. These kind of loans are being advanced but those who need them don't really benefit. The process of obtaining the loans is usually too cumbersome for the rural farmer. I think farmers' associations should be used because they are the ones who really know who deserved the loans and how to relate with the farmers."

## Biotechnology can boost agric in Nigeria - Dr. Zaku

By Abubakar Buba

The task of ensuring that Nigeria's economy becomes virile in the face of the global financial meltdown requires the development of new technologies that have the capability of ensuring increased food production, Minister of science and technology Dr. Alhassan Bako Zaku has said.

He said that it is paramount that Nigeria begins to explore new avenues for bringing about increased revenue generation through less reliance on imported technologies.

Dr. Zaku who was speaking at the launching of the Open Agricultural Biotechnology in Nigeria (OFAB) said that biotechnology offers the country the opportunity of increased productivity and wealth creation "biotechnology products have achieved sales in excess of \$500 billion per year and a growth rate of 24% since the turn of the century."

He said that the forum will create a platform for the discussion of issues pertaining Agricultural biotechnology and its gain to the Nigerian society.

In her remark, minister of information and communication, Professor Dora Akunyili said that biotechnology portends great potentials for accelerated industrial growth, adding "food security will lead to economic growth"

She said: "prudent application of resources to vital sectors of the economy such as agricultural biotechnology is pivotal to boosting agriculture production and accelerating the development process in other spheres".

# AGRIC BUSINESS

## N200bn loan: Large scale famers divert agric fund - Dr. Waziri

**What will you say are the problems of farmers in Nigeria?**

Well, I will speak from the point of view of the farmers themselves. They don't have access to farm inputs. I discovered that people are reluctant to go into farming because they can not easily get access to farm inputs. As of this moment there are about 30 people in my farms clearing manually. I should be using machines. I shouldn't be engaging such labor. The more machinery you use on your farm the more the output and less risk. Because of the unreliability of our people the risk is with the labor because if you don't have good supervision you will loose at the end of the day. There is also the issue of inconsistent rainfall. Last year I planted rice and was expecting about 320 bags but what I got was just 32 bags because the rains were not enough.

**What impact have you made in your society through your engagement in agriculture, generally?**

Lots of people admire me because they see somebody coming from the computer industry to the farm. I have encouraged a lot of people to engage in farming especially retired civil servants.

**There is this talk that the Central Bank of Nigeria is making available N200 billion credit facility**

*Dr. Ibrahim Waziri is one of the big farmers in Bauchi State. In this interview, the Political Economist cum farmer says subsistence farmers are the life wire of the country's agricultural sector. Excerpts:*

**From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi**

**to farmers. How do you think this fund should be disbursed and to whom?**

I will wish the federal government spread the money to all small scale farmers in the country because they are the real farmers. Most of the so called large scale farmers, who have access to such loans, are not actually using the loans for farming activities; they divert the money to other areas. As an Economist I believe that when you take just a million dollars, roughly about N160 Million, and distribute to 10 Microfinance banks in the rural areas and dedicate that amount to serious farmers I think at the end of the day the volume of production will be higher. For example, if you give N50, 000 to the rural farmer through a microfinance bank in his locality you are sure of three things: full supervision, recovery and high production. There will be a multiplier effect of a marginal agricultural output. The higher the multiplier effect, through agricultural activities, the higher the standards of living of the people.

**Do you have confidence on CBN when it comes to agriculture?**



**Dr. Ibrahim Waziri**

I think the CBN is serious and wants to see to the real development of this sector, the problem is how to do it. I also believe that there are technocrats in such institutions who are willing but most don't know the practical things happening on the ground.

**What is your assessment of government's policy on agriculture in the country?**

I did my Masters dissertation on Nigeria's agricultural policy from the Shagari era to Buhari regime.

I discovered that there is both consistency and inconsistency in the policy. The consistency is that each regime identified the importance of agriculture to the socio-economic well being of the country. The inconsistency is that each regime had a different approach to the policy. Because each regime came up with a different approach, and even now that is what obtains, we ended up not going anywhere.

**Can state governments do better?**

My advice to state governments is that they should focus more on inputs such as combined harvesters, tractors with full implements, boom sprayers, insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers. If state governments focus on these alone there will be a marginal increase in output. In Bauchi State, for instance, we don't have a single combined harvester for people to hire. No boom sprayer. No land clearing machines like bull dozers, etc. if I have a subsidized bull dozer I will rather use it than manual labor. We also don't have correct seedlings of anything.

**In spite of the short comings what will be your advice to Nigerians with regards to agriculture?**

Nigerians should go back to farm. It is from these small farming activities that we would get the bulk of our production. If every one will engage in farming, no matter how small, Nigeria will be the better for it and we will have more and cheaper agricultural commodities. There will really be food security.

**Can you briefly tell us about yourself?**

I was born in Ningi in Bauchi State in 1954. I had my Primary education at the Ningi Central Primary School. I had my secondary school education at the then Kano Commercial College between 1973 and 1975. I spent only three years in the secondary school. From there I went to Northern Oklahoma College in the USA where I obtained an Associate Degree in Computer Data Processing and Accounting in 1979. I later went to Oklahoma State University for my second degree in Economics and graduated in 1983. I was also at the Atlanta University, Georgia in the USA where I obtained a Masters Degree in Economic Development

and another Masters Degree in Urban and Rural Economics and graduated in 1985. I also had my Doctorate degrees at the same University in Political Economy, International Affairs, Comparative Politics and African Political Economy from where I graduated in 1989. I had worked in the USA as an Account Manager with Atlanta International Airport before coming back to Nigeria in 1990. I introduced the first indigenous Computer Company in Northern Nigeria called High Tech Computers. I went into farming in the early 1990s and now own about 14 Squares Km of agricultural land across Bauchi.

**With such an impressive academic feat one will be tempted to ask why you chose to go into farming?**

In my stay in the USA, I realized that for people to develop and develop organically, meaning get real development, they must involve themselves in agriculture and agriculture related activities such as small and medium scale processing industries. Agriculture has nothing to do with one's level of education. Any one can go into agriculture because that is where real development is. I had observed that in the USA one farmer can own up to 20 Square Miles of agricultural land and utilizing it effectively. I am a full time farmer now and I have no regrets. I enjoy what I am doing because I know it is real.

**What do you farm?**

I farm Maize, Guinea Corn, Rice, Soya beans and am now experimenting on planting Sesame. I do not farm for commercial purposes. Whatever I harvest I give to people in the society who have no means and keep the rest for my own consumption.

***Nigerians should go back to farm. It is from these small farming activities that we would get the bulk of our production. If every one will engage in farming, no matter how small, Nigeria will be the better for it and we will have more and cheaper agricultural commodities. There will really be food security.***

## STAR FEATURE

## The story

**E**aster is the annual festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the principal feast of the Christian year. It is celebrated on a Sunday on varying dates between March 22 and April 25 and is therefore called a movable feast. The dates of several other ecclesiastical festivals, extending over a period between Septuagesima Sunday (the ninth Sunday before Easter) and the first Sunday of Advent, are fixed in relation to the date of Easter.

Connected with the observance of Easter are the 40-day penitential season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding at midnight on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday; Holy Week, commencing on Palm Sunday, including Good Friday, the day of the crucifixion, and terminating with Holy Saturday; and the Octave of Easter, extending from Easter Sunday through the following Sunday. During the Octave of Easter in early Christian times, the newly baptized wore white garments, white being the liturgical color of Easter and signifying light, purity, and joy.

The Christian festival of Easter probably embodies a number of converging traditions; most scholars emphasize the original relation of Easter to the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach, from which is derived Pasch, another name for Easter. The early Christians, many of whom were of Jewish origin, were brought up in the Hebrew tradition and regarded Easter as a new feature of the Passover festival, a commemoration of the advent of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets.

Easter, which celebrates Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, is Christianity's most important holiday. It has been called a moveable feast because it doesn't fall on a set date every year, as most holidays do. Instead, Christian churches in the West celebrate Easter on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox on March 21. Therefore, Easter is observed anywhere between March 22 and April 25 every year. Orthodox Christians use the Julian calendar to calculate when Easter will occur and typically celebrate the holiday a week or two after the Western churches, which follow the Gregorian calendar.

The exact origins of this religious feast day's name are unknown. Some sources claim the word Easter is derived from Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility. Other accounts trace Easter to the Latin term hebdomada alba, or white week, an ancient reference to Easter week and the white clothing donned by people who were baptized during that time. Through a translation error, the term later appeared as esostarum in Old High German, which eventually became Easter in English. In Spanish, Easter is known as Pascua; in French, Paques. These words are derived from the Greek and Latin Pascha or Pasch, for Passover. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection occurred after he went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover (or Pesach in Hebrew), the Jewish festival commemorating the ancient Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt. Pascha eventually came to mean Easter.

Easter is really an entire season of the Christian church year, as opposed to a single-day observance. Lent, the 40-day period leading up to Easter Sunday, is a time of reflection and penance and represents the 40 days that Jesus spent alone in the wilderness before starting his ministry, a time in which Christians believe he survived various temptations by the devil. The day before Lent, known as Fat Tuesday, is a last hurrah of food and fun before the fasting begins. The week preceding Easter is called Holy Week and includes Maundy Thursday, which commemorates Jesus' last supper with his disciples; Good Friday, which honors the day of his crucifixion; and Holy Saturday, which focuses on the transition between the crucifixion and resurrection. The 50-day period following Easter Sunday is called Eastertide and includes a celebration of Jesus' ascension into heaven.

In addition to Easter's religious significance, it also has a commercial side, as evidenced by the mounds of jelly beans and marshmallow chicks that appear in stores each spring. As with Christmas, over the centuries various folk customs and pagan traditions, including Easter eggs, bunnies, baskets and candy, have become a standard part of this holy holiday.

#### Easter in the Early Church

According to the New Testament, Christ was crucified on the eve of Passover and shortly afterward rose from the dead. In consequence, the Easter festival commemorated Christ's resurrection. In time, a serious difference over the date of the Easter festival arose among Christians. Those of Jewish origin

*Yesterday was Easter, but the Christian world which calls today Easter Monday, remains in Easter mood.*



The symbol of Christ on the Cross

celebrated the resurrection immediately following the Passover festival, which, according to their Babylonian lunar calendar, fell on the evening of the full moon (the 14th day in the month of Nisan, the first month of the year); by their reckoning, Easter, from year to year, fell on different days of the week.

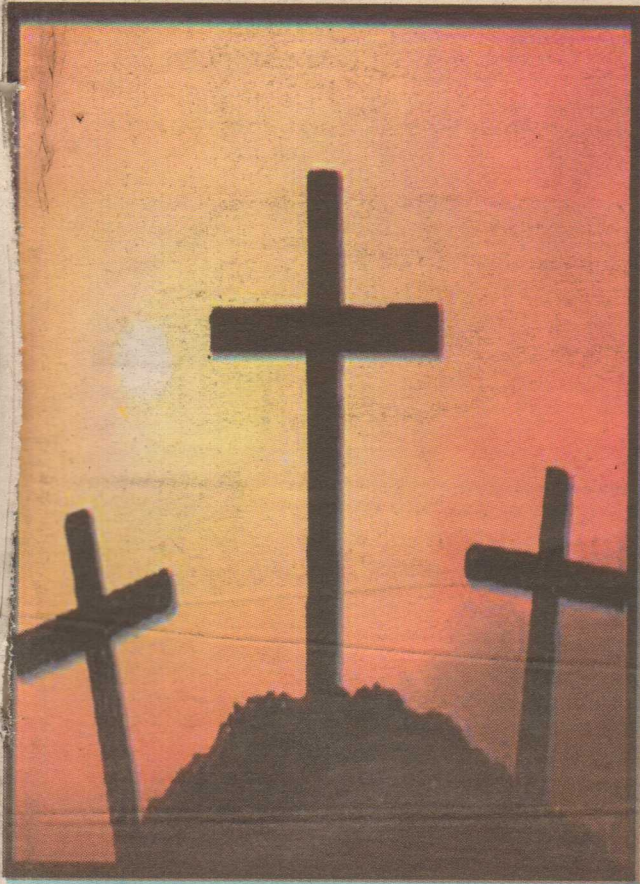
Christians of Gentile origin, however, wished to commemorate the resurrection on the first day of the week, Sunday; by their method, Easter occurred on the same day of the week, but from year to year it fell on different dates. An important historical result of the difference in reckoning the date of Easter was that the Christian churches in the East, which were closer to the birthplace of the new religion and in which old traditions were strong, observed Easter according to the date of the Passover festival. The churches of the West, descendants of Greco-Roman civilization, celebrated Easter on a Sunday.

#### Dating of Easter

Constantine I, Roman emperor, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox; and that if the full moon should occur on a Sunday and thereby coincide with the Passover festival, Easter should be commemorated on the Sunday following. Coincidence of the feasts of Easter and Passover was thus avoided.

The Council of Nicaea also decided that the calendar date of Easter was to be calculated at Alexandria, then the principal astronomical center of the world. The accurate determination of the date, however, proved an impossible task in view of the limited knowledge of the 4th-century world. The principal astronomical problem involved was the discrepancy, called the *epact*, between

# of Easter



the solar year and the lunar year. The chief calendric problem was a gradually increasing discrepancy between the true astronomical year and the Julian calendar then in use.

Ways of fixing the date of the feast tried by the church proved unsatisfactory, and Easter was celebrated on different dates in different parts of the world. In 387, for example, the dates of Easter in France and Egypt were 35 days apart. About 465, the church adopted a system of calculation proposed by the astronomer Victorinus (fl. 5th cent.), who had been commissioned by Pope Hilarius (r. 461-68) to reform the calendar and fix the date of Easter. Elements of his method are still in use. Refusal of the British and Celtic Christian churches to adopt the proposed changes led to a bitter dispute between them and Rome in the 7th century.

Reform of the Julian calendar in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII, through adoption of the Gregorian calendar, eliminated much of the difficulty in fixing the date of Easter and in arranging the ecclesiastical year; since 1752, when the Gregorian calendar was also adopted in Great Britain and Ireland, Easter has been celebrated on the same day in the Western part of the Christian world. The Eastern churches, however, which did not adopt the Gregorian calendar, commemorate Easter on a Sunday either preceding or following the date observed in the West. Occasionally the dates coincide; the most recent times were in 1865 and 1963.

Because the Easter holiday affects a varied number of secular affairs in many countries, it has long been urged as a matter of convenience that the movable dates of the festival be either narrowed in range or replaced by a fixed date in the manner of Christmas. In 1923 the problem was referred to the Holy See, which has found no canonical objection to the proposed reform. In 1928 the British Parliament enacted a measure allowing the Church of England to commemorate Easter on the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. Despite these steps toward reform, Easter continues to be a movable feast.

### Easter Symbols

The Bible makes no mention of a long-eared, short-tailed creature who delivers decorated eggs to well-behaved children on Easter Sunday; nevertheless, the Easter bunny has become a prominent symbol of Christianity's most important holiday. The exact origins of this mythical mammal are unclear, but rabbits, known to be prolific procreators, are an ancient symbol of fertility and new life. According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who

settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs. Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left out carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry from all his hopping.

### Easter Eggs

Easter is a religious holiday, but some of its customs, such as Easter eggs, are likely linked to pagan traditions. The egg, an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection. Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century, according to some sources. One explanation for this custom is that eggs were formerly a forbidden food during the Lenten season, so people would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

Easter egg hunts and egg rolling are two popular egg-related traditions. In the U.S., the White House Easter Egg Roll, a race in which children push decorated, hard-boiled eggs across the White House lawn, is an annual event held the Monday after Easter. The first official White House egg roll occurred in 1878, when Rutherford B. Hayes was president. The event has no religious significance, although some people have considered egg rolling symbolic of the stone blocking Jesus' tomb being rolled away, leading to his resurrection.

### Easter Candy

Easter is the second best-selling candy holiday in America, after Halloween. Among the most popular sweet treats associated with this day are chocolate eggs, which date back to early 19th century Europe. Eggs have long been associated with Easter as a symbol of new life and Jesus' resurrection. Another egg-shaped candy, the jelly bean, became associated with Easter in the 1930s (although the jelly bean's origins reportedly date all the way back to a Biblical-era concoction called a Turkish Delight). According to the National Confectioners Association, over 16 billion jelly beans are made in the U.S. each year for Easter, enough to fill a giant egg measuring 89 feet high and 60 feet wide. For the past decade, the top-selling non-chocolate Easter candy has been the marshmallow Peep, a sugary, pastel-colored confection. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania-based candy manufacturer Just Born (founded by Russian immigrant Sam Born in 1923) began selling Peeps in the 1950s. The original Peeps were handmade,



### Easter Eggs

marshmallow-flavored yellow chicks, but other shapes and flavors were later introduced, including chocolate mousse bunnies.

### Easter Parade

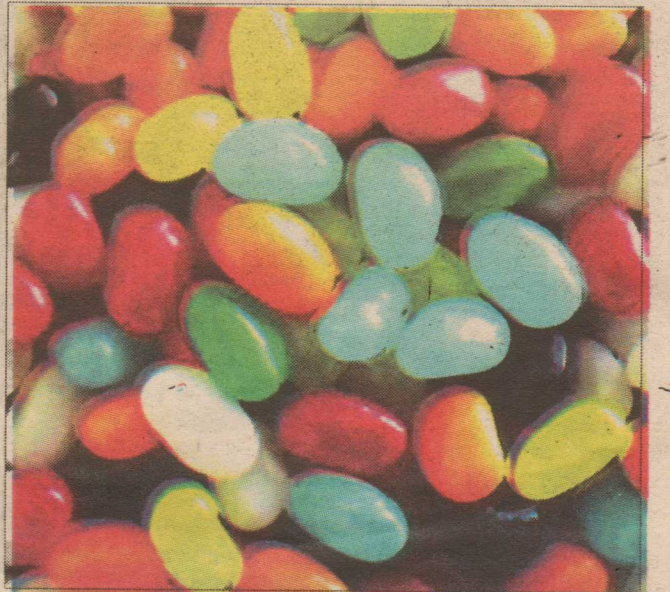
In New York City, the Easter Parade tradition dates back to the mid-1800s, when the upper crust of society would attend Easter services at various Fifth Avenue churches then stroll outside afterward, showing off their new spring outfits and hats. Average citizens started showing up along Fifth Avenue to check out the action. The tradition reached its peak by the mid-20th century, and in 1948, the popular film *Easter Parade* was released, starring Fred Astaire and Judy Garland and featuring the music of Irving Berlin. The title song includes the lyrics: "In your Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it/You'll be the grandest lady in the Easter parade."

The Easter Parade tradition lives on in Manhattan, with Fifth Avenue from 49th Street to 57th Street being shut down during the day to traffic. Participants often sport elaborately decorated bonnets and hats. The event has no religious significance, but sources note that Easter processions have been a part of Christianity since its earliest days. Today, other cities across America also have their own parades.

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Easter Bunny



Easter Candy

# BUSINESS TRUST

## Poverty: Adamawa youth revert to mortar, pestle

As the economic recession continued to bite, some youths in Adamawa particularly in Yola the State Capital were prompted to revert to the old trade of Mortar and pestle carving with the view to fighting poverty.

Mortar and pestle are widely used by people especially in the rural communities to grind pepper, corn, ingredients and also to pound yams for human consumption.

In Adamawa, trees use for carving of Mortar and Pestles are found in the forests near the villages of Boggare, Mayo-Inne, Dou Labi and Wuro Kilbaji areas of Yola South and Fufore respectively.

In an interview, the Chairman Mortar and pestle carvers Association, Yola South, Mallam Yakubu Musa narrated his experience in this trade and was optimistic that the trade is not for lazy people.

He described mortar and pestle as monumental because of its exotic nature which uses the very hard wood as raw material.

Malam Yakubu Musa said, "Only hard trees such as Kirya known as Adenium Obesun, botanically known as Afzelia Africana which grows to 100 feet and 12 feet in girth and wide spread in the forests of

Boggare and Mayo-Inne and Murke villages in the state could be used in

From Ibrahim Muhammad, Yola

carving mortars and pestles".

The raw materials, Daily Trust learnt are sometimes protected as farm trees and may have been raised in the forest in some localities of Mayo-inne.

Abdullahi Habu a mortar and pestle carver at Sangere village said, "I started this job barely one year ago and I got married and feed my family with this craft".

The 22 year-old Habu confirmed that, "though the work is not easy, but due to the economic hardship and lack of job, I resolved to this trade because it can reduce poverty even though it is tedious".

According to him, he is into this trade to earn a living and mortar and pestle carving happens to be his source of livelihood and he is happy with it.

He said on a daily basis they (carvers) suffer setbacks due to high revenue demands by the environment Ministry officials who charge them N1,000 each as monthly dues for using the forest. Others problems being encountered by the carvers include lack of modern working materials that will boost and modernized their trade, lack of assistance or support from the government and micro finance agencies for the pur-



Youth at work

pose of improving their capacities to carve products to attract more market.

Also corroborating Bello Iliyasu, 33 years old from Ganjarma village in Yobe State and Muhammad Bashir from Iware in Taraba State said urmi and Tabarya as their products are popularly known in the northern parlance "if not for the economic hardship we are mak-

ing brisk business".

They explained that mortar and pestle carved of kiriya and Kawo have the thickest and hardest girth that last up to 20 - 30 years 5 - 15 years, depending on the frequency of use and maintenance.

Investigations have shown that, mortar and pestle is being used for over 2,000 years in Africa and

Caribbean countries and in Nigeria, it has also been used in medicinal and spiritual works.

Some of the carvers were said to have lose their power and strength as a result of cutting down the large, hard trees used as raw materials.

One Muhammad Bashir, a carver at Sangere village of Yola South said that, "daily we make profit of N2, 500 in the business as we sell up to five or even 15 mortars and pestles, depending on the market".

He noted that they produce five mortars and pestles from one trunk thereby making more profit, saying that, daily were go to about 35Klms to get the raw materials and in two days we start carving the mortars and pestles".

"We do carve mortars of different size i.e. small, medium and big sizes with different prices accordingly", he added.

Many craftsmen carving mortar earn their living paying school fees for their children and wards as well as solving various needs for their daily needs.

Marketing the products also attract people attention especially at the rural areas where majority of the customers dwells. The price of mortar starts from N700 per a small size, N1,000 for a medium size and

N1,500 for a large size. As according to Bello Iliyasu "Weekly, we earn up to N10,5000 while monthly a person can make N42,000 it is really a profitable job".

To this end, he called on the government to assist them with soft loans and other working tools, "if government will help us with loan facilities and reduce taxation, ease our sufferings and give us shops

were we can exhibit our products in the urban areas, we can reduce unemployment in our own way and fight poverty".

Tools use for carving mortars and pestles include Gatari (axe), Gizago for smoothing mortars; mafaifaya for opening a hole on the stemp of a tree to form mortars structure and masirfa among others, for digging a stem or raw material.



Man poses before mortars and pestles

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# BUSINESS TRUST

## Hajj 2009 and global economic crisis

That the global economic crisis will affect the 2009 Hajj operation is no news. What is perhaps new are the measures being put in place by the operators to forestall the spiralling economic tide from overflowing into the shore of spirituality. Hence, operators and intending pilgrims may have to brace up, commentators say.

Intending pilgrims who invested in shares for the sole purpose of growing their wealth in preparation for the 2009 Hajj are already counting their losses.

Although the Hajj fares have not been announced by the country's Hajj authorities, the current fall in the value of naira makes it easier, however, to predict. This is also against the backdrop of the money paid by the pilgrims last year.

It would be recalled that last year's pilgrims paid a minimum of N417,832.92. Pilgrims also paid a maximum Hajj fees of N506,460.42 and a medium payment of N447,375.42 for the Northern part of the country.

These charges, at N116 exchange rate, the dollar equivalents therefore are: Minimum-\$3,603.44, medium-\$3862.06, while maximum was \$4370.68.

On the other hand, pilgrims from South paid the minimum N423,741.42, medium N453,283.92 and maximum N512,368.92.

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

While in Saudi Arabia, the minimum Basic Travel Allowance BTA was \$750; medium \$1,000 while the maximum was \$1,500" per pilgrim. Also in converting this amount into naira last year, at the rate of N116 per dollar, the amount were N87,000 for the minimum of BTA, medium was N116,000, while the maximum was N174,000.

Even at this, the pilgrims were complaining that the fare was on the high side. If the Hajj authorities therefore were to retain the dollar equivalent of what was paid last year by the pilgrims, indications are that the fare may be in the region of a minimum of N648,540 which is equal to \$3,603; while for Medium N695,160 equals \$3,862, and the maximum could be N786,600 which is equivalent of \$4,370.

But the good news is that the prices of oil is lower compared to last year's July when its reached an all time high of \$147 a barrel, by implication the aviation fuel will be lower in relation to last year's. The prices of oil at the international market are within the range of \$50 a drum. Hence, the hajj fares this year may not go up as speculated in some quarters. This is the argument of the hajj authorities.

There may also be a succour coming the way of



NAHCON chairman Malam Muhammad Bello

the intending pilgrims in terms of accommodation in Saudi Arabia owing to the fall in the value of dollar across the world. This is another factor that determines the hajj fares.

Hence, hajj authorities at all levels are optimistic that the global economic woes may not affect the performance of hajj this year.

A source in the hajj commission told Daily Trust that foreign airlines would participate in this year's hajj operation, which would give room for competition and

better options that would favour the pilgrims.

The Air Carriers, on their part share the same idea that despite the depreciation in

the value of naira, the fall in the prices of oil which may lead to the reduction in the price of aviation fuel can

help in bringing down the hajj fares, as was envisaged.

An accountant with one of the state pilgrims welfare board expressed said the only way out is for the government to intervene by directing the Central Bank to sell dollar equivalent to the hajj authority at a reasonable price. Without this, he said the global credit crisis would, without doubt affect the operation of the 2009 hajj exercise.

An intending pilgrim Muhammad H. Abubakar said there is need for government to intervene in order to cushion the financial crisis, harping that the hajj is a spiritual journey that would benefit Nigeria as a country.

He said most countries have already put in place plans to mitigate the effect of the financial meltdown on the spiritual trip.

He urged President Yar'adua and other state governors to subsidise hajj for Nigerian Pilgrims because of the recession.

However, it remains to be seen if the global economic crisis would affect the 2009 hajj operation. Already commentators say there is no assurances coming from the hajj authorities.

### Britain: Cut in VAT 'boosts retail sales'

The government's much-criticised cut in VAT is working and has led to a big boost in consumer spending, according to a leading economics consultancy.

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) says that the cut, which took effect on 1 December 2008, has led to £2.1bn of extra sales.

The centre says the growth in retail spending is "remarkable".

It argues that the temporary cut of 2.5%, which expires in January 2010, should be extended for six months.

"Annual growth in retail sales accelerated from 1.6% in November 2008 to 2.6% in December. Sales growth accelerated further in January to 3.2%, and registered a marginal decline in February to 3%," it added.

This equates to a boost in retailers' turnover of

£2.1bn, the centre calculated.

"The rise in retail growth is even more remarkable given the economic context over this period," it argued.

The CEBR estimates that retail sales for the year are likely to be £8-9bn higher that they would have been without the cut.

It believes that raising VAT again in January 2010, as planned, "threatens to cause a consumer downturn and choke the fragile economic recovery".

"The chancellor should extend the duration of the cut to July 2010, when the economy will be stronger."

The boost in sales has not been due to discounts, the centre said. Annual growth in the value of sales, which also measures price changes, has remained steady since the cut was introduced, it argued.

The government's

policy of cutting VAT has been widely criticised both at home and abroad.

Some opponents have argued that the cut is too small to make any difference to consumers' spending habits during the recession.

Others have argued that the lost revenue to the state is too great a price to pay at a time when government debt is spiralling.

A poll conducted by the Federation of Small Businesses in February this year found that 97% of firms polled said the VAT cut had had "no impact at all."

The government introduced the 2.5% cut in VAT as part of a package of measures to boost economic activity during the economic downturn.

The CEBR had been a vocal proponent of a cut in VAT to boost consumer spending, calling on the chancellor to cut VAT by 5% towards the end of last year. BBC.

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# BUSINESS TRUST

## Kaduna identifies 11 hydropower locations

In an effort to resuscitate the comatose textiles industries in the state, Kaduna State government has disclosed its plan to complement the electricity supply by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), saying it has identified 11 locations where hydro-power can be generated in addition to a fuel power plants that will generate 100 mega watts (mw) electricity which is already in the pipeline.

According to the state governor, Mohammed Namadi Sambo, the first phase of the programme will soon commenced as a detailed design for three hydro-electricity projects to be embarked upon has reached an advanced stage.

The governor who spoke at the Tuk-Ham annual cul-

From Murjanatu  
Mohammed Abba, Kaduna

tural festival over the weekend in Kwoi, area of Jaba local government of the state, explained that this is part of the federal government's power project initiative in the state, in which already a 132 sub-station has been scheduled from Jos to Kafachan in order to boost power supply in the area.

Sambo explained, "Similarly by this week, we shall sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Gurara management agency of the federal ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Kaduna State government on the evacuation of the 34 Mega Watts (MW) of electricity which the federal government graciously gave

us". He added that the electricity would be evacuated and conveyed to the Kudenda Industrial Area of which the transmission cost will be borne 50-50 by both the state and the federal government and that the 132 sub-station cost

will be borne entirely by the state.

"To guarantee the immediate take off of the scheme at Gurara, a budgetary provision of N2 billion as our counterpart funding of the first phase of the programme has been made. In all, the project is ex-

pected to gulp the sum of N50 billion from the sum of N50 billion from the completion with the active participation of the federal government and the private sector", he stated.

Speaking earlier in his welcome address, the chairman of Jaba local government, Barris-

ter Musa Y. Suleiman commended the governor for the completion of the rural electrification project in his domain as well as the completion of the road linking Jaban Kogo in Kachia Local government and Daddu road in Jaba local government areas

## Accident: Tanker drivers, FRSC disagree

Petroleum Tanker Drivers (PTD), an appendage of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) has faulted the statement credited to the Corp Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) that 5,157 people were killed in tanker accident in the last three years.

The Union has also asked FRSC to provide details to justify the claim that over 5,000 people were killed by tanker drivers and another 13,251 injured due to recklessness of tanker drivers.

National Secretary of PFD, Comrade Dayyabu Garba said that causes of road accident in Nigeria should not be blamed on tanker drivers who according to him "drive day and night to lubricate the nation's economy".

He added that it is disheartening that FRSC choose to blame tanker drivers for the rising rate of accidents in Nigeria instead of challenging government to be more alive to its responsibilities.

By Abubakar Buba

In a statement, Comrade Garba also picked hole in the position of FRSC on the issue of parks, adding, "where are the locations designated as illegal or legal parks? Except the commission wants tanker drivers to drive all the way from Lagos to Maiduguri non-stop, which is more herculean and dangerous".

Comrade Garba said that PTD is raising an appeal fund for the purchase of Towing vans to be stationed along major highways as part of measures to reduce carnage on the nation's roads.

He however commended the effort of FRSC in enlightening motorists on the dangers of violating road safety rules and regulations especially as the Easter celebration draws nearer.

The National Secretary pledged the support and commitment of his members in ensuring the prevention of accidents in Nigeria.

## Afribank wins CBN award

The Ibadan Region of Afribank Nigeria Plc has won the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) "Best Clearing Banks Award" of Ibadan Bankers Clearing House.

In a letter of congratulation sent to the Management of Afribank by the Branch Controller, CBN, Ibadan and Chairman, Ibadan Bankers Clearing House Committee, Mr. Adebayo B. G. said "I congratulate your Bank on your outstanding performance during the year 2008 and having been adjudged 1st in the clearing Bank's Award".

He added "your Bank recorded the least errors in its notepad as incidented in the

From Kayode Ekundayo,  
Lagos

clearing house during the period".

Mr. Azeem Adewale, Afribank staff from Ibadan Region, who represented the Bank at the event said the Afribank was happy that the apex Bank appreciated its efforts in Ibadan Region in doing the right thing which was publicly acknowledged by the Award.

He assured that the Region and the Bank would work hard to sustain the record and always live to the expectation of its stakeholders.

Afribank in a statement said the bank has succeeded



Winner of a brand new BMW 3 Series in the Glo Win & Rule promo, Mrs Olufunke Ayantuga, receiving the keys from Glo Ambassador, Ekwe, recently in Lagos.

## CBN to licence one more ATM consortium

...Orders banks to limit ATMs within their premises

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said it would soon license one more Automated Teller Machine Consortium (ATMC) in a bid to ease distribution of ATM services nationwide.

Beside, the apex body also ordered the banks to restrict installation of ATMs to their

From Kayode Ekundayo,  
Lagos

premises and not in public places.

Currently, there is only one licensed ATMC in the country. But the bank, in a memo signed by its director, Banking operation, James Olekah said the licencing of additional

one would further enhance payment infrastructural facilities in the nation's banking industry as well as effectively responding to the rising demand for ATM services by the public

"CBN has decided commence soon, the process of licensing an additional ATM consortium. This will bring the

total number of ATM consortia in the economy to two. The two consortia shall solely responsible for the deployment of ATMs in public places in line with the bank's policy and best practices", CBN said

CBN expressed with concern that banks are competing with the ATMC in deployment of ATMs in public places

"A worrisome trend is the number of ATMs at the airports hotel lobbies, which if unchecked, would soon congest these public places"

With the development CBN directed that banks should restrict the deployment of ATMs to their premises.

The apex bank also advised the banks to withdraw all existing ATMs in public places to their premises on or before June 30, 2009

"It would be recalled that one of the policies that guiding the operations of ATM consortium is that the ATMC shall have the sole mandate to deploy ATMs at public places while the banks only deploy only within their premises", the bank said

CBN though expressed satisfaction on the growth of adoption of ATMs by Nigerians as one of the channels of e-payment, it said is committed to ensuring that the deployment and management of ATMs within the economy.

It has been observed that most banks have there ATMs in hotels, hospitals as well with microfinance banks far from their premises.

## 'Economic meltdown is opportunity for Nigerian mining sector'

The Minister of Mines and Steel Development Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke has ex-

By Abdulkadir Badsha  
Mukhtar

pressed optimism that with the present economic meltdown, the appropriate time has come for Nigeria to develop a strategic framework and take advantage of what she called "the lull in commodity prices."

Speaking during a meeting with a delegation from the Nigerian Investment Promotion Council (NIPC), led by its Executive Secretary, Engr. Mustapha Bello, the Minister said the global meltdown has ensured that commodity markets all over the world are down; noting that the time has come for Nigeria to make an entry into the market before the prices begin an upward swing.

The Minister, who noted that Nigeria is blessed with extensive deposits of mineral wealth but do not compete favourably with her

in implementing a reliable banking application technology that enables its operations to run seamlessly. The re-engineering efforts of the Bank has positioned the Bank to operate with zero error tolerance while the Bank's staff are exposed to continuous training impacting greatly on its service delivery processes.

The Bank has leveraged on this to drive its businesses, wide product offering and its consistent delivery on aid brand promise to make customers happy with excellent banking services.

Since banking industry consolidation, Afribank has witness rapid growth and transformation in all its operations.

# INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

## Zimbabwe dollar 'not back soon'

Zimbabwe's national currency will remain suspended for at least a year following the legalisation of foreign currencies, officials say.

"There was nothing to support the value of the Zimbabwean dollar," Economic Planning Minister Elton Mangoma said.

Since January use of foreign currency has been allowed, to combat hyper-inflation that had left even top-value Zimbabwe dollar notes worthless.

Consumer prices are cur-

rently falling by 3% month-on-month, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) said using figures collated in March. In February, prices fell by 3.1% according to the CSO.

The power-sharing government led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai has prioritised rebuilding the devastated Zimbabwe economy since taking office in February.

State-controlled Sunday Mail newspaper said the government had decided the Zimbabwe dollar should be brought back only when in-

dustrial output returns to about 60% capacity from the current average of 20%.

Critics of veteran leader Robert Mugabe blame him for mismanaging the economic affairs of the country and for the collapse of its water, sanitation and health systems.

An outbreak of cholera last August has killed about 4,000 people, though the World Health Organisation says the peak of the outbreak may have been passed now.

The international community has been helping

Zimbabwe cope with its cholera epidemic, but most devel-

opment aid is being withheld until signs of effective power

sharing are deemed apparent. BBC.



Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe

## Obama sees 'hope' for US economy

US President Barack Obama has said he sees "glimmers of hope" in the economy, but warned that the system remained under "severe strain".

Speaking after a meeting with his top economic advisers, he said there was still "a lot of work to do".

Mr Obama promised more action on the economy in the coming weeks.

He said he and his team had discussed the stability of the financial system, the housing market and plans to help banks clear their books of bad assets.

Mr Obama was speaking after a meeting at the White House with top strategists including Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and

Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke.

He told journalists afterwards: "We're starting to see progress."

"If we stick with it, if we don't flinch in the face of some difficulties, then I feel absolutely convinced that we are going to get this economy back on track."

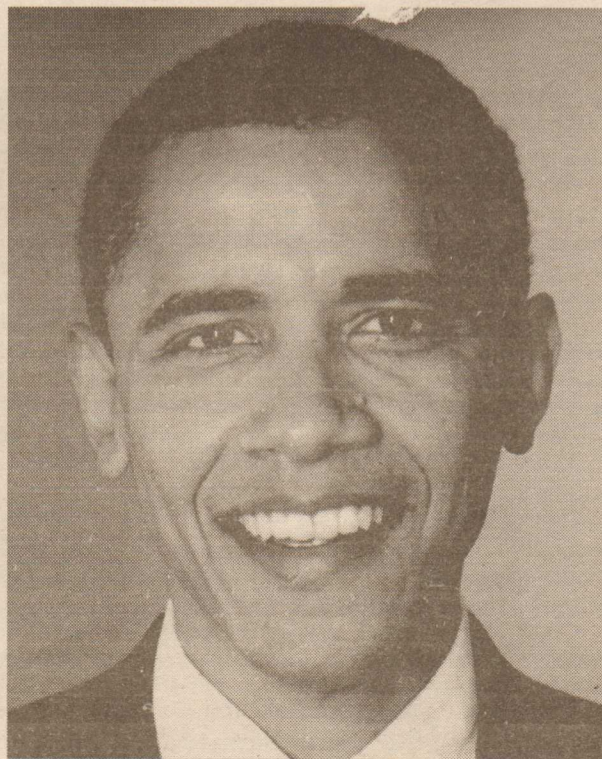
The president cited increases in loans to small businesses, tax-cut cheques going out and new investments in infrastructure and energy projects as signs of

hope for the economy.

But he added a note of caution, saying that the measures taken had to "translate into economic growth and jobs and rising income for the American people."

"And right now we're still seeing a lot of job losses, a lot of hardship, people finding themselves in some very difficult situations," he said.

"We still have a lot of work to do, and over the next several weeks you'll be seeing additional actions by the administration." BBC.



US President Barack Obama

## Microsoft, Yahoo talking on search deal

The chief executives of Microsoft Corp and Yahoo Inc met last week to discuss potential partnerships between the companies' Internet search and advertising operations, the technology blog All

Things Digital reported on Friday.

Wide-ranging talks have taken place between executives at the companies, the blog reported, including discussion of the potential for Microsoft to handle Yahoo's

search advertising business, and for Yahoo to combine and run the two companies' display advertising business.

Microsoft and Yahoo declined to comment on the report.

Expectation that the two technology giants would enter negotiations over Yahoo's search business has been rising since Yahoo's new CEO, Carol Bartz, took the reins in January.

She succeeded Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang, who beat back Microsoft's effort to buy all of Yahoo last year for \$47.5 billion, which soured relationships between the two companies.

Microsoft wanted to buy Yahoo chiefly to combat Google Inc's dominance in the Internet search arena, and CEO Steve Ballmer has made it clear he would still like to do some sort of deal in that area.

"Unless I'm fooling myself, over time I would expect there's a good opportunity for a deal," Ballmer told a media conference in New York last month. REUTERS.

A survey of 19 brokerages by Reuters Estimates has operating loss at the world's biggest automaker expanding to a median 550 billion yen in the current year, from an estimated 450 billion yen in the year ended last month.

Analysts say the outcome will depend on the exchange rate, the global vehicle demand and how much Toyota will be able to reduce its costs. REUTERS.

## Toyota operating loss may hit \$5 bn in 2009/10

Toyota Motor Corp's operating loss could balloon to over 500 billion yen (\$5 billion) in the year to March 2010, as the global economic crisis hits car sales, the Nikkei business daily said on Sunday without citing sources.

Sales of automobiles could tumble to about 6.5 million units during the current year, falling 7 million units for the first time in six years, Nikkei said.

## Chevron profits to fall sharply

US oil giant Chevron has said that its profits for the first three months of 2009 will be "sharply lower" than those it made in the previous quarter.

The company said that the drop would, in part, be due to falls in the price of crude oil and natural gas.

Chevron made a profit of \$4.9bn (£3.3bn) in the final quarter of 2008 but did not say what it will make in the period to the end of March.

The fall in profits will come in spite of an increase in oil production.

Chevron, one of the biggest oil companies in the world, said that margins on refined products fell significantly during the period.

It also said that earnings would include \$100m in write-offs associated with exploration.

Chevron increased oil production by 41,000 barrels a day in the US and by 64,000

a day internationally over the first two months of this year.

The company's full results for the first quarter will be announced on 1 May. BBC.

## US bank expects a record profit

US bank Wells Fargo has surprised investors by bucking the recession, saying it expects a record net profit.

The bank said profit will be \$3bn in the first quarter, thanks to better-than-expected results at newly-acquired lender Wachovia.

Wells Fargo bought Wachovia, which was the fourth-largest US bank, after it almost collapsed last year.

"Wachovia's outstanding franchise has proven to be everything we thought it would," the bank said.

The bank said it expected revenue of \$20bn for the quarter, translating into "another

quarter of double-digit revenue growth" of 16%.

Banking giant Citigroup had initially tried to block the merger between Wachovia and Wells Fargo.

But the US Federal Reserve approved Wells Fargo's \$12bn takeover after its all-stock offer.

Wells Fargo's results are set to include \$372m in dividend payments to the US Treasury, which took a stake in many banks in exchange for a cash injection.

US financier Warren Buffett has a stake in Wells Fargo through his holding company, Berkshire Hathaway, which has lost its

top credit rating from Moody's.

Wells Fargo's announcement is the latest in a line of positive statements from banks such as Citigroup, Bank of America and Deutsche Bank about their performances in 2009.

Shares in the bank surged 32% by the end of trading on Wall Street.

Its shares led US banking stocks higher and helped to push the broader Dow Jones average of US stocks up 2.3%.

Bank of America shares gained 20.7%, Citigroup rose 8.5% and JP Morgan climbed 11.4%. BBC.

## Internet is blessing to postal services – NIPOST

The internet has been helpful to postal operations, the Abuja Territorial Manager of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPST), Aliyu B. Mahmud has said.

According to him the advent of internet and other wireless telecommunication devices have improve activities of postal services around the world thereby facilitating easy networking, tracing and tracking of messages.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in Abuja, Mahmud said with the use of ICT, complaints about missing items have drastically reduce, saying, NIPST is fully utilising the benefits offered by

By Hamisu Muhammad

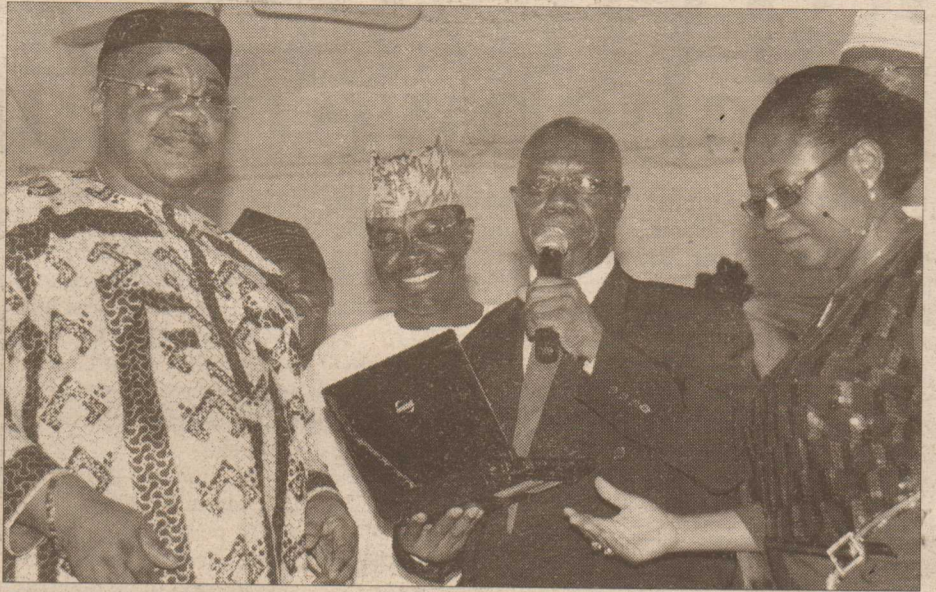
information and communication technology to serve customers better.

"Before now, people fear that, the advent of GSM services and internet will erode postal services but we are now utilising the capacity provided by them to enhance customers' enquiry".

He said "the system is such that people now don't need to go to the post office for them to know the status of their items but they do so at their own convenient through the net by login in NIPST website. As soon as you key in the item number you will immediately be told the status of that item".

"With this system on ground the issue of physical enquiry of missing item has been highly minimised. More so, in major post office here Abuja we don't have cases of missing items because we track and trace every item on the net and the staff are more dedicated more than before".

Mahmud said NIPST Abuja territory is under expansion programme of boxes and Private Mail Box (PMB) within the territory, adding that the idea is to increase the number of boxes with 20,000 boxes in Garki, 10,000 in Kubwa general post offices to carter the high demand in the city.



The Chairman, Omatek Ventures Plc, Dr. Tim Farinre (3rd from left) presenting an Omatek 10" Smartbook to Governor of Oyo State, Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala at the public presentation of computers to public/civil servants and re-launch of Omatek e-Xpress consumer initiative.

## Zain steps toward All-IP network

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

Zain Group has chosen Tekelec to enable Zain Nigeria Ltd. to quickly facilitate migrating to an all-Internet Protocol (IP) multimedia subsystem (IMS) network. Zain Group provides mobile services in 23 countries and is the world's fourth-largest telecommunications company based on geographic presence.

Major factors in Zain's selection of Tekelec were the technology's market-proven reliability and ability to scale to the growing demands of global service providers.

Statement from Zain Group said another important feature in Zain's selection of Tekelec's EAGLE 5 platform was Tekelec's support of SIGTRAN (SS7 signaling over IP), which is a stepping stone for cost-effectively migrating to an all-IP network.

"SIGTRAN enables service providers on the public-switched telephone networks (PSTNs) to use an underlying IP transport vehicle, thereby allowing them to offer their subscribers multimedia services through their existing network. Zain Nigeria completed the EAGLE 5 deployment in Q4 2008".

"The project has been managed by Tekelec in an exceptionally professional and consistent manner even when faced with integration into a challenging environment such as Nigeria," said John Earley, Technical Director for Zain Nigeria.

"I can say with confidence that Tekelec's handling of this project from start to now has been faultless. We are looking forward to a seamless integration into our existing core and anticipate substantial improvements in network signaling

## Oyo deploys ICT to improve service

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

The Oyo State government says it is committed towards promoting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development to enhance and improve service delivery by public servants in the state.

The state governor, Adebayo Alao Akala disclosed this recently at the public presentation of Omatek computers to civil servants and the re-launch

of the Omatek e-Xpress initiative by the government in Ibadan.

Governor Akala who commended the high quality products supplied by Omatek noted that there has been drastic improvement in the service delivery by civil servants in the state since the introduction of the easy computer acquisition scheme in 2008, as public

officers are now more efficient and effective at work, owing to the improved knowledge/proficiency in the use and application of ICT tools.

He however urged public servants to take advantage of the internet facilities within the state secretariat to enhance effective communication link among governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as keep all workers abreast of modern management techniques.

## Easter: Glo subscribers to enjoy 20% bonus airtime

Glo Mobile subscribers are to enjoy 20percent bonus airtime in a new promotion called Special Easter Offer.

The new promo which will run till April 15, 2009, offers 20% free Glo to Glo airtime on every recharge above N100. Globacom's Marketing Director, Jagatjit Singh disclosed this in a statement in Lagos yesterday.

By Hamisu Muhammad

The 20% bonus translates to N100 free airtime for every N500 recharge card denomination and N200 for every N1,000 recharge card.

A subscriber who recharges with the N2,000 denomination will be given N400 free airtime while the N3,000 recharge denomination attracts N600 free airtime. On the other

hand, every N5,000 recharge attracts a bonus airtime of N,1000. Glo subscribers can enjoy making glo-to-glo calls using this bonus.

Singh said the Special Easter Offer was launched to celebrate the Easter Season and reward subscribers for their loyalty to the network. He added that the gesture marked Glo out as a caring network as it was the most generous offer so far in the industry.

## ...gives out more cars to customers

Globacom for two days last week took Lagos by storm as the telecom giant took cars and other exciting prizes to the winners of its Win and Rule promo in their various homes. From Ikorodu, Globacom train of joy moved to several parts of the city and even to Ogun State to present cars, motorcycle and generator at the doorsteps of winners who won in the draws held on Saturday, March 21, 2009 at the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos.

At that event, the Glo held the draw where eight brand new cars ranging from Kia Rio, Peugeot 307, BMW 3 Series to Mercedes Benz E Class were won by subscribers.

At the Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja commercial centre, Mrs Olufunke Ayantuga, who works with a Bureau de Change, took delivery of a brand new BMW 3 Series which she won. It was a carnival of sort as all the shop owners and customers came out to behold the marvel. Many kept shouting "So it is true! So it is true!", when the car was driven into the premises.

Mrs Ayantuga, an expectant mother, said she had no doubt that Globacom was going to present the car to her right in her own environment as promised. She affirmed her faith in the network and encouraged her colleagues to cross over to the Glo network.

Artisans and other residents on Obafemi Awolowo Road, Ikorodu, temporarily abandoned work when Mr. Matthew Oyejola, a civil servant, was presented the Peugeot 307 XT he won. Oyejola was full of gratitude to Globacom for giving him a brand new car to replace his rickety car. He said that doubting Thomases had been put to shame when Glo brought the car to his home.

It was the same mood at the Costain Mechanic Village, Lagos where a mechanic, Mr Sikiru Lasisi was presented the brand new Kia Rio he won in the draw. The scores of motor mechanics at the village left their tools to rejoice with one of their own whose fortune had just turned better courtesy of Globacom. At Pedro, where Jaiyesinmi Olabode resides, a huge crowd had gathered before the Globacom train arrived with the Kia Rio he won in the promo. Olabode, an Accounting student of the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State, said anyone not on the Glo network "is missing big time".

A staff of the Finance and Administration Department of the Lagos State Ministry of Establishment and Training, Mrs Funmilayo Onabanjo received her Peugeot 307 XT at her residence on Arolahun Street, Mushin. Residents, both young and old, trooped out to witness the event, which they said was too good to be true. She confessed that she never had any premonition that she would get a car at this time, let alone a brand new one. She was full of prayers for Globacom for the promo that had brought her good fortune.

## IT WORLD

## Know your gadget

## Use keyboard shortcuts

The mouse, one of the greatest advances in computing history, provides you with an intuitive point-and-click method for using your computer. Depending on the type of work you're doing, however, sometimes using a mouse actually slows you down. If you are a good typist, taking your hands away from the keyboard to move the mouse can use up a few seconds. Over the course of a full day, you could save several minutes by using keyboard shortcuts instead of the mouse.

You can use your keyboard instead of your mouse to do these three tasks:

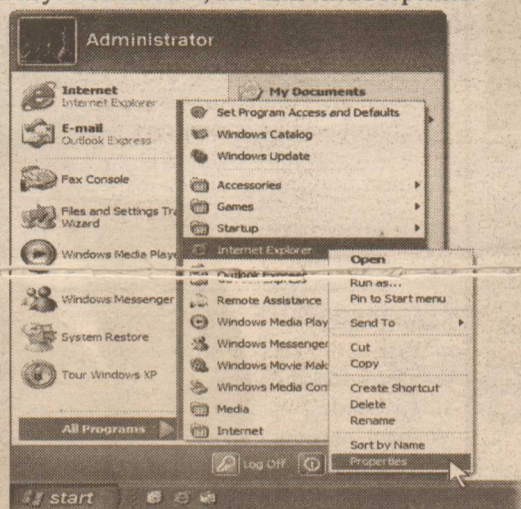
- Start a program
- Navigate menus
- Minimize, maximize, and close windows

## Start a program using a keyboard shortcut

The Start menu is great for finding programs, but its multiple levels of folders can be time consuming to navigate. If there is a program you start frequently, you should set a keyboard shortcut for it so that you can start the program without taking your hands off the keyboard.

## To set a keyboard shortcut to start a program

1. Click the Start menu, and then click All Programs. Right-click the program that you want to start with a keyboard shortcut, and then click Properties.



2. Click in the Shortcut key box. Now press the letter on your keyboard that you want to use to start the program. Make it easy to remember—for example, press I for Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Note: You can use either uppercase or lowercase letters when creating your keyboard shortcuts—and when accessing them later. In the Shortcut key box, Microsoft Windows XP automatically adds Ctrl + Alt + before the key you pressed. When you want to start the program, hold down both the CTRL and ALT keys simultaneously, while also pressing the letter you chose. This way, your program won't start every time you type that letter.

3. Click OK.

4. Now test your shortcut. Hold down the CTRL and ALT keys, and then press the letter you chose. If you find it difficult to hold down two keys at once, read Turn on the Sticky Keys feature. Your program should start.

When your friends see you start up programs without touching your mouse, they just might think you have a psychic connection with your computer!

Top of page

Navigate menus using the keyboard

You can speed up tasks in almost any program by choosing menu items using your keyboard instead of your mouse. This operation is particularly handy when you're performing repetitive tasks.

To control menus using your keyboard.

Culled from microsoft.com

• To be continued

## Again, Yahoo, Microsoft in partnership talks

Yahoo and Microsoft are in talks again, but this time its a partnership deal that is on the table rather than a proposed acquisition, according to reports. Skip related content

Yahoo's new chief executive Carol Bartz and Microsoft boss Steve Ballmer had a face-to-face meeting last week, as part of negotiations which were begun in the last several weeks, said a report in All Things Digital.

The proposed tie-up involves looking at the various commercial opportunities that a search and advertising partnership would present. The report cites a variety

By Hamisu Muhammad  
with agency reports

of sources, saying that the talks, both between Ballmer and Bartz, and other executives on both sides, are preliminary and wide ranging.

The talks may come as a surprise to some, given that Microsoft seems to have been pushing ahead with its own search plans under the Kumo codename. The firm even poached Yahoos head of engineering for the Search and Advertising Technology Group, Qi Lu, to lead its own search and online advertising efforts.

A tie-up between the two would make sense however, given Googles continued dominance in both the

search and online advertising markets.

Google currently has around 60 per cent of the market, with Yahoo some way off in second place with 20 per cent and Microsoft even further behind that in third.

For her part though, Carol Bartz has repeatedly sent out signals that she will not be pressured into selling off parts of Yahoos business.

Commentators have generally agreed that the firm shows more direction and purpose with her in charge, although it is still with its problems, and could be amenable to a deal, given the ground it still has to make up to effectively challenge Google.

## Hotmail log-in problems cause user panic

Millions of Hotmail, Windows Live and MSN customers were left high and dry after another outage meant they were unable to access their inboxes for around two hours. Skip related content

When users tried to log-in at around 5am yesterday morning, they were presented with a message which read You dont have an inbox yet.

According to a posting on the Microsoft Live blog, the incorrect message was sent out because of a network issue that we encountered while doing routine maintenance.

We have corrected the problem and you should be able to access your Hotmail and other Windows Live services again now, the blog continued.

We apologise for any inconvenience that was caused by this issue, and we thank you for using Windows Live.

Any users who are still experiencing problems have been asked to contact Windows Live Help

Although the timing of the incident means that UK customers are unlikely to have been affected, the news will add to those doubts some users have over the software-as-a-service model.

In February, Gmail suffered a major outage for around three hours after one of the firms European data centres overloaded, causing cascading problems through its other data centres.

While these outages are generally few and far between, they can cause anger and panic among the user community, and given their high profile nature, may deter corporates thinking of investing in mission critical web-based services such as email.

However, the SaaS model is nonetheless making steady inroads into the corporate IT sphere. Last month software company Serena Software migrated 700 of its staff over to Gmail in one day [vnet.com.a](http://vnet.com.a)

## Alcatel pledges timely completion of Glo expansion project

Telecommunications equipment vendor, Alcatel-Lucent has promised timely completion of the multi-billion naira network improvement contract it signed with Globacom.

Speaking in Lagos at a media parley organized by Globacom, the General Manager in charge of Globacom Projects in Alcatel-Lucent, Mr. Peter Schubert, expressed the commitment of his company to the timely delivery of the key elements of the mega

From Zakariyya Adaramola,  
Lagos

expansion project it recently signed to undertake for Globacom.

"It is a flagship project and when completed, the Glo network will be expanded and modernized. Alcatel-Lucent is committed to Globacom's desire to provide excellent services for its subscribers not only in Nigeria but also in its other regions of operation in West Africa", he added.

The projects, aimed at

radically transforming service delivery on the Glo network, will see the addition of at least 1500 Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) to its existing over 5000 BTSs across the country and an additional 25 Base Switching Centres in order to improve traffic on the network.

Also included in the multi-million dollar contract package are four brand new New Generation Network (NGN) Mobile Switching Centre (MSCs), which installation will increase the network's switching

capacity from the present 30 million to 45million.

These will assist Globacom beyond mere voice communication. For example, it will significantly push up capacity for other value adding services such as upgrading the network's Short Message Service Centre license from 400 messages per second to 600 messages per second. It will also enhance Globacom's 3G coverage in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt and extend it to cover various other state capitals, while also increasing its GPRS capacity to 10 million data subscribers from the current 5 million.

## MTN out with new products, services

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

MTN Nigeria has adopted a strategy of sustainable customer engagement which will enhance both existing and new products and services.

Speaking on the new development, Mr Bola Akingbade, the Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer, MTN, said "MTN has developed products and services to meet its customers' 'special needs' in unique ways. We want our customers to enjoy the latest offerings in the world of telecommunications, which will place them ahead of their friends and relations who are not on the MTN network."

The new products and services will be showcased across three locations in Abuja and Lagos during a series of mega events tagged 'MTN Innovation Day.'

The MTN Innovation Day will play host to Les Brown, a renowned public speaker, author and television personality. He will speak on the theme 'Enriching lives through innovation' which derives from what he has learnt from his own life, which is a classic 'rags-to-riches' story.

# DIGEST

## Traffic pollution can harm babies in the womb, claim researchers

Exposure to traffic pollution during pregnancy could harm babies in the womb, a study shows.

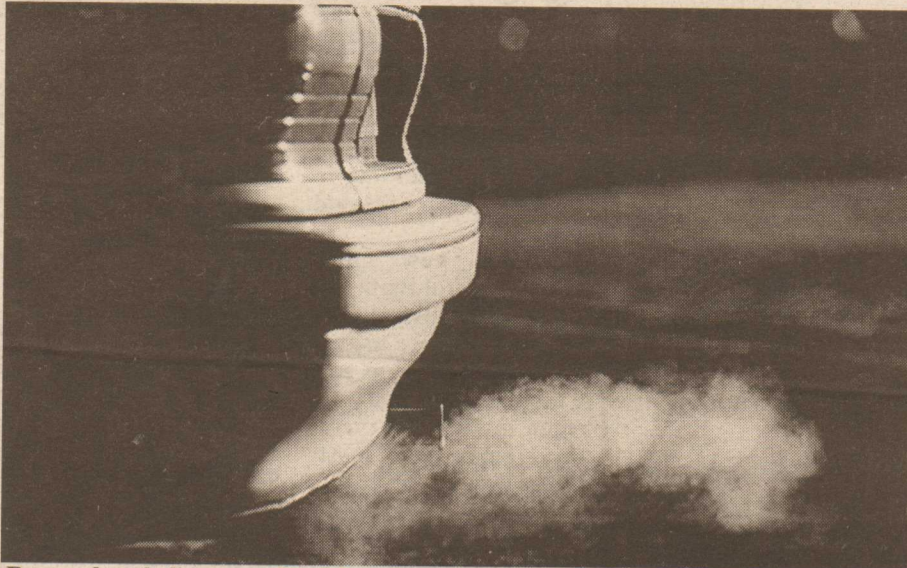
The risk of a delivering a baby of small weight rose significantly with each increase in pollution levels during the first three months and final three months of pregnancy.

Researchers believe restricted fetal growth may be linked to traffic pollution or living close to a major road.

Babies 'get taste for vegetables in womb' Epidemiologist Professor David Rich, of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and colleagues said it was unclear how air pollution restricts fetal growth.

Previous research suggests air pollution might alter cell activity - or cut the amount of oxygen and nutrients a baby receives while in the womb.

Prof Rich, whose findings are published online in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, said: "A body of evidence is emerging from several



Researchers believe restricted fetal growth may be linked to traffic pollution or living close to a major road.

Photo: GETTY

countries on the adverse consequences of ambient air pollution on fetal/birth outcomes, including pre-term birth and fetal growth restriction."

The researchers based their findings on almost 336,000 births in New Jersey between 1999 and 2003 and daily readings of air pollution from monitoring points around the state from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Mothers of small, and very small birth weight babies were more likely to be younger, less well educated, of African-American ethnicity, smokers, poorer, and single parents than mothers with normal birth weight babies.

But levels of ambient air pollutants were linked to restricted fetal growth, even after taking account of these risk factors.

Prof Rich said: "These

findings suggest ambient air pollution, perhaps specifically traffic emissions during early and late pregnancy and/or factors associated with residence near a roadway during pregnancy, may affect fetal growth.

"Further, pregnancy complications may increase susceptibility to these effects in late pregnancy."

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

## Eco-chic: Recycled women's suit made from 50 plastic bottles

It is sometimes said that beautiful women can look good dressed in any old rubbish.

Well now they can test that theory. Designers from Debenhams have come up with a £55 trouser suit that is made entirely from recycled plastic bottles.

The bottles, which would otherwise have been destined for landfill sites, are cleaned and have their labels removed before being ground down into chips which are melted at a plant in Taiwan.

The mixture is then refined and woven into a soft but hard-wearing type of polyester.

Around 50 are used in each suit.

A spokesman for Debenhams claims that the single-button jacket and the bootcut trousers will tempt the 'fashion conscious' shopper

and 'would not look out of place

in the boardroom'.

With its polyester feel the suit, made in Vietnam, may not be luxurious enough for everyone.

But its green credentials - and the credit-crunch price of £35 for the jacket and £20 for the trousers - will attract some.

Elena Antoniou, a spokesman for the store, said:

'We are proud of our creation as it's right on trend in terms of fashion, and kind to the environment, without costing the earth.'

'If it proves popular amongst our customers then there's no reason why we couldn't extend it to menswear, so watch this space.'

It took 12 months to create the suit.

The special process to make the material involves melting down the unwanted bottles, refining the mixture and weaving it into a soft, but hard-wearing type of polyester.

Debenhams 'green' suit made from recycled plastic bottle

Culled from dailymail.co.uk

## Can a nuclear blast alter earth's rotation?

Nuclear bombs are humankind's most powerful weapon, but their destructive impact would unlikely alter the spinning of the Earth on its axis.

One way to see this is to compare the energy of a nuclear blast to that of the rotational motion of the Earth. The

tens of megatons, or about  $10^{17}$  Joules, whereas the Earth's rotational energy is around  $10^{29}$  Joules.

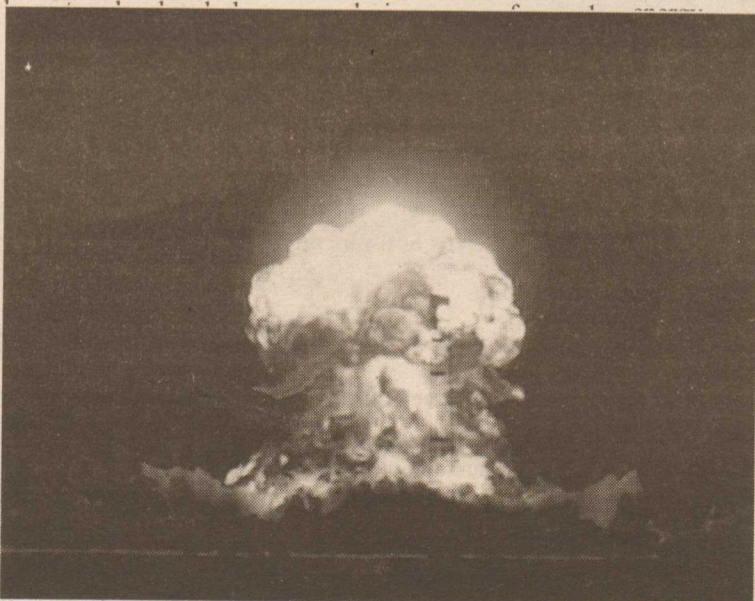
So even if all the force of a nuclear explosion was used to push the Earth in a particular direction, the energy in this push would be less than a trillionth that of the rotational

It would be like trying to divert a speeding car with the energy of a flying mosquito.

Even the largest earthquakes have only a minuscule effect on our planet's spinning. Scientists calculated that the colossal tsunami-causing 2004 Sumatra earthquake caused a slimming of the Earth that shortened the day by a few millionths of a second and shifted the North Pole by an inch.

The amount of fault-moving ("Earth-slimming") energy in this magnitude 9.3 earthquake was estimated at more than  $10^{22}$  Joules, or roughly 100,000 times that of the biggest nuclear bombs. So any effect of a nuclear blast on Earth's rotation would be far below what is measureable.

Culled from livescience.com



Life as we know it may owe its existence to the decline in metal on the early earth.

The massive influx of oxygen into Earth's atmosphere some 2.4 billion years ago that set evolution on a path to multicellular life was unleashed by a cascade of events in which nickel played a starring role.

What scientists call the

## Decline in nickel kick-started evolution

Great Oxygen Event "irreversibly changed surface environments on Earth and ultimately made advanced life possible," said Dominic Papineau of the Carnegie Institution's Geophysical Laboratory and a

Co-author of the study.

"It was a major turning

point in the evolution of our planet."

Scientists generally agree that this oxygen surge was made possible by a rapid decline in atmospheric levels of methane.

But why methane dropped off has remained a mystery.

The researchers, led by Kurt

Konhauser of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, believe the answer lies in rocks that were formed before oxygen was abundant in the air or the sea.

Analysing changes over time in the level of trace elements in these rocks, the scientists noticed that levels

of nickel dropped just before oxygen levels soared.

This piece of evidence led them to fit all the pieces of theoretical puzzle together.

The dominant life form before the Great Oxygen Event was the methanogen - a single-celled ocean organism that exuded methane as a byproduct of its

metabolism.

The enormous quantities of methane these methanogens produced almost certainly prevented the build up of oxygen in the air.

To survive, these creatures gobbled up nickel, which existed 2.7 billion years ago in quantities 400 times greater than today.

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

DIGEST

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

EASY

57.

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

SOLUTION TO SUDOKU PUZZLE No. 56

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

SIGN LANGUAGE



Cor blimey! How about that?  
Photo location: Canada by Alyin Vincent  
Culled from the telegraph.co.uk

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO

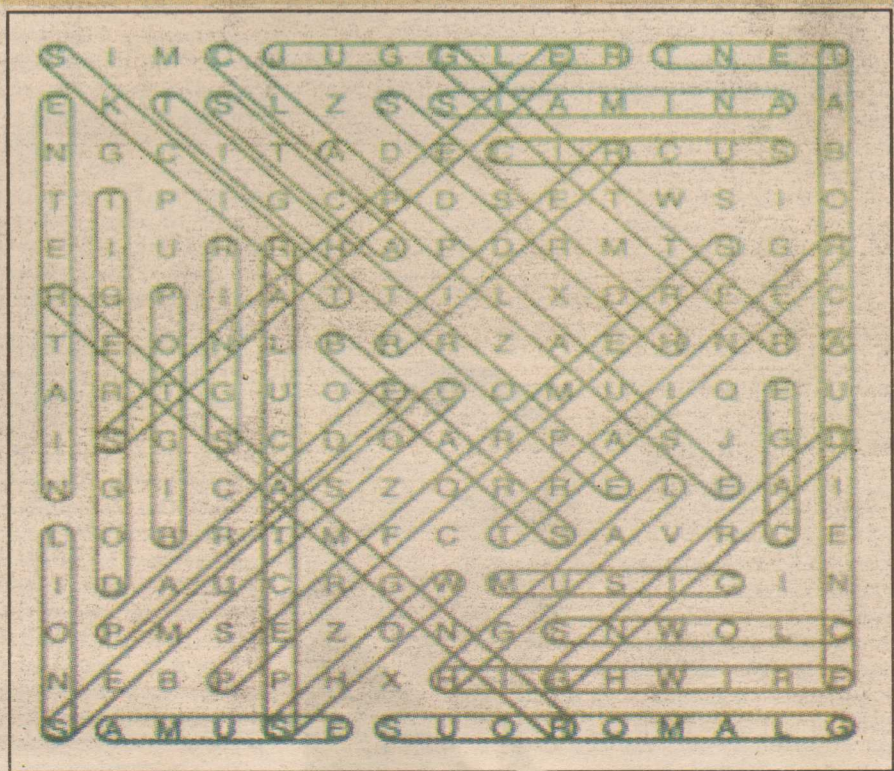
FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO puzzles are solved by finding all the hidden words in the diagram. The words are always in a straight line and may read up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally. Cross a word off your list once you have circled it. Many words will overlap.

46

Egyptian encounter

S	A	G	O	S	H	E	N	O	A	C	A	I	R	O	Temple
P	K	T	N	D	R	U	M	P	H	A	R	A	O	H	Kohl
O	S	P	H	I	N	X	I	A	N	S	E	T	H	L	Lake
E	T	R	R	M	L	S	C	T	D	U	B	S	T	N	Nasser
H	A	R	A	A	K	E	E	T	P	N	B	L	A	R	Mummy
C	R	E	M	R	I	L	A	U	B	R	A	I	H	H	Nile
Y	B	P	E	Y	O	R	S	T	Y	K	E	W	A	Y	Nubian
S	O	S	S	P	A	O	D	A	E	P	C	M	S	N	Osiris
X	C	A	E	E	S	J	C	N	H	T	L	G	M	A	Pharaoh
P	I	A	S	I	M	I	A	K	A	A	M	I	U	U	Pylon
S	J	D	R	T	B	S	F	H	L	X	R	Z	M	D	Pyramids
X	E	I	U	A	S	I	Q	A	S	H	E	A	M	G	Rameses
R	S	X	R	E	B	A	S	M	L	N	O	L	Y	P	Red Sea
J	W	A	R	T	A	P	O	E	L	C	O	K	A	E	Sahara
E	L	P	M	E	T	K	A	N	R	A	K	O	G	P	Sais
Alexan-	Asper	Cobra	Seth												
dria	Aswan	Giza	Sphinx												
Almah	Dam	Goshen	Tutankha-												
Antelope	Cairo	Hathor	men												
Apis	Cheops	Ibis													
Arabic	Cleopatra	Karnak													

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 45



# NEXT LEVEL

## Appointments And Promotions

e-mail:nextlevel@dailytrust.com

### Prof. Uche Gbenedion is acting VC, UniBenin

Professor Uche Gbenedion has been appointed Acting Vice-Chancellor of University of Benin. She was the deputy vice chancellor in charge of Administration before her new appointment.

President Umaru Yar'adua approved her appointment in a letter to the out-going Vice Chancellor, Prof. Emmanuel Nwanze by the Minister of Education, Dr. Sam Egwu, directing him to hand over the affairs of the institution to Professor Uche Gbenedion as the acting vice chancellor.

The Presidential approval put paid to much controversy that had dogged succession to the post since it was to be vacated by the immediate past VC, Professor Nwanze.

The education minister also conveyed the President's decision to the Acting Registrar, Mrs. Celerina Ojomo, who is the secretary

**By Onimisi Alao**  
to council and senate of the university.

Prof. Nwanze's tenure expired on February 9, 2009 after a five-year tenure as the VC.

However, the President's approval of Professor Uche Gbenedion will have the acting VC remain on acting capacity till the inauguration of a Governing Council for the university headed by the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Sa,ad Abubakar III, who is expected to select a substantive Vice Chancellor for the institution as enshrined in the law establishing it.

Uche Gbenedion's appointment as acting VC had been condemned by the University's academic staff who were protesting that due process had not been followed.

The Chancellor, His Eminence, Sa,ad Abubakar, had to wade in by appealing to

the University community to close ranks and forge a common purpose to move the University forward. Born 57 years ago, Professor (Mrs.) Uche Gbenedion, a professor of Language Education,

was appointed deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) in August 2006 after returning from secondment to the Benson Idahosa University as its pioneer vice-chancellor.



Education Minister Dr. Sam Egwu

### Ahmed becomes FMBN boss

The Federal Government has approved the appointment of Mr. Abdulsalam Yahaya Ahmed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN). He was the acting managing director of the bank.

A statement by the bank's Head, Corporate Affairs, Dauda Yusuf, said as a professional banker with over 19 years of experience, Ahmed was the pioneer general manager, Policy and Strategy of the FMBN, a position he had held since January 2006.

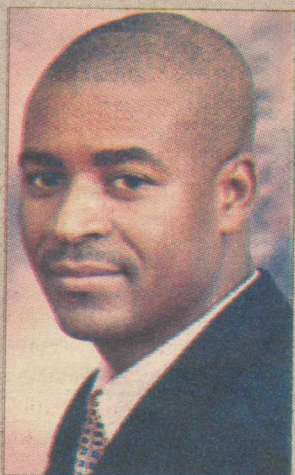
An alumnus of a number of prestigious educational institutions, Mr. Ahmed holds a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Corporate and International Finance from University of Durham, England; an MBA from Bayero University, Kano; an M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics from Nigeria's premier university, the University of Ibadan; and a B.Sc. in Agricultural Economics from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He is a full member of Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered).

Before joining the FMBN, Mr. Ahmed was the divisional head of the Risk Management Group of Unity Bank Plc. and was assistant general manager and head, Risk Assets Management Department of the defunct First Interstate Bank Plc, prior to its merger with other banks to form the Unity Bank.

The statement said Ahmed's other career milestones include serving in

**By Nasidi Adamu Yahaya**

various capacities in the Credit Division and Ilorin branch of the former Habib Nigeria Bank where he rose to become the pioneer head, Corporate Finance and Special Loans Unit in 1996; the construction, services and public sector group of the defunct NAL Bank Plc, where he participated in many capital market issues, financial advisory, treasury as well as credit and marketing activities. In 1999, he became pioneer Abuja branch manager of Stanbic Bank Ltd. (member of the Standard Bank Group of South Africa) in which capacity he doubled as head, Corporate Finance, Northern Nigeria, with responsibility for identification of corporate and project finance opportunities, maintaining interface with regulatory authorities and marketing funds under asset management and custody services.



Mr. Abdulsalam Yahaya Ahmed, MD, FMBN

### Diamond, Savannah banks recruit staff

Diamond Bank Plc has embarked on a nationwide recruitment of fresh graduates. The exercise which has so far taken place in three locations: Abuja, Lagos and Owerri, according to information from the bank, brought into it's fold well over 300 fresh graduates.

The bank says the recruitment is part of its strategy of deepening its talent pool and contributing meaningfully in the reduction of unemployment level in the country. "Yes, we conducted aptitude tests for the shortlisted candidates in three locations: Abuja, Lagos and Owerri after which over 300 were successful. By doing this, we simply want to add value to the quality of their life and make their career dreams a reality.

Equally, this forms part of our intervention mechanism in reducing the frightening rate of unemployment among the youths in the country," the bank's Head of Corporate Communications, Mr. Charles Udoh said in a statement. He revealed that the bank has recently embarked on several in-house initiatives aimed at making it an employer of choice. "Being an employer of choice is all about recognizing and rewarding staff for their outstanding contributions to an organization. For us in Diamond Bank, we seek to continually manage the aspirations of our em-

**By Onimisi Alao**

ployees through adoption of best practices in our Human Resources Management programmes," he said.

On its own part, Savannah Bank of Nigeria Plc has commenced the process of recruitment of staff in preparation for service offerings following the reinstatement of the bank's operational licence by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The bank had set up a website where it states that it is seeking graduates and experienced professionals at all levels.

A message in the career page of the website reads in part, "Come on board... Graduates and experienced bankers are welcomed to submit their resume online to signify an interest in joining our bank."

The CBN had on February 20, 2009, restored the operating licence of Savannah Bank after years of lying comatose due to operational problems.

The Savannah Bank of Nigeria (SBN) had on February 18, 2002, instituted a court action against the CBN; Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Inspector General of Police to challenge the revocation of its banking license by the CBN on February 15, 2002. The revocation of the bank's license which led to loss of hundreds of jobs also caused loss of savings of many of the bank's customers.

### Onoja, Mbadiwe, others head boards of govt agencies, parastatals

**By Onimisi Alao**

President Umaru Yar'adua has appointed Maj. Gen. Lawrence Onoja (rtd), a former two-time military governor, as chairman of National Institute for Sports. Mr. Kayode Oni, Augustine Katakata and Cynthia Boro are members of the board.

The National Institute of Sports' board constitution is a part of similar exercise involving other institutions and personalities, that is appointment of members of governing boards for parastatals and agencies in the Presidency and some federal ministries.

National Bureau of Statistics is headed by frontline politician and Nigeria's former ambassador to Congo, Chief Greg Mbadiwe, while Alhaji Ali Badala Gumel, Alhaji Sule Majidadi, Alhaji Raimi Ayo Raji, Chief Franklin Edonkumoh and Capt. Joe Agada are members.

National Insurance Commission board will be chaired by Minister of Women Affairs under President Olusegun Obasanjo, Hajiya Inna Ciroma, with Aminu Ahmed Yapeco, Senator Ben Collins Ndu and Oluwatayo Boye as members.

Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation has Wakilin Adamawa, Alhaji Hassan Adamu, as chairman, while Chief David Oghene, Chief Oyeibisi Ilaka and Lawan Gana are members.

National Broadcasting Commission has Lawal Bagiwa as chairman, and Alhaji Abdullahi Kuda, Chief Peter Nwaboshi, Doyin Ogungbe, Ibrahim Dukku, Chief Patrick Adaba, Alhaji Tajudeen Oladipo, Mr. Akhere Ugbesia and Mr. Mike Mku as members.

Voice of Nigeria is chaired by Dr. Stella Attoe, while members are Komolafe O. Ajibola, Mainasara Illo, Nsima Ekere and Usman Ibrahim Yammawa.

Chief Tony N. Ezebuoro is chairman of the Rural Electrification Agency, while members include Mr. Yinka Adigun, Abokie Galadima, Mr. Victor Bala, Chief Damishi Sango, Mr. John Akhayere and Chief Stephen Igere.

National Youth Service Corps has Chief Linus Okon as chairman, with Mrs. Folarin Kusamotu Adewale, Dr. Bappa Mahmud and Abubakar Aminu Musa as members.

Mr. Abiodun Oyeibanji is chairman of Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, with members comprising Mr. Anthony Ogulla, Mr. Mustapha Habib, Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Nata'ala Umar, Hakeem Lawal and Mr. Chijioke Adindu.

The board of the National Centre for Women Development will be chaired by Hajia Habiba Saidu-Belgore. The members are Mrs. Kolajo, Mrs. Bilkiyu Salihijo Ahmed, Hajia Falmata Ali, Mrs. T. Giwa Amu, L.K. Iliyasu, Joseph Tanwa, Hajia Fatima Mohammed and Tayo Ajilo. Chief Josephine Nnohan, Patricia Okeke Ojiaku, Hajiya Mariya Abdullahi, Idris Ozi Shuaibu, Mr. Dare Gbolahan and Lawal Abdu Kanleare are also on the board.

Chief E.Y. Columbus is

chairman of National Orthopaedic Hospital, Enugu, while Mr. Okenwa Agubuzor and Mr. Sam Eyiogwe are members.

National Orthopaedic Hospital, Kano has Alhaji Mohammed Hassan Santana as chairman, with Mr. Sani Bello and Suleiman Abdullahi as members, while the board of the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, will be chaired by Mr. J. Oyemade, with Mr. Kamal O. Olorunjoje and Mrs. Rhoda Fiberesima as members.

The eight psychiatric hospitals in the country have the following board chairmen and members:

Abeokuta: Chief (Mrs.) Iyabo Apampa is chairman, with Chief Abiola Ogun-dokun and Chief Kayode Odunsi are members.

Calabar: Maj.-Gen. Bassey Asuquo (rtd) is chairman, while Chief Terry Noah and Mrs. Filita Henshaw Etim are members.

Benin: Dr. Abieyuwa Osemwenkha is chairman, Mr. Adedeji Akenzua and Usaini M. Dogo Machina are members.

Enugu: Chief Osita Nwanneri is chairman, with Mr. Oliver Udeh and Chief Cornelius Nnaji are members.

Kaduna: Alhaji Ramalan Yero is chairman, Alhaji Muntari A. Maimaje and Hawwa Musa Kida are members.

Maiduguri: Alhaji Sule Doguwa is chairman, Alhaji Abdallah Hashim and Mr. Samson Dibal are members; Kware.

Sokoto: Ambassador Shehu Wurno is chairman, members - Yaba: The chairman is Dr. Adesola M. Taiwo with Femi Orimole and Dr. Shamsideen Giwa as members.

### C&F Porter Novelli appoints management staff

**By Onimisi Alao**

C&F Porter Novelli, a public relations agency in Nigeria, has appointed two management staff. They are Mr. Dipankar Dasgupta, an Indian, as the new general manager, and Mr. Tim Beighton, a Briton, who assumes duty as the head of Client Services.

The agency says the two appointees will help it consolidate on its position "as one of the leading public relations agency in Nigeria and increase its capacity for professionalism."

Commenting on the appointment, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company, Mr. Nn'emeka Maduegbuna, said, "The appointments are evidence of the agency's commitment to professionalism and world-class services to our clients. The duo's experience in the marketing communication industry would add tremendous value to C&F Porter Novelli, and give an additional boost to the company's commitment to provide exceptional services."

Dasgupta joined C&F Porter Novelli with over 20 years' experience in strategic planning, business development, integrated marketing communication plans; channel management; team management and client servicing.

# PROPERTY

## Lagos marks 1,923 buildings for demolition

The Lagos State Government says 1,923 buildings having structural defect have been marked for demolition to prevent further incidences of building collapse. The State Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Francisco Abosedo, disclosed this on Thursday during a ministerial briefing to commemorate the second anniversary of the administration of Governor Babatunde Fashola. Abosedo explained that the move will help avert further loss of lives, adding that the ministry will as a matter of importance, carry out periodic enforcement exercise in the state to ensure that residents comply with building rules and regulations.

He identified the locations where such buildings with structural defects are found as Lagos Island, Ajeromi-Ifelodun and Somolu/Kosofe Local Government Areas.

Abosedo said 976 of the buildings are located on Lagos Island with 617 recommended for renovation and 346 recommended for test while 13 will be demolished.

Also, 656 of such buildings were identified in Ajeromi-Ifelodun with 320 of them slated for renovation and 233 subjected to test while the remaining 103 will be demolished.

He said 291 buildings were identified in Somolu/Kosofe council area of which 214 will be renovated while 77 recommended for demolition.

## D/speaker asks govt to repair bridge

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

The Deputy Speaker, Kwara State House of Assembly, Alhaji Abubakar Sukababa, has appealed to the State Governor, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki and the state's House of Assembly to urgently intervene in the reconstruction of the recently collapsed Moshe bridge in Kaiama Local Government Area of the State.

Alhaji Sukababa, who made the appeal while presenting the matter before the House, stated that it is an issue of urgent public importance and will go a long way to assist the people of Kaiama and Baruten Local Government areas.

The Deputy Speaker noted that the unfortunate incident has compounded the suffering of the people by denying them access to neighbouring communities to transact their businesses. "It was the only major bridge that connected the local government to other neighbouring communities".

The Deputy Speaker stated that the bridge, which was constructed in 1955, collapsed recently, reaffirming that the present condition will seriously affect the commercial activities of the area as the only alternative route, the New Bussa-Kaiama road was also under serious threat.

He called on the state government to intervene by liaising with the Federal Government to salvage the situation. Responding, the Speaker, Alhaji Babatunde Mohammed, recalled various efforts of the House to repair the bridge in the past and directed its Committee on Works and Transport to visit the scene to ascertain the level of its condition.

## US renters turn buyers as homes become affordable

After six years of renting in San Francisco, Kate Wilusz jumped at the chance to swap her tiny apartment for a roomy four-bedroom Victorian home. But she is paying a mortgage instead of rent — and coming out even.

"I could not be more thrilled," said Wilusz, a financial planner who recently closed on the dream house with her husband, Charley. In some U.S. markets, prices appear to have fallen enough to make buying cheaper than renting. Mix that with mortgage rates that are near record lows and renters who want to become buyers are rejoicing.

San Francisco, one of the metropolitan areas covered in the widely watched Standard & Poor's S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices, has shown significant home price depreciation. Home prices fell 3.8 percent in December from November. San Francisco was also one of the worst-performing cities in terms of year-over-year declines in December, with home prices dropping an average 31.2 percent. The silver lining in these clouds over California's housing market is clear: Lower prices are luring buyers.

"You can now own a home in so many areas of the country for less than it costs to rent," said Mollie Carmichael, senior vice president at John Burns Real Estate Consulting in Irvine, California. -Reuters



A building shaped like a piano and violin in Huainan, Anhui province, China...The building will be used as the Urban Planning Exhibition Hall

# Ministry awards 8 highway road contracts

By Mustapha Suleiman

Eight new highway construction and rehabilitation projects were awarded by the Federal Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development across the nation.

The highway road contracts amount to over twenty three billion Naira was approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) during its meeting on Wednesday.

Giving the breakdown of the contracts during an interactive session with journalists at his Mabushi

office in Abuja Thursday, Works and Housing Minister, Dr. Hassan Lawal, disclosed that the highway contracts is in eight categories cutting across eight states of the Federation.

This, according to him, includes the additional work to the subsisting contract for the total strengthening of the existing River Niger Bridge at Onitsha in Anambra State awarded to Setraco Nigeria Limited at the rate of 740,062,957.88

Naira, rehabilitation of Nguru-Gashua-Bayamari road in Yobe State awarded to Gerawa Global Engineering Limited for 2,318,694,378.00 Naira.

Others are rehabilitation of Ifon-Uzebba-Iruekpen road and approach road to Ose bridge in Edo state contracted to Piccolo-Brunelli Engineering Limited at the rate of 1,990,000,000.00 Naira, rehabilitation of Akungba-Ikare, Omuo-Kabba road in Ondo/Ekiti States awarded to Philko Nigeria Limited for 1,534,911,551.25;

realignment and construction of dangerous curves between Akwanga and Lafia road in Nasarawa state awarded to ENL Consortium Limited at the rate of 3,382,960,350.00 Naira, rehabilitation of Enugu bound carriageway of the Onitsha-Enugu road to be handled by CCC Construction Nigeria Limited for 5,092,444,641.90 and rehabilitation of Efon Alaaye- Erinmo- Iwaraja road in Ekiti State contracted to Kopek Construction for 3,503,113,480.75 Naira.

## Lagos moves to end land disputes

The Lagos State Government has appealed to traditional rulers in the state to find lasting solutions to land disputes which have been claiming innocent lives.

The Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Mr Rotimi Agunsoye, made the appeal at a forum organised by the state government for traditional rulers, chiefs and government officials.

The forum was held at

the Adeyemi Bero auditorium, Alausa, Ikeja.

Agunsoye said Governor Babatunde Fashola is worried by the incessant land disputes in the state and the resultant killing of people.

He said, "the ugly incidents are bad lessons for our youths who might think that there are gains from settling scores in this manner."

The commissioner implored the royal fathers to

find out the causes of land disputes and how they could be averted.

He noted that violence generated by land disputes have led to a breach of the peace, urging that dialogue, litigation and arbitration rather than violence be employed to resolve the disputes.

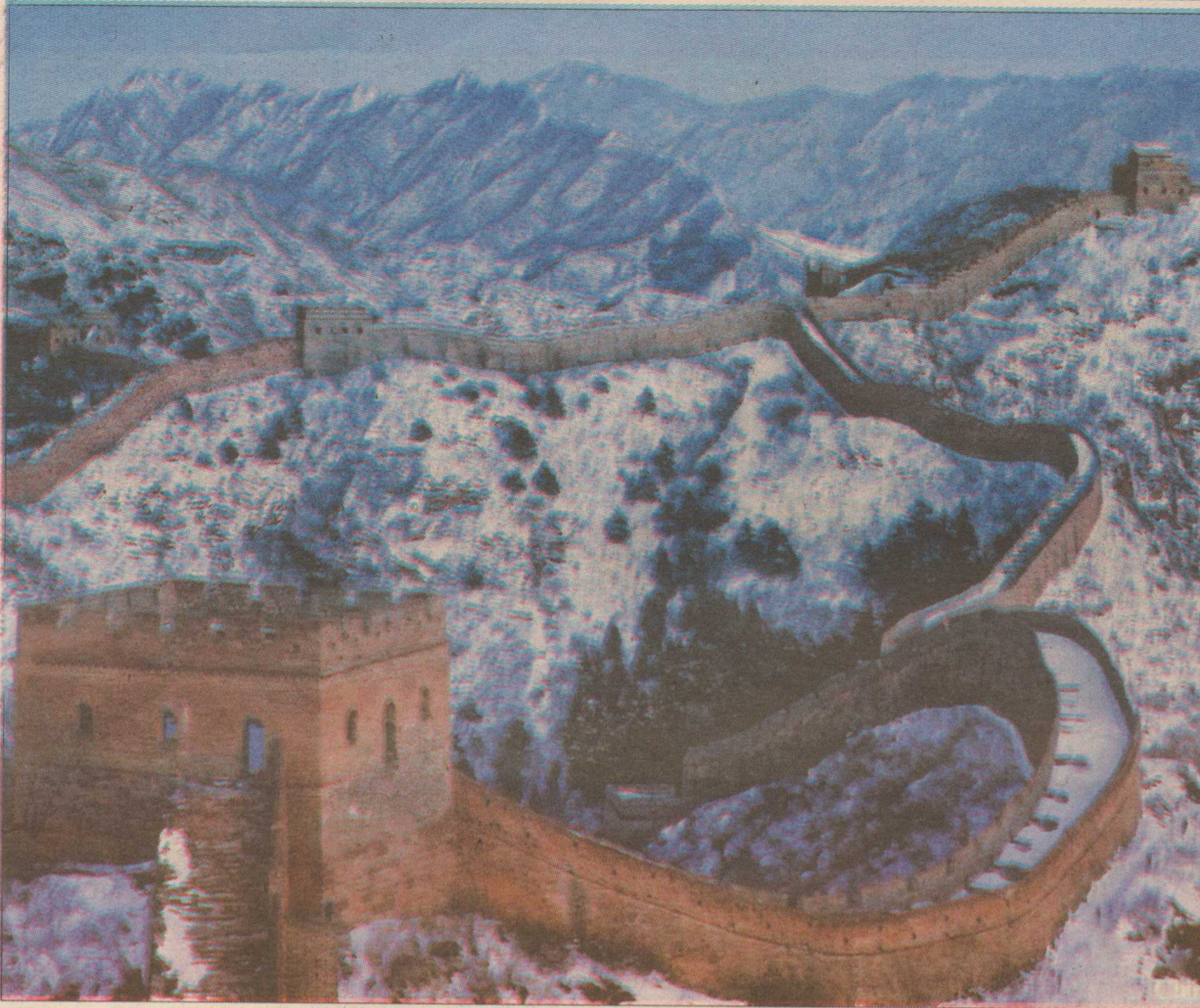
"This untoward and barbaric development has shaken the fabric of our society and has constituted serious embarrassment to

the state government.

"There are other humane and civilised means of resolving differences or disputes through dialogue, arbitration or the law court as a last resort, rather than the use of force or violence which is barbaric and condemnable," he said.

The traditional ruler of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu, urged his colleagues to support government efforts to ensure peace and stability.

# ENVIRONMENT



Snow covering the Great Wall of China and its environs

## AEPB sets up six teams for monitoring, supervision

As part of its strategy to tackle environmental nuisance, the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) has set up six teams to strengthen its monitoring, supervision and intervention capacity in all districts of Abuja.

A press release issued by the Board stated that as an immediate action plan

By Nasir Imam

designed by the new AEPB director, Engr. Abubakar Shehu Yabo, the exercise will cover all the districts of the FCT to forestall any likely occurrence of overflow waste generated as a result of the Easter celebrations.

The Board said in case of any complaint over environmental nuisance,

residents can call the following telephone lines 08059789555 or 08065560315. Similarly, the monitoring, supervising and intervening teams will also check and abate all illegal activities of hawkers, beggars and street trading in the territory.

AEPB, through the statement, appealed to all FCT residents to make good use of their waste

receptacles for easy and effective waste management to avoid indiscriminate dumping of waste and littering of streets.

The statement added that AEPB officials will be working throughout the Easter holidays to ensure that the city is clean during and after the break and wished all Christians God blessing of Easter.

## Wako erosion is beyond council's control - Kwali Chairman

The Acting Chairman of Kwali Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr. Danlami Saleh Yebu, Thursday, said the erosion threatening residents of Wako community is beyond the control of the council.

Yebu who was speaking to newsmen in his office, said the Wako erosion which links Dangara-Yaba is a federal road and that the federal government needs to come to the aid of the community tackle the erosion problem.

According to him, the

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

erosion threatening Yaba-Dangara road and residents of Wako community for over six years cannot be handled by the council except with the support of the federal government and the Ministry of Environment.

He said immediately assuming office; the council executive including the head of works visited the erosion site and took photographs of the damaged portion of the site, which he said prompted the council to write a letter in September

last year to the former Minister of FCT, Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar, intimating him of the erosion problem facing the community.

The council chairman stated that the issue erosion facing the community was tabled at two different executive council meetings in which the district head of the community also attended and resolved to formally write a letter and attach photographs of the erosion and forward to the FCT administration.

"The issue of Wako erosion problem was

discussed on two occasions during the council's executive meeting in which the district head of the community was also in attendance, before the council wrote a letter and attached photographs of the erosion site and forwarded it to the then Former FCT minister Aliyu Modibbo Umar, to come to our aid, which up till now nothing has been done about it and the council is still making effort to mount pressure on the present FCT minister to come to the councils aid," he said.

## Galapagos volcano erupts threatening wildlife

Ecuador officials say a volcano is erupting in the Galapagos Islands and could harm unique wildlife. The Galapagos National Park says La Cumbre volcano began spewing lava, gas and smoke on uninhabited Fernandina Island on Saturday after four years of inactivity. The park says in a statement the eruption is not a threat to people living on nearby Isabela Island.

But it says lava flowing to the sea will likely affect marine and terrestrial iguanas, wolves and other fauna.

The Galapagos are home to unique animals and plant species that became the basis for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Scientists say Fernandina is the island with the most volcanic activity in the archipelago. La Cumbre last erupted in May 2005. —AP

## Cows with gas: India's global warming problem

Indolent cows languidly chewing their cud while befuddled motorists honk and maneuver their vehicles around them are images as stereotypically Indian as saffron-clad holy men and the Taj Mahal. Now, however, India's ubiquitous cows — of which there are 283 million, more than anywhere else in the world — have assumed a more menacing role as they become part of the climate change debate.

By burping, belching and excreting copious amounts of methane — a greenhouse gas that traps 20 times more heat than carbon dioxide — India's livestock of roughly 485 million (including sheep and goats) contribute more to global warming than the vehicles they obstruct. With new research suggesting that emission of methane by Indian livestock is higher than previously estimated, scientists are furiously working at designing diets to help bovines and other ruminants eat better, stay more energetic and secrete lesser amounts of the offensive gas.

Last month, scientists at the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad in western India published a pan-India livestock methane emission inventory, the first ever, which put the figure at 11.75 million metric tons per year, higher than 9 million metric tons estimated in 1994. This amount is likely to increase as higher incomes and consumption rates put more pressure on the country's dairy industry to become even more productive. —TIME

## Destroy forest, get 2-yr jail term -Katsina Assembly

Anybody found guilty of damaging or destroying forests in Katsina state will be liable to two years imprisonment or a fine of N10,000.

The measure was taken after an amendment to the law on forestry by the state House of Assembly.

The law was unanimously amended in order to make it conform to the present situation and the challenges of the time. Giving the highlights of some of the sections affected by the amendment, Majority Leader, Hon. Abdullahi Tandama, announced that the new law vests powers on the Local Government Service Commission to appoint forestry officers at local government council levels.

Meanwhile, a new member representing Batsari constituency in the Katsina state House of Assembly has been sworn-in. He is Hon. Aliyu Iliyasu Dan Alhaji who was recently elected to fill the vacancy created following the death of the former member representing the area, late Bature Iliyasu. The Speaker of the state Assembly, Hon. Ya'u Umar Gwajo — Gwajo charged the new member to live above board and follow the footsteps of his predecessor.

He explained that the new member has been appointed as member, Agriculture, Religious Affairs, Anti-Corruption, Higher Education and Works Committees.

Dan Alhaji pledged to discharge his duties with the fear of God and serve his people diligently.

# PROPERTY

## 100 shops demolished in Ibadan

About 100 shops described as illegal structures were on Tuesday demolished in Molete, Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, by officials of the state Ministry of Environment.

Churches, Mosques and mechanic workshops were also affected. Daily Trust gathered that the structures had been marked for demolition by the government since last year.

Some of the places of worship affected in the exercise were Ayilara Mosque, Cherubim and Seraphim Church and Foursquare Gospel Church, which the pastor said was not marked for demolition.

The structures were behind St. Anne's School, Molete. Eyewitness told the Daily Trust that the Ministry of Environment officials carried out the exercise which they said was without prior notice.

When the owners tried to resist the action, the officials were said to have called for police security as a result of which about 25 mobile

policemen were deployed to the area.

One of the victims identified simply as Tunde, told the *Daily Trust* that the demolition might not be unconnected with the alleged rape, last year, of some students of St. Anne's School.

According to him, the state government had since passed a circular directing owners of the structures behind the school to vacate the place. It was learnt that the people had gone to court but they could not stop the government from carrying out the demolition.

When the Daily Trust visited the area, some of the victims claimed that they were not aware of any circular from the government asking them to vacate the place.

They frowned at alleged inclusion of hoodlums in the team that carried out the exercise and described the method employed as barbaric, saying that some people who were inside the buildings and who were not aware of the exercise were almost killed.

## Problems with accessing housing loans in Nigeria

Despite the N41.96bn in the coffers of the National Housing Fund, the hopes of many Nigerians of owning their own homes through the NHF appear farfetched.

This is because many contributors have difficulties accessing the fund due to stringent conditions imposed by the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria.

A document on the performance of the bank showed that the total contribution to the NHF increased from N10.3bn in 2002 to N41.96bn as at January 31, 2009. This reflects a percentage increase of 300 per cent.

The number of registered contributors also increased from 1,855, 686 in 2002 to 3,427,348 in January 31, 2009. The number of states contributing to the fund rose from three to 24.

The fund was established by Decree 3 of 1992 to provide a pool of funds for the construction, purchase or rehabilitation of houses.

The NHF relies almost exclusively on the contribution of 2.5 per cent of workers' basic monthly salaries. But other contributors mandated by the law, including the Federal Government, banks and insurance companies, are not fulfilling their side of the bargain. To qualify for a loan, an individual must be a contributor to the fund and must have contributed for a period of not less than six months. The borrower must have evidence of regular flow of income, while not more than one-third of his

income shall be considered for a loan repayment-affordability level.

The maximum loan to an individual applicant is not to be more than N5m. He or she must possess valid title to the land while the property to be mortgaged must conform to the existing planning laws and regulations. A loan granted to an individual under the fund shall be secured by a first legal mortgage of his or her residential property.

The statutory instrument also makes a general prescription that the loan shall not exceed 90 per cent of the cost or value of the property to be mortgaged.

Eighty per cent of the loan shall be provided by the fund.

The PMI, through which the application is made, shall provide the balance of 20 per cent. Interest on the loan is six per cent per annum.

The Acting Managing Director of the FMBN, Mr. Abdulsalam Ahmed, said that an aggregate cumulative of N78.63bn had been approved for both the Primary Mortgage Institutions and estate developers under the Real Estate Development Loan Scheme to finance the construction and ownership of 43,402 units since inception of the NHF scheme. This is made up of individual loans of N28.12bn and estate development loans of N50.51bn. However, aggregate loan disbursement of N42.12bn has been made. This is made of individual loans of N14.15bn and estate development loans of N27.97bn.



A commercial shopping complex in Wuse II, Abuja

## 'Akwanga - Lafia road contract award long overdue'

By Mustapha Suleiman

The newly awarded Akwanga - Lafia road contract have been described as long overdue as it remains a major link between the Northern and Eastern parts of the country.

This assertion was made by the Minister of Works, Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Hassan Lawal, while fielding questions from newsmen during a media parley at his Mabushi office on Thursday.

A journalist had asked the minister how he felt on the approval of Akwanga-Lafia road notorious for

causing fatal road accidents and neglected by successive government.

The minister, who happens to hail from Nasarawa State where the road is located said: "the road was the major link during the Nigeria civil war between the Northern part of Nigeria and the Eastern part. All movement of goods and properties and military personnel from the North to East was done through that very road, so it has historical significance.

"It has served the

country during the time of need. It is a pity that road has been abandoned. It has been used and dumped by government, a road that has this kind of history ought to have been rehabilitated by now. And if you know the number of accidents recorded on that road and the lives that were lost, I am sure you will be happy for Nigerians because it is one of the busiest roads up till today as it cuts across so many states particularly North-Central axis.

"And so many people actually contributed to the realization of this particular

contract award for so many years. This work was no done within the few months I have stayed in the ministry so there is no way I will want to take any credit for it. But perhaps one must have contributed one way or the other by giving it the final push to get it through," the minister said.

Dr. Lawal added that God made it possible for him to get the road fixed while he holds sway as the minister, saying it is a relief to people in states like plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Eastern part of the country.

## Ojora family reclaims land 37 years after

The Ojora chieftaincy family of Lagos has reclaimed its disputed land after 37 years of protracted legal battle with the Iganmu community.

The five justices of the Supreme Court led by Justice Adesola Oguntade, unanimously declared the Ojora chieftaincy family as the legal owner of all the parcel of land at Iganmu, comprising Orile Iganmu, Aloko, Savage, Sari, Offa Ofin, Oko-Olodi, Tokosi, Coker, Ajabe, Laniyonu, Tapa, Bankole

Amoro and other adjoining villages on Plan No. AL/641/1974.

The Ojora chieftaincy family at the Lagos High Court, had sought the declaration of title under native laws and customs to all the parcel of land being part of the Ojora chieftaincy family land, forfeiture of the customary tenancy and occupational rights of all the defendants and each of them on the land in dispute and possession of the land.

Subsequently,

judgements on the disputed parcel of land were entered in favour of the Ojora family in 2000, at the Lagos High Court and Appeal Court in 2004, but the defendant, led by Chief Adesina Jinadu and 12 others for the Iganmu community, headed for the Supreme Court to appeal the judgement of the Appeal Court which ruled in favour of the Ojora chieftaincy family. Justice Oguntade said in his lead judgement that there existed no basis upon which the two courts below

could have granted the counter-claim of the 13th appellant when a plethora of evidence before the trial court the ownership of the land was vested in the Ojora chieftaincy family. According to him, "I am satisfied that these appeals by the first to 13th appellants have no merit. They were rightly dismissed by the court below. I also dismiss them with N50,000 costs against each set of appellants in favour of the plaintiffs/respondents."

# ENVIRONMENT

## Kwara to enjoy regular water supply next year

The consultant handling the water project in Ilorin metropolis, Engineer Sulyman Adeyemi, says by next year, there will be regular water supply in all nooks and crannies of Ilorin, the Kwara State

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

capital. Adeyemi who disclosed this in Ilorin, while answering questions on a Radio Kwara Programme, 'Play Host,' noted that the state government had taken

a bold step to solve the problem of water within the metropolis by increasing the network of water pipes.

He said that the treatment plant for the Ilorin water project had been completed, while the distribution network would be completed next year.

Commenting on the improved power sector in the state, the civil engineer said that the people had begun to enjoy it, as it had started yielding positive results in the economy.

He said he was in support of the idea where corps members are made to serve

on farms, during their service year to enable them have agricultural experience, as was done in the past.

He appealed to the university researchers to ensure that their research works are translated into reality, for the benefit of the society.

He therefore stressed the need for government agencies to ensure that proper designs were made and adequate supervision

are carried out on construction to address cases of rampant cases of collapsed buildings in the country.

### Britain set to become most populous country in EU

Soaring population will force millions to flee water shortages in search of refuge - and, according to new figures, Britain will be one of the world's 'lifeboats'. On the eve of a major population conference, Science Editor, Robin McKie, asks: could the UK cope?

Britain will become one of the world's major destinations for immigrants as the world heats up and populations continue to soar. Statistics from the United Nations show that, on average, every year more than 174,000 people will be added to the numbers in the UK and that this trend will continue for the next four decades.

By then, only the United States and Canada will be receiving more overseas settlers, says the UN. This increase in British numbers is likely to put considerable strain on the country's transport, energy and housing, experts warned last week.

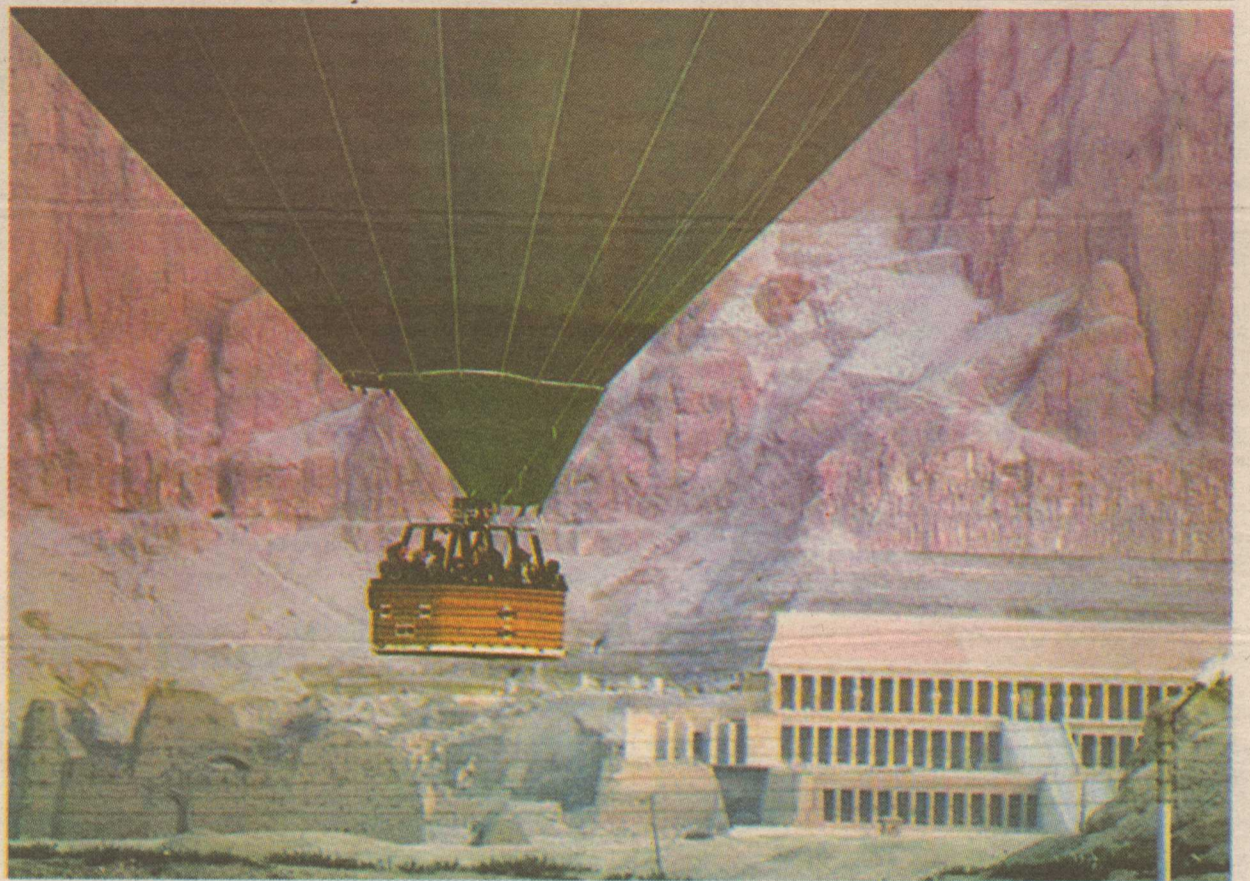
"The US and Canada will be taking in more people than us every year by 2050 but they are huge countries," said demographer Professor Tom Dyson of the London School of Economics. "Britain, by contrast, is a small nation. We will feel the impact of all these

people. There will be no getting out of it. Simply controlling our carbon dioxide emissions will become harder and harder as more and more people arrive on our shores. In addition, housing, water supplies and transport will be strained and will need greatly increased investment."

However, other experts say such increases could also produce benefits for the nation, bringing in immigrants who could provide a vital supply of young workers. These demographers point out that, by 2050, more than a third of the UK population will be aged 60 or over. By then there will be a desperate need for bus drivers, care-workers and others to keep the country running and immigrants could fill this gap.

In addition, there is the issue of humanitarian responsibility. Britain is likely to be one of the few nations to survive the worst effects of climate change while other nations, particularly those in the developing world, have their farmland and fishing grounds destroyed. It could be argued that the UK has a moral duty to provide shelter for as many refugees as our shores can support.

-The Observer



A hot air balloon rises above the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut during its early morning flight along Luxor's West Bank

### 'Tanneries are worst polluters in Kano'

Tanneries are some of the worst polluters of the environment in Kano state through the discharge of wastes, an official of the state's Ministry of Environment, has said. Malam Mustapha Muhammad, the Deputy Director, Pollution Control in the ministry, who made the assertion yesterday in Abuja in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said the situation has

become a source of concern to the state.

"This situation calls for urgent concern by all stakeholders in Kano state. Things need to be done to check this menace," he said.

Muhammad said the ministry will collaborate with the National Environmental Standards Regulations and Enforcement Agency (NESREA) to ensure that tanneries comply with NESREA's deadline of May

6, to set up plants for the treatment of effluent discharges.

"On our own in the state, we are doing a lot. We have ensured that tanneries comply with the installation of pre-assessment treatment facilities for waste water, adding, "in the past, non of the tanneries had such facilities".

Muhammad urged the federal government to put in more efforts to tackle desert

encroachment threatening the area, adding that the state government alone cannot tackle the problem.

He said the ecological fund needs to do more to fund desertification projects in the state, and appealed to the fund to ensure that contractors working on environmental projects have adequate knowledge of environmental problems as this would ensure the quality of job.

## UK hospitals, schools could be powered by underground heat

Schools and hospitals in the UK could be powered by tapping heat from under the ground, saving taxpayers thousands of pounds every year, engineers have claimed.

The UK is sitting on a "vast resource of untapped energy", a Royal Academy of Engineering conference on the potential use of geothermal energy was told.

By using ground source

heat pumps, the energy can be transferred from hundreds of feet below the ground to the central heating system, while the same pump can also cool the building by taking heat out of the air in the summer.

The technology is widely used in Scandinavia and the US but has failed to take off in the UK because of the cost and the availability of cheap oil and gas.

Around 350,000 ground source heat pumps are installed in Sweden, providing around 10 per cent of heating needs, compared to just 7,000 in the UK.

However, with fossil fuel prices set to increase in the future and ambitious climate change targets to cut carbon emissions coming into force, the Royal Academy of Engineering believe it is time to re-examine the issue.

David Banks, a consultant engineer, admitted that the £10,000 cost of installing a heat pump for one house was not worth it in the current climate.

However, large public buildings like schools and hospitals can make back the investment of hundreds of thousands of pounds within 10 years.

Homes in rural areas that rely on bringing in heating

oil may also be able to make back the money in a relatively short period.

The Government is hoping to cut carbon emissions from buildings by offering subsidies for renewable energy projects and introducing regulations to make all homes carbon neutral by 2016.

Mr Banks predicted the technology will become widely used in the UK in the next few years, saving

taxpayers thousands of pounds in the long run.

"The carrot of government subsidy and stick of planning regulation are forcing developers to consider the ground source heat option," he added.

The conference called 'The heat beneath your feet', also heard about the potential of geothermal heat in the UK which can heat hundreds of homes at a time.

-Daily Telegraph

# City news

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## Mother raises alarm over missing child

By Abubakar Yakubu

A mother, who took her three-year-old son to Masaka market to buy food stuff Saturday, broke down weeping when she could not find him after frantic searches for him.

Our reporter learnt from the woman that the boy was by her side while she was haggling the price of a commodity, adding that when she checked for the boy later, he was nowhere to be found.

The mother said she spent hours at the market

searching for her son, after which she reported the incident to the Masaka Police Station.

Police officers at the station revealed that they have been having worrisome cases of missing children over the past weeks.

One of such victims, Miracle Areze, disappeared on March 6 at 6pm, while going to the market to get items for his parents.

Eze Onyema Nwatu, a missing person, was taken

to Christ Ascension Church, Masaka for prayers on March 10 and on March 13, he disappeared without traces.

Another victim, eleven-year-old Williams Jonathan, also got lost in March. The victim's father, Jonathan Yakubu of 21 Police Mobile Force said when he returned from work on that

fateful day, he discovered that his boy was missing and went round Masaka to find him without results.

City News learnt that some children declared missing have returned back with harrowing experiences.

One of such children was a boy charmed on the road and kept in the inner room of his abductor's apartment for two weeks.

While under captive, the boy was sexually abused by the man, until he found his way out and was rescued by one of his classmates, who took him to some elders before calling in the police to arrest the

kidnapper, who is serving a one year jail sentence.

Vigilant Masaka resident also stopped another child kidnap that attempted to move away with his victim on March 29, 2009.

The alleged kidnapper, Shafiu Danjuma, a hawker of *Otipia pia* (locally made insecticide), while hawking his product at 8.40pm, had charmed a four-year-old girl at Auta Balefi that was following him as he left the community.

"One Bako Dogeri of the district head's palace became suspicious of the hawker's movement and inquired from him whether he knew the child following

him," a resident said.

He said the hawker tried to prove smart and escape but was apprehended by other residents, who took him to the Masaka Police Station.

"During investigation it was learnt that the hawker if found of such acts and we will deal with him according to the law," a police officer said.

The residents called on the police to investigate the hawker properly in order to find out what he wanted to do with his victim.

"Such investigations will reveal whether he is a ritualist and those behind the trade," a resident added.

He called on the police in the area to deploy more of their surveillance officers to areas where such crimes are pronounced in order to put a stop to it.

## Driver jailed for speeding off after accident

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibrahim A. Fatai

A 22-year-old driver, Gbenga Shittu was recently sentenced to one month imprisonment for not stopping after hitting a police patrol bike.

He was however given a fine option of N1,000.

Prosecutor Jeremiah Elijah informed the court that on March 3, 2009, one Gbenga Shittu drove his milk coloured jeep recklessly along Pyakasa village road and hit a police patrol motorcycle with registration number NPF8622B that was parked beside the road and fled.

He further argued that the offences committed by the accused are punishable under Sections 28 (1) Cap 548 and 34 (9) Cap 548 of the Road Traffic Act.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded guilty to the offence of failing to stop after the accident occurred and denied the offence of driving recklessly.

The prosecutor then asked the court to try the accused summarily on the charge he pleaded guilty and give a hearing date for the trial of the second charge to commence.

Magistrate Zubairu Mohammed sentenced him to one month imprisonment or a fine option of N1,000 for not stopping and in the reckless driving charge, the accused was granted bail in the sum of N20,000 with a reliable surety in like sum that must reside within the court's jurisdiction and swear to an

affidavit to produce the ac-

cused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to April 22 for hearing.



Last minute Easter Shopping at Nyanya market over the weekend.

Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

## Woman causes stir at Masaka Police Station

By Abubakar Yakubu

A middle-aged woman Thursday caused a scene at the Masaka Police Station, when the Divisional Crime Officer of the station refused to take action on a case she reported there.

The woman, Miss Peace

Ibe had reported one Malam Aminu Lawal of allegedly pouring water into her generator set, which knocked its engine.

In the process of reporting

the matter at the station's counter, the divisional crime officer told the lady that he will not accept her case because she was reporting it days after the incident happened.

The crime officer's statement angered the lady and

she held on to the accused person's shirt informing him to kill her.

The lady's cry attracted a crowd in front of the station and when the Divisional Police Officer, Ibrahim Adamu entered the station, he

sought to know what the problem was and after listening to the divisional crime officer and the lady, he ordered the crime officer to immediately accept the case and make sure that it is properly investigated.

## City news

# Pyakasa residents want road tarred

Residents of Pyakasa have appealed to the FCT Administration to tar the road linking the community with Abuja city centre.

The community, which is along the airport road in the

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

FCT, has a un-tarred road that causes dust whenever vehicles pass through.

Mrs. Mary Obianor, a business woman in the commu-

nity said if the road is rehabilitated, transport fares in the area will come down.

Mr Idris Inoh, a resident, disclosed that most residents in the area are farmers and tarring the road will make it easy for them to

transport their farm products to other communities to market.

## tarred

At the traditional ruler's palace, our reporter was told that he recently died.

One of those in the palace recalled how the late ruler made frantic efforts to ensure that the road is tarred.

"The road has been graded and is waiting to be tarred," one of the residents said.



Dancers entertaining guests at Yangoji ...recently.

Pic: Felix-Onigbinde.

## Pick-pocket jailed 30 days for stealing

An Abuja magistrate court yesterday sentenced a pick-pocket to 30 days imprisonment for stealing a wallet.

The accused, Bashir Audu of Nyanya Tipper Park was jailed for stealing the wallet from one Emokhor A. Emmanuel of Jikwoyi.

Court Registrar, Mrs Salamatu, while reading the police report said the complainant reported to the police on the night of March 7 that the accused stole a wallet from his pocket that contained ATM cards, national identity card and N3,000 cash.

Prosecutor Jerry

By Sikiru M. Jimoh

Tangshek also told the court that the accused confessed to the crime during police investigation.

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded guilty and appealed for mercy, adding that he is a worker at Panteka Market.

The prosecutor then applied for summary trial according to Section 157 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Magistrate Hadiza Dodo sentenced him to 30 days imprisonment or to pay a fine of N2,000.

In another case, a 23-year-old automobile mechanic, Chigozie Ezeji was on Thursday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court for allegedly moving close to a vehicle at night without any mean of identification.

Assistant Court Registrar, Miss Chidimma Imeh, while reading out the police report said on March 22, one Ahmed Raji of Kurudu village reported to the police that a vigilante group caught the accused during late hours and they suspected he wanted to commit an offence.

He said when the group

requested for the accused person's identification card, he could not produce any.

Prosecutor Umar Muhammad told the court that the accused person's suspicious movement contravened Section 95 of the Penal Code Law.

The accused denied the charge and Magistrate Ahmed Ndajiwo granted him bail in the sum of N30,000 with a reliable surety that must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

"The vehicle of the accused should equally be released to him upon proof of ownership," the magistrate

ordered.

The case was adjourned to April 22 for hearing.

## Imam preaches on the importance of Zakat

By Muideen Olaniyi

The Chief Imam of Fouad Lababidi Central Mosque, Wuse 2, Abuja yesterday said the payment of Zakat is the only permanent solution to poverty eradication.

Imam Tajudeen Bello said this while delivering a lecture at a four-day seminar organised by the Organisation of Tadamunul Muslimeen (OTM), FCT branch.

In his lecture titled 'Zakat: Permanent Solution to Eradication of Poverty and Redistribution of Income', the cleric stated that Zakat meant not only to eradicate poverty but also to give security to any nation.

He argued that it is the faith givers have in God that makes them give out from their wealth.

## Students jailed for stealing camera

By Hussein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

Two students were recently jailed for one month each by an Abuja magistrate court for stealing a digital camera and two speakers.

The accused persons, Alimu Modu and Umeh Ndubizu, all of Utako village, Abuja were arrested by the police on April 6, 2009.

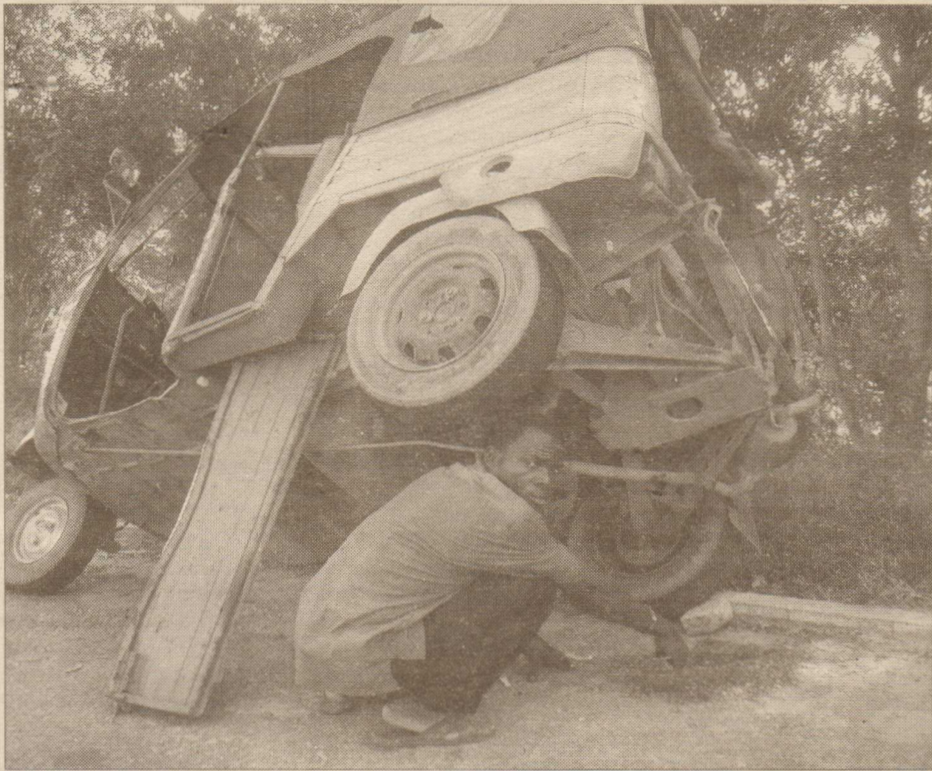
Prosecutor Abdullah Alhassan told the court that on April 6, 2009, one Sunny Okonkwo of Utako village reported to the police that the accused persons conspired to forcefully open his vehicle and stole the said items.

He said the stolen items were found on the accused persons during police investigation, adding that the offences committed by them are punishable under Sections 7 and 288 of the Penal Code Law.

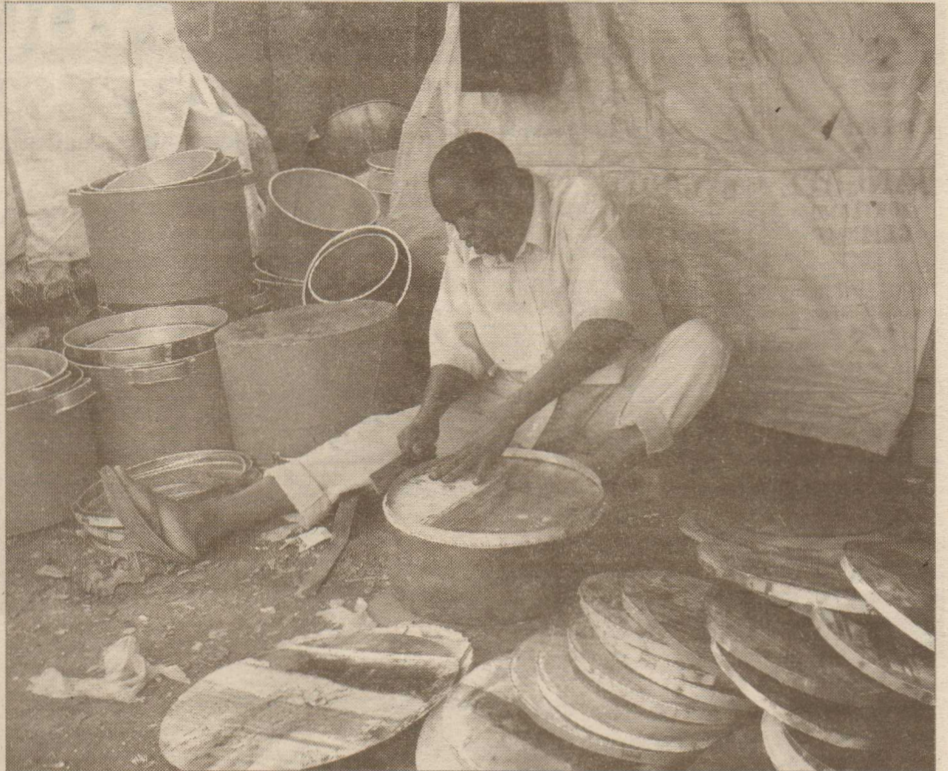
When the charges were read to the accused persons they all pleaded guilty and begged for leniency.

The prosecutor asked the court to try the accused persons summarily and Magistrate Aminu Mohammed sentenced them to one month imprisonment each or N3,000 fine options each.

# City Photospeak



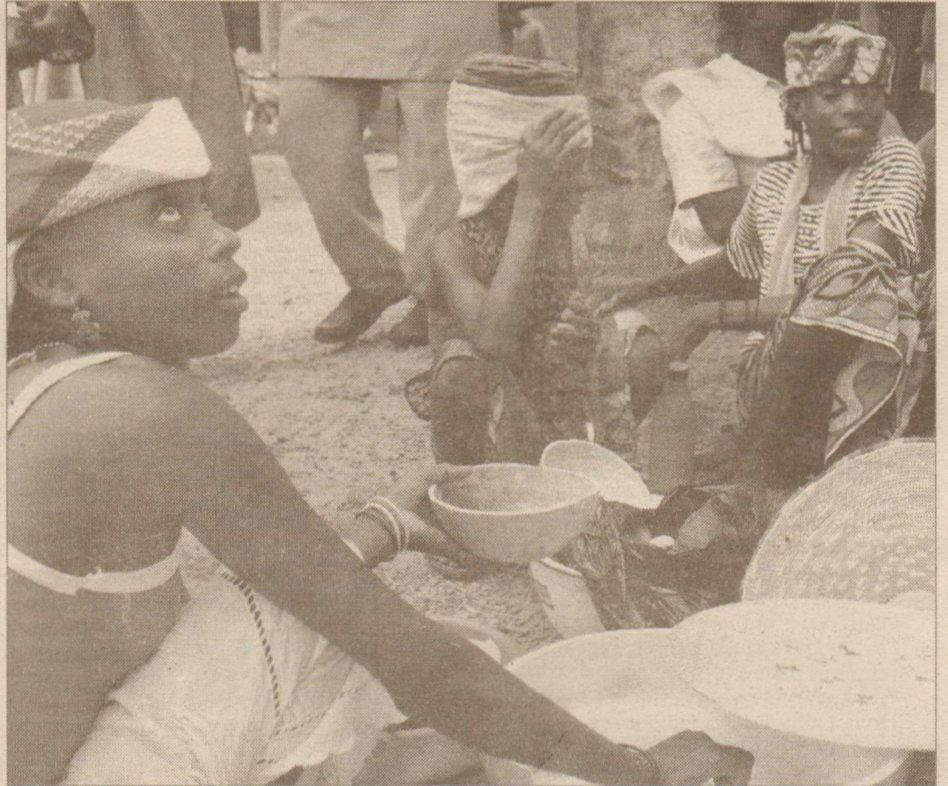
A mechanic fixing a broken down tricycle at Central Business Area, Abuja recently.



A potter at Utako.



A wheel barrow pusher waiting for customers at Mararaba.



Fura sellers at Peygi community.



Mobile phones battery charging business at Nyanya over the weekend. Pics: Felix Onigbinde.



Students of Junior Secondary School Jikwoyi during a workshop in Abuja recently. Pic: Abubakar Yakubu.

# City news

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**SEROB LEGACY HOTELS**, Plot 686/687, Idris Gidado Road, Wuye District, Abuja. Tel: +234-9-6281160, Fax: 09-6281161

Room type	Rates	Inclusive	Deposit	Non Resident
Standard room	N7,000	N8,050	N10,000	\$100
Deluxe Room	N9,000	N10,350	N12,000	\$120
Executive Room	N11,000	N12,650	N15,000	\$125
Business Suite	N15,000	N17,250	N20,000	\$150
Royal Suites	N18,000	N20,700	N23,000	\$175
Amb. Suites	N22,000	N25,300	N27,000	\$200

**Banquet Tariff:**

Legacy Hall	250	-	500 persons	N60,000 per day
Princess Hall	100	-	120 persons	N30,000 per day
Pool Side	50	-	80 persons	N40,000 per day
Meeting Rooms	-	-	20 people	N13,000 per day

**Note:** Inclusive means, 10% service charge and 5% Value Added Tax (VAT). US Dollar rate apply to expatriate without Nigerian resident permit. The above rates are subject to change with prior notice.

## HOTELS IN ABUJA

**Golden Age Hotels Limited:** Plot 2330, Kigoma Street, Zone 7, Wuse District, Abuja, FCT P.O. Box 9119  
Tel: 09-5230006, 5235100, 08036450811, Fax: 5239792

Room type	Rates	Inclusive	Deposit	Non Resident
Standard Room	N6,087	N7,000	N8,500	\$66
Alcove Room	N6,804	N7,825	N10,500	\$75
Golden Room	N7,804	N8,975	N11,500	\$85
Golden Suite	N14,348	N16,500	N19,000	\$140

**Other Facilities:** Our heavy duty 350 KVA generating set is on standby to ensure that you will have no cause to worry in case of power outages. While at the Golden Age Hotels, all your secretarial needs will be taken care of at our fully automated Business Centre that is equipped and manned to cater for your meetings and office support services like Binding, Photocopying, Typing, Word Processing, Facsimile, Laminating and Scanning etc.

**DENIS HOTEL**, 19, Njamenana Crescent, off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja.

Room type	Rates N	Inclusive N	Deposit Required N
Deluxe room	15,156	17,430	21,000
Twin room	17,722	20,380	23,000
Family suite	29,680	33,421	40,000
Executive suite	30,680	35,285	42,000

*Inclusive rate means: Addition of 5% vat and 10% service charge*

**CHIDA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL**, Plot 224 Solomon Lar Way, Utako district, P.O. Box 12338, Garki, Abuja.

Room Type	Room Rates
Presidential Suite	N40,000.00
Royal Suite	N30,000.00
Ambassadorial Suite	N25,000.00
Superior room	N18,000.00
Executive room	N15,000.00
Standard room	N13,000.00

**BOLTON WHITE HOTELS LTD.** No 7 Gwandu Street, Beside NPI, Area 11 Garki 2 Abuja. Tel: +234-9-3144311, 3144406, 3144406,

3144408, 3144318, 3144319 Fax: +234-9-3144405, +234-8022267197, +234-8065902167, +234-8054295027

**Room Types**  
**Room Rates (N)**

Inclusive Dollar (\$)
Club World
8,000
9,200
85
Delux Room
11,000
12,650
120
Super Delux Room
13,000
14,950
150
Executive Royale
15,000
17,250
160
Ambassador Suite
24,000
27,600
240
Presidential Suite
33,000
37,950
335

\* 50% Discount on all room types from Friday 12 noon to Sunday 12 noon Non-Inclusive of complimentary Breakfast.  
\* Change without prior notice  
\* Availability, \* 5% VAT and 10% Service Charge (Special rates applicable to corporate, group and long stay guests. Reservations are available on request.)  
**24 Hours room service**

**ROCKVIEW HOTELS.** Plots 194/196, Cad Zone A8, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Box 5879, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 094612800-

30, 08039043800-30; Classic: Tel: 094136722-38, 4614600-30; reservationroyale@rockviewhotelsltd.com; reservationclassic@rockviewhotelsltd.com

Room Types	Inclusive (N)
Superior Room	18,170
Superior King Room	19,320
Executive Room	20,700
Classic Room	22,080
Queens Room	23,230
Deluxe Room	25,530
Premium Deluxe Room	26,680
Royale Room	28,060
Alcove Room	30,590
King Size Room	33,120
Ambassadorial Suite	40,480
Diplomatic Suite	45,770
Business Suite	48,300
Service Apartment	59,800
Presidential Suite	82,800

\* Inclusive means 10% Service Charge and 5% VAT  
**(317 Rooms extensively furnished and equipped with colour TV, Satellite Channels, Telephone Systems and Air Conditioner. 24 Hours room service)**

## BUSES, TAXI FARES

**A. Nationwide Unity Transport Ltd**

Wuse to Gwarimpa	-	N50
Wuse to Suleja	-	N80
Wuse to Madala	-	N60
Wuse to Kubwa	-	N60
Wuse to Bwari	-	N70

**B. Abuja Urban Mass Transit Company**

Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Nyanya/Maraba & Ado	-	N50
Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Masaka	-	N60
Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Karu	-	N50
City centre to Karshi/Orozo	-	N80

**C. Sonic Global**

Area 1/Wuse to Gwagwalada	-	N100
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**D. Abuja cabs**

Each drop within the City centre	-	N100
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## FCT Helplines

**Federal Capital Territory Administration**

0804448844 080520006000 096729002

FCT website: www.fct.gov.ng.

### Abuja Fire Service

09-6711371, 09-4836175, 09-6701722

092341299 (Garki) (HQ) 093149682 (State House)

095232465 (Wuse Station) 08062091082 (Nyanya)

08059686173 (Nyanya) 08059665342 (Nyanya)

### Medical (National Hospital)

+234-9-2342686, 2341224, 2341382, 6712524,

**Fax:**

234-9-2342632

### FCT Directorate of Muslim Pilgrims Affairs

08058516721 08035949215

08069277076 07037837125

08036785152 08051332258

## SECURITY TIPS

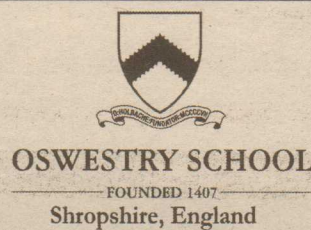
1. Be cautious when entering private vehicles that operate as taxis
2. Before you board a cab, take down the number and search the car to see if criminals are not hiding in it.
3. In crowded bus stops, hold tight to your bags and pockets in order not to be robbed by pick pockets.
4. Do not leave your children with strangers, especially in religious places of worship.
5. Always secure your residence by locking up the place.
6. Do not allow a stranger embrace you in public as such person may be out to pick your wallet
7. Mind how you give lift with your cars to strangers as some of them may be robbers
8. Be observant inside and outside bank premises in order not to be trailed by robbers.
9. Stop keeping money or valuables inside your car
10. Avoid buying sachet water in motor parks as some may be drugged.
11. Watch over your luggages in motor parks

## RESORT CENTERS

1. Wuse Park, opposite Sky Memorial Plaza at Zone 6, Abuja.
2. Berger Park, Berger Roundabout, Abuja.
3. Children's Amusement Park, opposite National Hospital, Abuja.
4. National Zoological Park, Asokoro.
5. Abuja Zoological Garden, Area 1, Abuja.
6. Millennium Park, Maitama.
7. Ceddi Plaza, Central district, Abuja.
8. Wonderland Amusement Park, Opposite National Stadium, Abuja.
9. Maitama Amusement Park, Maitama, Abuja.

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## STUDY IN THE UK

An independent, co-educational day and boarding school for ages 9 - 18

One of England's oldest schools, with a record of academic excellence; we provide a safe, supportive and friendly environment where students are encouraged to fulfil their academic and social potential.

We are pleased to offer prospective parents and students an opportunity to meet the Headmaster and Senior Master of this historic, successful school. Presentation/student counselling and interviews for entry in September 2009 (limited places available) held on the following dates:

### Abuja

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 10am - 5.30pm

Dave Abion Consulting Office, Suite 217B (Second Floor) Jinifa Plaza (opposite Securities & Exchange Commission Office), Muhammed Buhari Way, Central Business District, **Contacts:** Mary or Tola on 09-8729252, 08068559860

### Lagos

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 10am - 5pm

Dave Abion Consulting Office, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Elephant Cement House, Alausa, Ikeja For appointments, please call Tara or Ify - 01-7746088, 7379960, 08062700622

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 11am - 5pm

Nubi Educational Counselling, 300A Surulere Way, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi **Contact:** Nubi Educational Counselling 01 7910572, 08023135688

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 10am - 4pm

The Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja (Dave Abion Consulting) **Contact:** Tara, Ify & Vivianne on: 08062700622, 07055177000,

"We learn not for school but for life."

[www.oswestryschool.org.uk](http://www.oswestryschool.org.uk)

# City news

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Amigo Supermarkets

1023 Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

Fresh fruits and vegetables Butchery-fresh lamb, beef and chicken, dairy products, Bakery, toys, comestics, household items, Suya, popcorn, Electronics, stationary, seasonal items, food products, juice, Jewellery, mobile phones and confectionery

### Park n shop Supermarkets and departmental store

740 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

Cookers, washers/dryers, fridge/freezers, air conditioners, music systems, home and office furniture, lights, pet food, cheese products, fresh vegetables and fruits, butter, milk, wines, flat screen television, DVD/CD, cameras, phones, cigars

### Emab Plaza

Plot 751 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, close to Park n shop

#### Items you can buy

Artworks, children shops, boutiques, household items, supermarkets, pharmacy

### Maitama Stores

Suites 5,6 and 7 Maitama Shopping Complex at FHA, Maitama, Abuja.

#### Items you can buy

Provisions, cosmetics, assorted drinks, ice creams, textiles and frozen foods.

### Children's World Investment Ltd.

Prime Plaza. Plot 1012, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, opposite Rockview Hotel, Wuse II, Abuja.

#### Items you can buy

Toys, cards, shoes, dresses, accessories for kids.

### Grand Square

Plot 270 Muhammadu Buhari Way Central District, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

Homemade ice-cream, toiletries, fresh and frozen food, eggs, bakery, pastry, Drinks, wines, electronics, household appliances, Suitcases, toys, furniture, flowers

### Garki Stores and Supermarket

Plot 1240 Samuel Ladoke Akintola Street, Abuja and Plot 465 Ahmadu Bello Way, Garki 11, Abuja.

#### Items you can buy

Textiles, cosmetics, assorted drinks, frozen foods, provisions and ice creams

### Metro Plaza

Plot 991/992, 4<sup>th</sup> Cadastral Central Area, opposite War College, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

Canned and dry food goods, toys, electronics, drinks and clothes, ice-cream

### Children Affairs

1079, Kolda Link, off Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

Toys, cards, party accessories, sweets, everything for children

### Sahad Stores

Plot 1512, Uke Street, off Ahmadu Bello Way by NPI, Garki II, Abuja

#### Items you can buy

African prints, perfumes, Cosmetics, Canned foods, Cooking utensils, Greetings Cards.

### K City Plaza Ltd

Plot 528 Aminu Kano Crescent (by Multichoice/DSTV), Wuse 11, Abuja.

#### Available services include:

Boutique, Cosmetics & Perfumes, Cyber Café & Business Centre, Home Appliances, Super Market, Saloon, Travel Agency, Phones / Accessories



## Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja

Phase,3 Federal Secretariat Complex,  
Shehu Shagari Way, Abuja.

The Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Sam Egwu invites State Commissioners For Education, SUBEB Chairmen, Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executives of education Parastatals, Development Partners, professional Bodies and Associations, regulatory agencies, NGOS, Armed Forces Education Corps, Private operators, Parent-teacher Associations and Allstakeholders to an Extra-Ordinary session of the National Council on Education for the consideration and adoption of the Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector.

**Date:** Thursday April 16, 2009

**Venue:** International Conference Centre, Abuja.

**Time:** 10.00 a.m prompt

2. Grateful, attend promptly.

Signed.

**Alh S.B. Ozigis OON, mni**  
Permanent Secretary  
Federal Ministry of Education

# INSIDE POLITICS

## Why PDP senators are behind Yar'adua—Spokesman

Senator Ayogu Eze (PDP, Enugu North) is Chairman of the Senate Committee on Information and Media. Last week, Eze briefed newsmen on a recent closed door meeting of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) caucus in the Senate, which was alleged to have discussed automatic tickets for senators in the 2011 election and also discussed President Umaru Yar'adua's second term bid. Below are excerpts of his presentation.

**Is it true that the PDP caucus in the Senate at a closed door meeting last week resolved to support a second term ticket for President Yar'adua?**

If you have read newspapers in the past few days there have been some insinuations about the closed door meeting held by the PDP caucus of the Senate and somebody was trying to forge some issues that he or she thought happened in that closed door session. I want to state categorically clear that the meeting of the PDP caucus in the Senate never discussed the issue of the President's tenure, never mandated the Senate President to go and see the President on our behalf. On the contrary any time we have to see the President we had always had our leadership arrange it and we always had access to him. The President is very accessible to us and we don't have any reason whatsoever to want to send any message to him through a third party. If we want to see the President we will see the President, if we want to ask him any question whatsoever we will ask him. I also believe that it is wrong for anybody to start reacting to insinuations that are not confirmed or unfounded. That meeting was a closed door meeting whoever was reporting anything arising from that meeting was reporting something that was a product of his or her own imagination because nobody outside the senators was allowed in to the meeting and this senator claimed that the issue of the tenure of the President or his performance in office was discussed in that meeting. That senator is challenged to come out and say it openly. It was never discussed and if we have any issue with the President we always go to him like when the issue of chairmanship of the party came up we went and saw the President he was very accessible to us, he was very open to us and he told us his position even though things turn out differently from the position of the Senate but at least we discussed with him and we knew his thought. Even geo-political caucuses of the party who had wanted to see the President had always had access to him so we don't see why anybody will send the Senate President to go and tell the President that we are wondering about A or B so that issue did not arise. And

By Abdul-Rahman  
Abubakar & Turaki A.  
Hassan

to tell you that it is the hand work of mischief makers I also read somewhere that after our meeting some group of people met somewhere outside the Senate to discuss the same issue that is false. As far as I am concerned that matter never came up again after we met and no such matter was discussed.

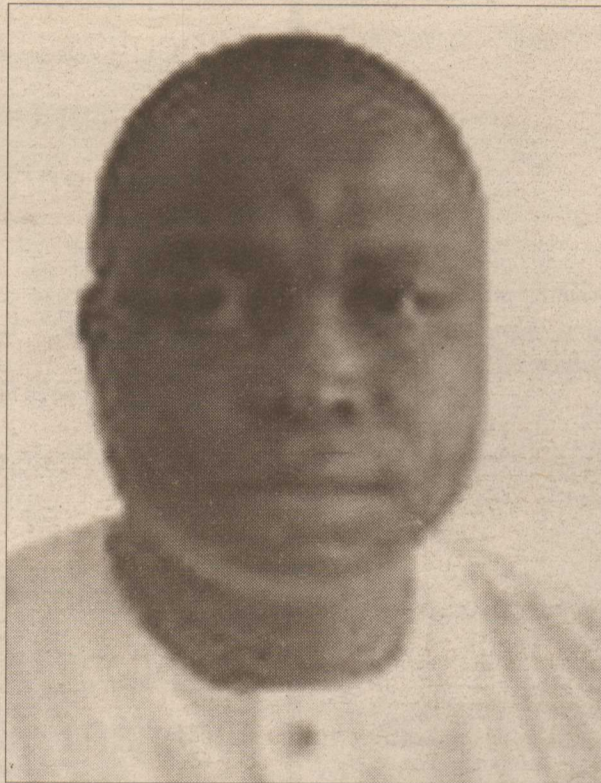
**So what did the caucus discuss?**

What was discussed in that meeting was the upcoming primaries of the PDP and the role of senators in the primary. A number of senators thought that all the senators should be members of the NEC because right now there are about six senators representing the entire senators in the NEC and we say that if you look at the system in America all the senators are members of the NEC of the party. So we don't see why that should not be the case here. If you recall on the day we had that caucus meeting the NEC was supposed to hold in the afternoon and we met in the morning to prepare our representatives on the kind of presentations we like them to make to the NEC and I know that some of these issues came up. The representation of senators at the NEC meeting and it was part of what was discussed at our closed door session. So it is the handiwork of mischief makers and those who want to curry favour with the executive by trying to create impression that the Senate is either not working with the executive or trying to raise issues where they do not arise. The President has not spoken to anybody about his ambition to go for second tenure. As far as I am concerned I have heard from his Special Adviser on Communications Segun Adeniyi who said the President is minded to concentrate on the job at hand rather than be distracted by issues of his second tenure. So how does that become a subject matter for senators where we know clearly that the President has not articulated any such ambition? So I want to dismiss this as the handiwork of mischief makers and those who want to disrupt the smooth working relationship between the legislature and the executive because otherwise there is no need for it.

**Is the PDP caucus in the Senate satisfied with performance of President Yar'adua?**

So far we are impressed with the articulation of the vision of the President; we are impressed with the structures that are being put in place by the President to

was cooked but with the quarrel the neighbour will know what type of meal was cooked. So it was not something we wanted to tell the Nigerian public since we were only strategising on how we can play a greater role but somebody went behind and said something



Senator Ayogu Eze

push through some of the issues in the seven point agenda. I think that the President had had composure to explain that it took him time to program these things so that when it takes off it will go on smoothly. So to that extent we are impressed. There is no actualisation that can come without planning and the President has taken his time to lay out the plan and we believe that if the soft structure is strong the physical structures will be enduring.

**It took you over a week to come up with this explanation on what transpired at the caucus meeting, do you think Nigerians will believe your position now?**

It was a caucus meeting that was held behind closed doors. It was not supposed to be a matter for public knowledge because we were just strategising on how we can make a stronger foothold inside the party as senators. Somebody now brought in mischief and my people have proverb that when there is a quarrel over the nature of sharing food the neighbours who are around will now have opportunity to know what is cooked because ordinarily it was just a food that

else.

**Are you saying that you are not aware of the President's decision to run for second term? Some governors have already started campaigning for him.**

Maybe the President had confided in the governors that he wants to run for second term; he has not confided in us. When the matter comes to us we will take a position on it. And I also need to say that if we work with the trend in democracy all over the world, the option of first rejection belongs to the incumbent. The American system that we copy when there is Presidential primary the option of first rejection belongs to the incumbent and even in America today no senator goes for primary election I stand to be contradicted. Once an election comes the man who is fielded is the incumbent senator and that is why they have long terms. The only time senator goes for primary election is if an incumbent is defeated by an opponent the next election will now require the party to conduct a primary election. Otherwise the option of first rejection belongs to the incumbent. First of all we never

took a position on the matter we are neither against nor for it. The matter has not come before us. The President has not told us that he wants to run for second term. We want to believe what was put out by his SA on Communications that he is now concentrating on matters of governance that is at hand now. When the matter comes it will be addressed properly.

**You said such issue never occurred, why then the quarrel that you are talking about?**

The quarrel I refer to here is the mischievous news report. If there was no such report we won't have come here to talk and the Nigerian public wouldn't have known what we discussed in that meeting. So in the process of refuting the false report I am now forced to tell you what took place. The agitation for senators to belong to the membership of NEC started with the fifth Senate so it has nothing to do with the running of the party. It has to do with the feeling of inclusion and the fact that we think that as people who have paid their dues in the society because if you ask me the Senate consists of a clog of Nigerian elders who have paid their dues in their different fields of endeavour from where they are coming and if you have such people and there is a precedence in other democratic line we too believe that we should be treated as our colleagues and co-senators are treated outside Nigeria. It has nothing to do with the running of the party. Those six persons representing us are not enough. That is all.

**Did senators demand for automatic tickets at the meeting?**

That has not been brought to my knowledge. I am not aware that any senator has made that request. That matter never arose. I told you it was an early morning meeting don't forget it was meant to prepare our members who are going for NEC to present our position. And don't forget that it was supposed to be meeting that will amend some sections of the party's constitution. We thought that we could use the opportunity of the amendment to also state our own position that we as senators feel that we should be members of the NEC.

**Is the Senate in any way worried about the health of Mr. President?**

To the best of our knowledge as senators the President is discharging his duties effectively and very creditably and there is a process for determining the health of public office holder. I as senator for instance before you can pronounce on my health you constitute a medical board of inquiry that will consist among other people my own personal physician who will be in the meeting that will decide the state of my health. After that has been decided it will now become a matter that will go to the legislature in the case of an executive to take some decisions. So the Senate cannot and does not even possess the authority to make any pronouncement or observation on the health of the President. The constitution doesn't give us the authority, so it is not an issue before us.

### 'Savannah State creation for good of all'

The Movement for the creation of Savannah State from the present Borno State said yesterday that its demand was for the general good of the people.

The movement is seeking the creation of the state from nine out of the present 27 local government areas of the state.

"Our demand is to engender greater development among the entire people of the present Borno. We are not guided by sentiments or any perceived domination, but rather we regard the creation of the state as a vehicle for further development," said Sen. Omar Hambagda, a member of the movement. Hambagda, representing Borno South Senatorial District at the National Assembly was speaking at a media chat in Maiduguri. He said that the movement began in 1973 during the military regime of retired Gen. Yakubu Gowon.

"The agitation for the creation of Savannah State actually started in 1973 during the regime of Gen. Yakubu Gowon when there were moves to create additional states in the country. "Although we made presentation to the government, our demand was not considered by the late Murtala Mohammed regime, which eventually created states in 1976," Hambagda said.

He said that the agitation continued in 1981 with a presentation to the then National Assembly for consideration.

"It is sad that although Savannah made the list of the 50 states penciled by the National Assembly for creation, the dream was scuttled by the military intervention of 1984. "It is also on record that Savannah was rated only second to Bayelsa by the committee on states creation of 1995 during the regime of late Gen. Sani Abacha," Hambagda said.

He said, however, that the state would have been created in 1995 but for a sharp division among the people who were ignorant of the aim of state creation. (NAN)

## SPORTS

Hotline:

08059100030 (Text Only)

## Sharks hold Abuja FC

By Ibraheem A. Fatai

Abuja FC will be happy to have come out of the Premier league encounter at the Old Parade Ground in Abuja against Sharks of Port Harcourt FC with a share of the spoil.

The match produced no goals, but Sharks had the upper hand, dictating the pace from the first blast of the whistle to the end of the match.

In the first ten minutes of the match, there was nothing much to choose between the two teams as they all started on a not too impressive note.

As the match progressed, the Port Harcourt team found their rhythm and made some incursions into FC Abuja's vital area, with Victor Ezeji making life difficult for the defenders.

Speaking at the end of the match, Sharks striker, Victor Ezeji, who scored four goals last week against Wikki Tourists, attributed the scoreless draw to bad pitch and heavy down pour, adding that his team can still grab one of the continental tickets if they continue to play well.

## Our loss due to bad luck - Duamlong

Gombe United FC Chief Coach, Ben Duamlong on Sunday in Kaduna blamed the loss of his team on bad luck.

Duamlong said his boys played well but 'mother luck' was "simply against us".

"We had a good chance of scoring but the shot kissed the goal post and went out, while Kaduna United with a similar opportunity converted theirs."

The coach simply, said "It was just a case of luck, anybody could have won the match."

The only goal of the match was scored by Kaduna United through Peter Obiora in the 26 minute of first half.

The second half, however, yielded no goals but was described by many as "more action packed than the first".

## Etuhu sparkle as Fulham sink Man. City

By Ismaila Umaru Lere

Super Eagles defensive midfielder, Dickson Etuhu was Fulham's hero as the Londoners came from behind to beat Manchester City 3-1 at the City of Manchester Stadium yesterday.

It was Fulham's second away win in this season's English Premier League.

Stephen Ireland gave Mark

Hughes's side a 28th-minute lead after his shot was deflected past Mark Schwarzer from the edge of the area.

But a second-half rally by a reinvigorated Fulham left City with no reply. First Clint Dempsey equalised for the Cottagers in the 50th minute before Etuhu

made amends for his part in City's goal, firing a fierce shot from the edge of the area past Given to give the Cottagers a 59th-minute lead and get his first goal for the club.

Dempsey then grabbed his second goal after Bobby Zamora had slipped the American through on goal in the 83rd minute to seal victory for Roy

Hodgson's side against a City side bereft of ideas in a poor second half.

The game started at a sluggish pace, with City's defence looking remarkably shaky early on, but Fulham were unable to take advantage.

A fine save from Shay Given at the feet of Bobby Zamora kept the hosts on terms and

spared captain Richard Dunne's blushes after the defender had clumsily lost possession to Andy Johnson in the fourth minute.

Johnson then went down inside the penalty area under a challenge from Dunne a minute later, but referee Mark Halsey waved it away to leave the striker looking bewildered.

Ireland, who had a subdued start to the match, broke the deadlock with very little warning: the midfielder collected the ball on the left edge of the Fulham penalty area and saw his speculative shot deflect off Etuhu and past Schwarzer.

Valeri Bojinov, who was leading the line on his own for the home side, then drilled a low shot narrowly wide of Schwarzer's near post, with Petrov in support left screaming for the ball on the half-hour.

The first half petered out with City happy to hold their lead and Fulham unable to build much of a threat. Yet Fulham emerged after the break with renewed urgency and Hodgson's reinvigorated side quickly caught City napping.

Their efforts were helped by slack defending from the hosts that enabled Dempsey to slot home the equaliser, as Paul Konchesky broke down the left to pass for Zamora, whose effort was cleared by Richards straight into the path of Dempsey, who finished crisply.



Fulham's Nigerian midfielder, Dickson Etuhu, right, celebrates after scoring with his teammate Danny Murphy and Ghanaian defender John Paintsil against Manchester City... yesterday.

## FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP

## Work at UJ Esuene Stadium slow

Although the floodlights at the UJ Esuene Stadium, Calabar, are almost ready, work on other facilities for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup are going on at a slow pace.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that while five of the six floodlights have been installed, with the sixth slated for Monday, work on the various rooms to be used by players, referees, FIFA officials and the masseurs, is at a standstill.

Six ambulances, which the Cross River government orde-

red, have yet to arrive.

"I am surprised at the way things are going. The government appears not to be releasing funds to the contractors and that is why not much is being done.

"In fact, at the rate we are going, I am beginning to doubt if Calabar is still interested in bidding to host the tournament," a reliable source told NAN on Saturday in Calabar.

But Mr Patrick Ugbe, Gov. Liyel Imoke's Chief Press Secretary, told NAN that there was no cause for alarm.

"No problem, we are on course and everything will be in place. Work is going on and all the facilities for which orders were placed, including the ambulances, will soon arrive," Ugbe said.

On the main pitch, only two women weed the grass after the second re-grassing instead of the 20 persons, who worked there one month ago.

However, on Saturday, painters were seen painting 52 steel desks recently fixed in the press gallery, while other workers affixed tiles to the floor

and ceiling boards to the roof of the conference room.

Mr Garry Forman, the Electrical Contract Manager of Lilliker Ltd., the firm handling lighting facilities at the stadium, said that the floodlights for the training pitches were increased to six when it was discovered that four were inadequate.

He told NAN in Calabar that each of the six floodlights carries 16 Philips bulbs of 200 watts each.

Cross River is one of nine Nigerian cities bidding to be one of the six that will eventually get FIFA's nod to host the

Under-17 World Cup matches, slated to hold between October and November.

The world soccer governing body's inspection team is expected in Nigeria next month for the final phase of inspection of the facilities for the cadet championship.

The Jack Warner-led team had said only Ijebu Ode and Abuja were technically ready when they visited Nigeria in January.

The nine cities are Abuja, Bauchi, Calabar, Enugu, Ijebu Ode, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos and Warri.

## Cowbell Para-Soccer tourney ends today

Curtains will be drawn today on the Cowbell Para-Soccer Tournament holding in Lagos as Rivers State Para-Soccer team will this evening take on Total Consult Terrorists of Lagos in the grand finals, reports David Ngobua.

The tournament which began on Friday April 10 at the Row Park Casino in Lagos has attracted a total of eight Para-Soccer teams from Lagos and Rivers State.

The Founder and out-gone head of the caretaker committee of the Para-Soccer Federation of Nigeria, PFN, Alhaji Misbahu Lawan Didi who spoke to Trustsports disclosed that while the third place match between A.Y United and NASS

Warriors both of Lagos stated has been slated for 2 pm, the grand finals would kick off at 4 pm.

He thanked Cowbell for supporting Para-Soccer just as he expressed gratitude to communication giants, MTN for supporting Cowbell in sponsoring the Easter break tournament.

Lawan Didi expressed satisfaction with the huge turnout of spectators who troop out daily to the venue of the tournament to watch the breath taking matches.

He described the huge attendance as a testimony that Nigerians have accepted the game which is played by the physically challenged people.

## Pillars beat Akwa United 2-1

Kano Pillars FC on Saturday in Kaduna defeated Akwa United FC of Uyo 2-1 in the ongoing Globacom Premier League. Akwa United boys, who outplayed Pillars at the start of the game were, however, unlucky as they conceded a goal through a penalty kick in the 36th minute of play through Rabiu Ali.

Rabiu had earlier been booked twice for rough tackles. Kano Pillars tore down the defence line of the visiting Akwa United two minutes after they scored the first goal by increasing the margin to two.

Moses Ogaga, one of the new attackers of the Pillars pulled a shot which went through the the goal keeper, Ambrose Vanzenkin into the net to record the second goal for his side. During first half, the scoreline stood at 2-0 in favour of the Pillars.

When the second half started, Akwa United was given a penalty kick following the hacking down of its attacker within the 18 yard box of the Pillars by the hosts' goalie. Akarandut Orok scored the penalty for Akwa FC, bringing the scoreline to 2-1.

Several incursions into the goal area of the Akwa United team were made by the pillars but poor finishing deprived them of further goals.

Pillars, who are relocated to Kaduna for both continental and league matches, had indicated their intention to play both matches at Ahmadu Bello Stadium.

## Quote of the Day

“He rang up and said he had a sore groin and unable to play... But there was no evidence earlier in the week he had the injury.”

— Newcastle manager, Alan Shearer, on why Nigeria's Obafemi Martins was pulled out of the team's squad against Stoke City. He insisted that he will not take disciplinary action against Martins despite his late withdrawal.

INSIDE &gt;&gt;&gt;

Joe Frazier still simmering over Ali P-53

Federer weds long-term girl friend P-56

# Sports

Real Madrid narrowed the gap on leaders Barcelona back to six points with a 2-0 victory over Valladolid at the Bernabeu.

A close-range strike from Raul shortly before half time and a classic counter-attack goal from Arjen Robben with eight minutes remaining were enough for the hosts to see off their mid-table opponents.

Madrid started proceedings the brighter in the first half, with Robben and Higuain causing problems down the flanks with their pace and trickery.

Madrid were unable to capitalise on their dominance of possession, however, and the first decent opportunity of the match fell to the visitors.

Lassana Diarra gave away a free kick with a foul on Fabian Cannobio after 25 minutes and the resulting set piece was taken by Sanchez Pedro Leon, whose effort on goal was spilled by Iker Casillas under his own crossbar.

Luis Prieto followed it in and should have applied the finishing touch but, under pressure from Casillas, he somehow headed wide from two yards.

Following a run and shot from Robben that flew narrowly wide, Valladolid had another great opportunity when the ball broke

## Real Madrid battle past Valladolid

loose in the Madrid area and Damian Escudero prodded it goalward.

Casillas was beaten and needed the assistance of Pepe, who cleared from his own goal line with the Valladolid players claiming it had gone over the line.

It was too close to call, however, and Madrid escaped.

The home side tried to take advantage of their fortune minutes later when Higuain burst down the left, with his cross-shot narrowly evading Raul in the middle before being beaten away by Sergio Asenjo in the visitors' goal.

With half-time looming Madrid took the lead when Higuain nipped in between two defenders on the right and slipped the ball through to Raul, who fired home left-footed from close range.

Higuain and Robben continued to create for Madrid in the second half, and it was the former who forced Sergio Asenjo into action after 56 minutes when the keeper punched away the striker's close-range effort.

Raul should have added a

second with 22 minutes remaining, but he blasted over from an excellent position; and when Robben missed a straightforward header ten minutes later

Valladolid were still in the game.

Pedro Lopez almost made Madrid pay for their profligacy when he beat Pepe to a right wing cross with ten minutes remaining,

but he failed to find the target.

A few minutes later the visitors came close again as Henok Goitom went down in the area, but while Valladolid were

appealing for a spot kick a long ball forward found Robben. The Dutchman beat his man and tucked the ball away calmly to seal the three points for Madrid.



Real Madrid's Argentinian midfielder Gonzalo Higuain reacts during a Spanish league match against Valladolid at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid. Real Madrid won 2-0.

## Villa fight back to hold Everton

Aston Villa and Everton shared the points after a thrilling 3-3 draw at Villa Park in the Premier League.

The home side recovered from a two-goal deficit in a pulsating encounter that saw both sides press forward relentlessly in pursuit of the three points.

Everton took the lead through Marouane Fellaini in the 19th minute after a fine cross from Leighton Baines, with Tim Cahill grabbing a second four minutes later.

But Villa hit back courtesy of John Carew's close-range strike to stay in contention going into half-time.

Steven Pienaar unleashed a superb shot in the 53rd minute

to re-establish the visitors' two-goal lead, but Martin O'Neill's side hit back once more through James Milner's stunning free kick in the 55th minute.

Gareth Barry then converted a 66th minute penalty to level the scores at 3-3, and with neither side able to clinch victory the match ended in a very fair draw.

O'Neill's side were looking to arrest a run of four successive league losses, and were good value for their point as they dominated much of the play - but only after a sluggish of which the visitors took full advantage.

Making his 400th Premier League appearance, Toffees

skipper Phil Neville attempted to get his name on the scoresheet with a rasping 16th-minute shot from 25 yards after the ball had squirmed out to him, forcing Brad Friedel to tip it over the bar.

Everton had their hosts under the cosh for much of the opening period, and three minutes later Fellaini gave Everton the lead, stealing in at the back post to tap home from Leighton Baines's superb delivery across the six-yard box.

Pienaar then drilled a shot just wide of Friedel's near post from the edge of the area, with Everton breaking at pace from a rare Villa attack in the 20th minute.

Everton's ascendancy was further established as Cahill doubled their lead in the 23rd minute. Baines whipped in a corner that the Australian met first with a powerful header which struck the bar and then with a sharp follow-up.

John Carew brought Villa back into the contest, finishing clinically after Gareth Barry and Gabriel Agbonlahor had failed to connect cleanly with Milner's cross in the 33rd minute.

Pienaar, clearly undeterred by an earlier aberration - attempting a fancy flick which squandered possession - found Cahill on the edge of the box with a fine piece of skill,

but his team-mate's pass to Jo was overhit and the chance went begging.

A superb ball from Ashley Young off his right foot on the stroke of half-time found Milner in the box, but Tim Howard punched away from a crowd of bodies to avert the danger.

The second half began with two powerful runs from Young which almost resulted in penalties. First the winger went down under a challenge from Hibbert, with both players fairly contesting the ball and Howard Webb waving away the half-hearted appeals.

Then Young hit the ground again a minute later with Pienaar challenging, but the result was the same.

At the other end, Leon Osman cleverly dummied a

pass from Cahill which Pienaar collected, swivelled and then found the top corner with a crisp strike to regain Everton's two-goal lead in the 53rd minute.

But just two minutes later and Villa were back in it once more, with Milner crashing a 20 yard free kick over the wall and into the corner of Tim Howard's goal to make it 3-2.

The hosts pressed forward in search of an equaliser, with Agbonlahor replaced by Nathan Delfouneso, and a high-footed challenge by Joleon Lescott on Petrov gave them an opportunity to level from the penalty spot.

Barry crashed the spot-kick down the middle of the goal with real conviction, leaving Howard with no chance as Villa deservedly levelled at 3-3.

## Ferguson hails 'special' Macheda

Sir Alex Ferguson lavished praise on substitute Federico Macheda after his goal secured a 2-1 win at Sunderland to put Manchester United top of the table.

"He's got something special about him, the boy," said the United manager of the 17-year-old Italian striker.

"He has a good eye for goal, a terrific physique and is not shy about playing under pressure - that's credit to him.

"He wasn't fazed by anything. Right away, he got involved in the game and he had a good 20 minutes for us."

In the space of a week Macheda has scored two goals in two substitute appearances, after his late goal on his league debut earned a 3-2 win over Aston Villa.

Ferguson decided to bring

on Macheda as a 75th minute substitute to replace Dimitar Berbatov, with United in desperate need of a winning goal to overtake Liverpool at the top of the Premier League.

Securing all three points proved vital for United's title defence, on a day when both rivals Liverpool and Chelsea had been victorious.

"It's a boost, of course and

an important away victory for us," said Ferguson.

"Sunderland is a difficult place to come, they were very committed so we can be pleased with that.

"The important thing is we have seven games left now and at this point, it is about cutting each game off as they come along."

But the 67-year-old Scot

played down suggestions that his team were feeling increased pressure in the title run-in.

"At the end of the day you have to do your own job and have the confidence in your players to react to any situation.

"Irrespective of where our opponents are the expectation is that Manchester United should get a result."

## Injured Senna to miss Arsenal tie

Villarreal will be without influential midfielder Marcos Senna for this week's Champions League return leg with Arsenal because of injury.

The Spain international, 32, limped out of Saturday's 2-0 defeat by Malaga with a hamstring problem.

It is not known how long Senna will be sidelined but the Villarreal website states he will miss Wednesday's game at the Emirates Stadium.

Senna scored Villarreal's goal as they drew the first leg 1-1 with Arsenal.

The Primera Liga side could be severely understrength in

midfield, with Santi Cazorla an absentee and wingers, Cani and Mati Fernandez, also doubtful.

Meanwhile, Arsenal have a crisis in defence with Johan Djourou joining William Gallas on the injury list after he was stretched off with a knee problem during the 4-1 win at Wigan.

### RESULTS

#### Premier League

Man. City 1, Fulham 3  
Aston Villa 3, Everton 3

#### La Liga

Real Madrid 2, Valladolid 0  
Mallorca 2, Almeria 0  
Osasuna 2, Athl. Bilbao 1  
Numancia 0, Espanyol 0  
Santander 2, Real Betis 3  
Sp. de Gijón 2, Valencia 3  
Villarreal 0, Málaga 2

#### Serie A

Reggina 0, Udinese 2

#### Bundesliga

Leverkusen 1, Bremen 1  
Stuttgart 1, Hamburg 0

#### Ligue 1

Lille 0, Paris-SG 0  
Marseille 4, Grenoble 1  
Rennes 1, Saint-Etienne 0

# Sports

## Robredo advances at Monte Carlo

Eleventh-seeded Tommy Robredo of Spain and 13th-seeded Stanislav Wawrinka of Switzerland advanced to the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters in straight sets on Sunday.

Robredo beat Rainer Schuettler of Germany 6-1, 6-4, and Wawrinka defeated Viktor Troicki of Serbia 6-2, 6-3.

Schuettler, the 2004 runner-up, won only 16 points in the first set and lost his serve five times.

Robredo next plays either Juan Monaco or Jeremy Chardy, while Wawrinka will face either Igor Andreev or Martin Vassallo Arguello.

Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany and Simone Bolelli of Italy also won. Kohlschreiber beat Ernests Gulbis of Latvia 6-1, 6-3 to set up a second-round match against seventh-seeded Fernando Verdasco of Spain.

"It's a very good start for the clay court season," Kohlschreiber said. "Overall I have to say I did everything right. I played a good match today."

Bolelli needed more than two hours to defeat big-serving Robin Soderling of Sweden 6-4, 1-6, 6-3.

Bolelli broke Soderling in the fourth game of the third set and then held for a 4-1 lead. He clinched the match with an ace on his second match point and next faces either ninth-seeded Gael Monfils of France or Janko

Tipsarevic of Serbia.

Top-ranked Rafael Nadal will begin his quest for a fifth consecutive Monte Carlo title in the second round against either Igor Kunitsyn of Russia or Juan Ignacio Chela of Argentina.

The Spaniard has won the French Open and Monte Carlo every year since 2005—beating second-ranked Roger Federer in the last three finals at both events.

All the players ranked in the top 10 are taking part this year, except sixth-ranked Andy Roddick.

Federer accepted a last-minute wild card invitation Thursday. The 13-time Grand Slam champion married his longtime girlfriend Mirka Vavrinec in a small ceremony in his hometown of Basel on Saturday.

After struggling with his form last year and losing his No. 1 ranking to Nadal, Federer also lost to the Spaniard in this year's Australian Open final.



Jelena Jankovic claimed her first title of the season at the Andalusia Tennis Championships.

## Jankovic beats Suarez in Andalusia final

World number four Jelena Jankovic battled to a 6-3 3-6-6-3 win over Carla Suarez Navarro on Sunday to claim her first title of the season at the Andalusia Tennis Championships.

The 20-year-old Spaniard

gave Jankovic a stiff test in sunny and breezy conditions on the clay in Marbella but the Serbian second seed prevailed thanks to her consistency and power.

The win gave Jankovic, who

ended 2008 at the top of the world rankings, a much needed boost as she has struggled to make an impact during the 2009 season.

"I know I have not been playing well the last three months but this win has given me back

the confidence I need," Jankovic said at a news conference.

Jankovic recently said her mother's health problems were affecting her tennis but on Sunday she finally managed to focus on her tennis.

She won the first set relatively comfortably with two breaks of serve before Suarez Navarro, playing in her first WTA tour final, produced a string of superb passing shots to claim the second.

The 34th-ranked Suarez Navarro's challenge faded in the deciding set and she allowed Jankovic to storm into a 5-1 lead.

The Spaniard briefly rallied to break Jankovic as she served for the match and then saved two match points on her own serve in the next game.

Jankovic sealed victory and her 10th career title when Suarez Navarro netted a return on the fifth match point.

## Woods plays mind games with himself

Normally on the third day of the Masters — "moving day", as Tiger Woods calls it — the rest of the field are reduced to watching his clicking progress into the distance as the shadows lengthen.

Not yesterday — at the start of the round, at least, and not with much trepidation at the end of it.

No, in the penultimate session of the 2009 Masters it was Tiger's turn to keep an anxious eye on the leaderboard, as his own game spluttered like a reconditioned Rolls Royce and old Ken Perry and youngish Chad Campbell rattled along with the zip of a pair of jalopies down Magnolia Lane.

They were attended for much of this warm, light-breezed day by Angel Cabrera, Tim Clark, Jim Furyk, Steve Stricker, Shingo Katayama, Todd Hamilton ... names (with the exception of Furyk who clattered through the field in the afternoon), that light up few billboards.

Woods has no right to victory, of course — only a predisposition for it. But, after eight months away working on

his knee, the magic remained bottled and the grim countenance fixed — until his faltering putter came to life, brightly in the middle and clinically at the end.

As he lined up a six-footer for par on the 18th, thoughts of bogeys here on Thursday and Friday were, no doubt, expelled from his cool head; he slotted it home to finish four-under. He's still there, still Tiger.

Hurrying from the course, he bore the look of a champion keen to keep his mojo, to stay strong after one of the toughest days of his comeback. "Right now, I need to eat," he said. "That's what I'm going to do right now."

But he lingered long enough to dissect his day. "It was not a very good start, obviously. Making double at one and three-putting the first hole just put me right behind the eight-ball. But, man, I fought hard to get it back today. That was a hell of a fight."

Indeed it was. To tread the carpeted warmth of the Augusta National Golf Club is to walk into a painting, so perfect are the colours and shapes. Briefly yesterday, though, it was as if



Woods is in need of self-belief after stuttering at Augusta.

Tiger had taken his place in something conjured up by Edvard Munch.

The day, blessed in sun, the grass sparkling from overnight storms, could hardly have started more wretchedly for the man who has won here four times. He was entitled to scream when he went wild left off the 1st tee, into the trees, then lugged it out to the right of the green for what should have been a regulation up-and-down. But his chip rolled back on him, and he missed a three-foot putt for double-bogey.

He blew a birdie chance at

the 7th, as he struggled to give his round the heart-thumping lift it needed. Finally it came: a monster 45-footer at the 9th for birdie and he turned in 36 for the third time this tournament. It wasn't diabolical, but it wasn't divine. Tiger found himself caught between heaven and hell and, early in the day, did not look to know the way out.

If he puts himself in contention to win from here, he will, surely, be drained by the exertion of the comeback. Won't he? He can't do it, realistically. Can he? Then again, Woods has always been a golfing surrealist.

## Suns cruise past Timberwolves 110-97

The Phoenix Suns' season is all but over. Their playoff hopes were vanquished on Wednesday, rendering the final four games of the season virtually meaningless.

You wouldn't know that by watching Grant Hill play on Saturday night.

The 14-year veteran gave his younger teammates a lesson in professionalism, scoring 19 points in 23 minutes to lead Phoenix to a 110-97 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

"That guy's got more character than anybody that I know," interim coach Alvin Gentry said. "He's such a professional that every night he steps out there he tries his best. He may not play well, but you never have to say anything about effort or coach effort with him and I think that's really important."

Hill was 7-for-8 from the floor and played as if this game actually mattered, even though

the Suns will miss the post-season for the first time in five years.

Jared Dudley scored 16 points and Shaquille O'Neal had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Suns, who gave heavy minutes to youngsters Robin Lopez, Goran Dragic and Louis Amundson.

Sebastian Telfair had 21 points and shot 8-of-12 for Minnesota, but his teammates didn't fare nearly as well in another slow start at Target Center.

"Just a terrible effort from start to finish," Wolves coach Kevin McHale said. "Hard to account for it... No bright spots. Nothing."

The youthful Wolves could learn a thing or two by watching Hill as well.

The consummate professional, Hill set the tone early with 11 points in the first quarter one night after an embarrassing 17-point loss at Memphis.

# TRUST CLASSIFIED

## ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH SHARE HOLDERS NIGERIA

The general public is hereby notified that the above named Foundation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for registration under part "C" of the Companies and Allied Matters Act. No. 1 of 1990 (As amended), Cap C 20 LFN 2004.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Bello Bala Muazu
2. Safiyanu Yahaya Hassan
3. Abubakar Ali
4. Kabiru Ibrahim Usman
5. Aminu Zubairu
6. Hadi Rabi

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

1. Protect share holders right
2. Making share holders wise
3. More knowledge on stock market

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 565, Ndola Square, Off Michael Opera Street, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:  
MANAGEMENT

## PECULIAR ANIONTED LIBERATION MINISTRY

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Ministry has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for registration under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Pastor Ifeanyi Fabian Udeozor
2. Pastor Ngozi Chinazom Udeozor
3. Elder Emmanuel Nwokone
4. Sister Ifeanyinwa Obiora
5. Elder Justine Uba
6. Lazarus Amah

**Aims and Objectives**

1. To propagate the word of God to the end of the earth.
2. To raise men and women of Christ like character and preach salvation to the world.

Any objection(s) to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent Maitama, P.M.B 198, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:  
Maxwell Alaeto

## YEARNING EARNESTLY FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE

This is to notify the general public that the above mentioned Organization has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (C.A.C) for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap 59 Laws of 1990.

**The Trustees are:**

1. Engr. Adetokunbo Anthony Adetayo
2. Mr. Biola Ogunrombi
3. Mrs. Omowonuola Ayoka Adetayo
4. Miss Adetola Adetayo

**The Aims and Objectives are:**

1. Empowering of youth globally
2. Seeks to help the youths develop can do attitude and say yes to peaceful co-existence.
3. Having positive attitude to life, positive re-enforcement
4. To amplify positive asepis of the youths, positive mobilization of the youth and society to embrace government policies and programmes think yes, say yes.
5. Yes foundation is about creating a world of possibilities.

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 565, Ndola Square, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:  
Barr. Ede Oluchukwu Ede  
Suite 208 Anbeez Plaza Zone 5,  
Abuja-FCI 08035950617.

## LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the loss of original Acknowledgement of Land document belonging to PIRGOS ENTERPRISES for plot No. 18, Cadestral Zone 07-05 Kubwa measuring 2203.01sqm is hereby declared missing.

All efforts made to trace it proved abortive. If found please return to the nearest police station. AGIS and the general public take note please.

## DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT INITIATIVE

This is to notify the general public that the above named organisation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Jayne Ifeoma Nwosu
2. Gerald Uchenna Nwosu
3. Amina Saidu Malami
4. Uba Saidu Malami

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. Sensitisation of parents of children living with down syndrome.
2. Establishment of resource centre
3. Capacity building for parents, family members and care givers.
4. Raising awareness among the public.

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, P.M.B 198 Garki, Abuja within twenty-eight (28) days of this publication.

V.O Muoneke, Esq  
(Legal Practitioner)

## GALAXY OF TALENT FOR PROMOTION OF YOUTHS' DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRENEURIAL SPIRIT INITIATIVE.

This is to notify the general public that the above mentioned Foundation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (C.A.C) for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap 59 Laws of 1990.

**The Trustees are:**

- |                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Zakariya Akinola Kehinde Akinpeju | Chairman  |
| 2. Aisha Adebisi Akinpeju            | Member    |
| 3. Mariam Adewumi Akinpeju           | Member    |
| 4. Zahrat Abimbola Akinpeju          | Member    |
| 5. Rasheed Adewale Raji              | Member    |
| 6. Abdul-Fattah Adebayo Hasan        | Secretary |

**The Aims and Objectives**

- a. To promote self development and entrepreneurial spirit among the youths
- b. To develop the inherent abilities and capabilities of the individual youth
- c. To undertake and engage in educational and cultural activities with a view to promoting self reliance among the youths.

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 565, Ndola Square, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:  
Abdul-Fattah Adebayo Hasan  
Solicitor  
08033735540

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly ABDULLAHI HARUNA now MOHAMMED K. SULAIMAN. All former documents remain valid. Collegé of Education, Gumel and general public to note.

I, formerly known as AUWAL YAHAYA now wish to be called AUWAL YAHAYA IYAL . All former documents remain valid. Fidelity Bank and authority concerned to note.

I, formerly MISS OWUNO LOUISA NGOZI now to be addressed as MRS ALI LOUISA NGOZI. All former documents remind valid. NYSC, general public note.

## NASRIL HAQ ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

This is to notify the general public that the above named Society has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (C.A.C) for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap 59 Laws of 1990.

**The Trustees are:**

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Alhaji Muhammad Saheed Usman | 2. Hajija Fatimah Binta Usman |
| 2. Hajija Lateefah Abubakar     | 4. Albulwasiu Abdulazeez      |
| 3. Ismael Bello                 | 6. Sheu Ibrahim               |
| 7. Abdul Majeed Yunus           | 8. Mukadam Yusuf Adebayo      |

**Aims and Objectives are:**

1. To propagate Islamic religion in Nigeria
2. To promote Islamic knowledge through establishment of Islamic Centres in Nigeria.

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Maitama District, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:  
Aya Alhassan  
Suite 14 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
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## Sports

## At 65, Joe Frazier still simmering over Ali

Muhammad Ali described his third and final fight with Joe Frazier as "death."

"Closest thing to dyin' that I know of," he said.

Frazier recalls their brutal match up outside Manila as something much less grandiose.

"We just did our job," he said.

The two great heavyweights always have been the ying and yang of boxing. Why should things change nearly 35 years later?

Now 65 and walking with the use of a cane, the slightly stooped Frazier reflected on the iconic fight in Quezon City in 1975 during a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press. He also talked about the contentious relationship between the starring characters, which is the subject of the new HBO documentary "Thrilla in Manila" premiering Saturday night.

"I don't think Manila was my greatest fight," Frazier said forcefully.

He ticks off several others in vivid detail, from the Golden Gloves to his gold medal at the

By Dave Skretta,  
AP Sports Writer

Tokyo Olympics, to the "Fight of the Century"—when he beat Ali at Madison Square Garden in 1971 to retain the heavyweight title.

"The greatest fight was '71, when we were all undefeated," he said. "There was more money, more people. I don't know why they make this one out to be the biggest fight."

When it comes to his long-time foil, Frazier is sympathetic to the suffering Parkinson's disease has caused Ali. But as a Christian, Frazier said, he isn't surprised by it, either.

"I'm sorry that he is the way he is, but I didn't have too much to do with it. It was the good man above," Frazier said. "Maybe I did have a little to do with it, but God judges, you know what I'm saying? We don't have the power to judge that the man has above."

Frazier believes that Ali's arrogant boasts of "I am the greatest!" were "a slap in the Lord's face," and that he did the same to his family when he changed his name from Cassius Clay to reflect his

Muslim beliefs.

"I respect him as a guy who did a fine job in the fight game," Frazier said. "I don't think he really loves me. I didn't like nothing he done, you know?"

That lingering tension can be traced to their epic trilogy, which turned former friends into enemies and culminated with an event that became as much about politics as prizefighting.

Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos actively sought their 1975 bout to divert attention from the social turmoil that was raging in his country, and promoter Don King—ever one to put on a spectacle—consented to holding the fight at the Araneta Coliseum.

It was the rubber match between two bigger-than-life heavyweights on the decline, Ali having beaten Frazier in their 1974 rematch. Following that bout, the tongue-whipping Ali regained the title by beating George Foreman in Zaire, the famed "Rumble in the Jungle."

Frazier was hanging on for one more shot at the title—and one more at Ali.

The animosity that grew

over the pair's first two fights reached a climax when, after the Philippines bout was announced, Ali pulled out a black rubber gorilla and famously launched into a poem:

fight.

After throwing his arms up in celebration, an exhausted Ali collapsed to the canvas.

Ali later tried to make amends, calling the mocking

He hangs around the gym and spends time with young fighters, but he's no longer interested in the sport at its highest level. There are too many so-called champions in



Boxing legend Joe Frazier

"It will be a killa and a chill and a thrill, when I get the gorilla in Manila."

"He kept saying, 'Joe Frazier, I'm going to whup you,'" Frazier recalled, still pained by the race-baiting attacks. "I said, 'Alright, I'm going to wrap your butt up.' People loved him on the basis of his noise."

The fight was scheduled for 10:45 a.m. to accommodate television in the United States, and the morning broke hot and humid. Thousands of people packed the arena, filling even the aisles, and for 14 rounds the two titans clashed—Ali winning the early rounds, Frazier asserting himself over the middle rounds.

Ali staggered Frazier in the 12th, then again in the 13th, one clean punch knocking his mouthpiece into the crowd. Frazier's left eye was swollen shut, his right eye closing. Even though the scorecards were virtually tied, and against Frazier's objections, his trainer Eddie Futch called a stop to the

use of a gorilla a promotional ploy, and said if "God ever calls me to a holy war, I want Joe Frazier fighting beside me."

But the wounds ran deep, and while the two men have alternated apologies with attacks over the years, their relationship is still raw.

"I don't mind people want to think Muhammad is the greatest fighter around," Frazier said. "Everybody wants to make him great because of his mouth, that he was the best. He was good, but that doesn't make him great. I proved that."

While the aftermath of a career spent inside the ring left Ali a broken man physically, it left Frazier broken financially.

He lost much of his hard-won fortune in real estate dealings gone awry, and gave away untold thousands of dollars, generous to a fault. While contemporaries like Foreman and Larry Holmes—and yes, Ali—are living comfortably, Frazier has only a humble Philadelphia apartment.

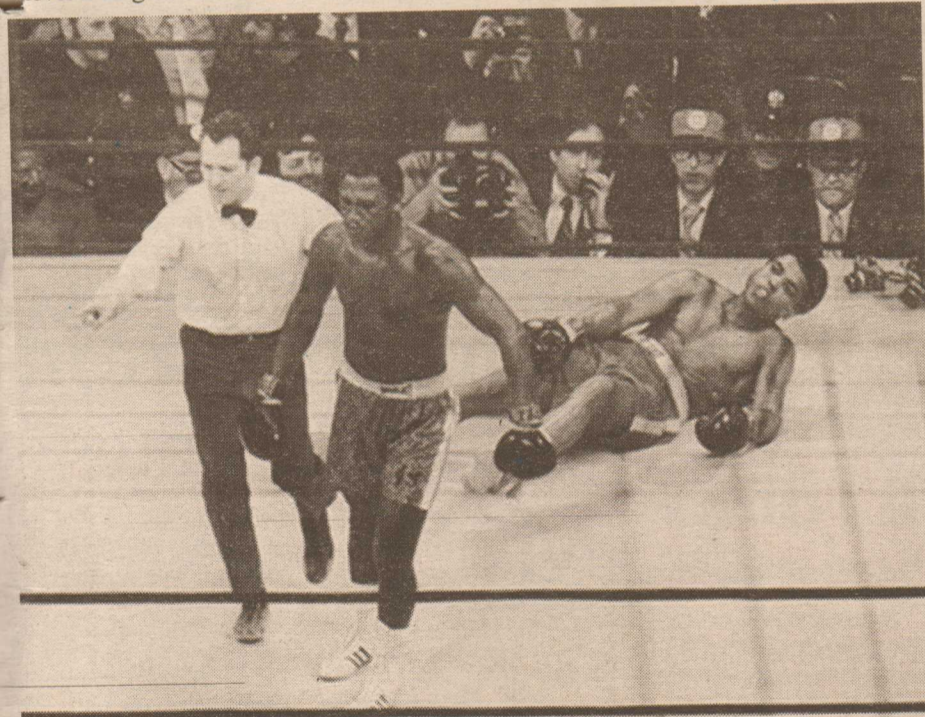
too many weight divisions, and the heavyweights—long considered the most glamorous—have become a joke.

The sport's popularity has waned considerably from the days of his historic battles with Ali, when the "sweet science" was forefront in newspapers and the American psyche. Now, boxing has become a niche sport followed mostly by the devoted.

"It just doesn't interest me anymore, the guys aren't exciting anymore," Frazier said, while holding out hope that its luster might one day be restored.

"Sure it bothers me. I'm going to wait until (President Barack) Obama gets a little quiet in Washington, and then I'm going to see if he has a meeting with me, or take a few guy with me, and seen and be heard about it."

"Let's see if we can get this back to where it needs to be." Perhaps back to where it was in 1975.



Joe Frazier is directed to the ropes by referee Arthur Marcante after knocking down Muhammad Ali during the 15th round of the title bout in New York's Madison Square Garden on March 8, 1971.

Britain's David Haye will challenge Wladimir Klitschko for his IBF and WBO heavyweight titles on 20 June at Schalke 04's stadium in Germany.

"We have reached an agreement with Schalke 04 and the football stadium," said Klitschko's manager Bernd Boente.

The venue in Gelsenkirchen holds 61,000 people and also has a retractable roof.

Haye, 28, a former undisputed cruiserweight world champion from London, has only fought as a heavyweight twice before.

The fight was finally agreed after four months of protracted negotiations.

## Venue for Haye-Klitschko revealed

"I'm so pleased we've finally managed to get this fight on," said Haye, who has won 22 of his 23 fights, with 21 knockouts.

"Klitschko's last opponents were cowards and I will knock him out and take his belts back to London. I guarantee I'll knock him out in spectacular fashion. I'm his worst nightmare."

"That's not all, I will also go and get Vitali [Wladimir's older brother, who holds the WBC title] belt. None of them can stop me. The new world heavyweight champion will soon be David Haye."

"I'm taking this fight to save boxing. I'm doing this for Jack Dempsey, Rocky Marciano, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and all the other great, smaller heavyweights of the past."

"I feel as though I've been sent by all the great heavyweights of yesteryear to clean up and save the heavyweight division."

Ukrainian Wladimir, who has 52 wins and three losses, with 46 knockouts, replied: "I am used to being attacked by my opponents before a fight, but David is top of the list of

crudity.

"He has to pay the price for it and I promise it will be painful."

Haye, who knocked out veteran American heavyweight Monte Barrett in November, had been due to meet Vitali, who, at 37, is four years Wladimir's senior.

But Vitali opted to take on mandatory challenger Juan Carlos Gomez of Cuba instead.

However, Wladimir, who is marginally smaller than his brother and who has been knocked out three times, had always been Haye's preferred

target.

Wladimir, who won gold at the 1996 Olympics, won his first world heavyweight title in October 2000, when he beat American Chris Byrd to claim the WBO crown.

However, South African Corrie Sanders knocked him out in two rounds in 2003 before American Lamont Brewster stopped him the following year. He had previously been stopped by journeyman Ross Purity in 1998.

Wladimir claimed the IBF title with a rematch win over Byrd in 2006, gained revenge

over Brewster in 2007 and reclaimed the WBO title with a unanimous decision over Sultan Ibragimov in 2008.

His last fight was a seventh-round stoppage of former world champion Hasim Rahman last December.

Haye's only defeat came against fellow Briton Carl Thompson in 2004, when he was stopped in the fifth round.

But he beat Frenchman Jean Marc Mormeck in Paris to claim the undisputed cruiserweight crown in 2007, before destroying Welshman Enzo Maccarinelli last March.

## Sports



Manchester City's Robinho, right, passes the ball away from Fulham's Danny Murphy during their English Premier League match at the City of Manchester Stadium... yesterday.

Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has told Cristiano Ronaldo that he will not accept any further lapses in possession and warned the Portuguese not to let his frustration get the better of him.

The winger has cut a frustrated figure at times this season and was guilty of giving the ball away in the lead-up to goals for Aston Villa and Porto in the last week.

Ronaldo was the key figure in United's march to the Premier League and Champions Lea-

## Ferguson warns Ronaldo over lapses

gue double last season but Ferguson has made sure the star knows what is expected.

"No, I don't accept that he will give goals away because of the player he is, I speak to him about it," Ferguson said. "I don't accept that from anyone."

"In European football, if you give the ball away it takes a

long time to get it back.

"He always feels he's not getting the proper protection from referees and I think that, maybe, in quite a few cases he is right, and a few cases he is not right."

"It's hard when a player who wants to entertain doesn't get everything his own way. But you can't get everything your

own way.

"He understands that and there's not a problem with that. It's just a frustration that he feels he doesn't get the decision and he gets upset about it."

"I think, obviously, he doesn't enjoy that and he knows he's letting himself down more than anything."

"He holds his hands up. I have had to remind him about that but I'm not getting into what has been said."

United are two points clear

of Liverpool at the top of the Premier League with a game in hand following their respective wins over Sunderland and Blackburn.

## Pachuca knock Toluca from ranks of unbeaten

On Saturday evening it was the battle of the number one and undefeated team, Toluca, against the number two ranked team, Pachuca. In the end los Tuzos triumphed, taking away Toluca's dominance of the table and unbeaten record while winning 3-1.

The first half was primarily Toluca's. It started early when in the 8th minute Hector Raul Mancilla had a shot on goal only for Pachuca's Miguel Calero to stop. The Pachuca keeper played very well in the game and was an important part of the winning side.

In the 18th minute things looked good for Toluca as they went up 1-0. Calero had come out to stop Carlos Esquivel on the right and after a series of rebounds the ball once again landed at Esquivel's feet. He then set up the ball for Mancilla who put it in the back of the net.

Pachuca came closest to goal in the first half during the 46th minute, but Hernan

Cristante managed to stop a shot with his foot to deny los Tuzos an equalizer.

It wasn't too long after the restart in the 53rd when Pachuca equalized. In came a corner and Paul Aguilar rose in front of Cristante to head it into the Toluca goal to make the game 1-1.

Only a few minutes later in the 59th when a long cross from Alvarez to Blas Perez, who headed in to make it 2-1 to Pachuca.

Toluca had a great chance of their own during the second half in the 65th minute when Mancilla came up against Calero on the edge of the box.

Mancilla ended up blowing his chance over the goal.

Pachuca were anxious to seal their win and they did so in the 80th minute. Cristante punched a ball into the path of Caballero who pushed it into the goal to make the score 3-1.

Pachuca were left with a win, the leadership of the table, the joint place for top scorer of the Clausura 2009, and the satisfaction of beating the previously unbeaten team of the tournament.

## Terry: Chelsea need Hiddink not Mourinho

Chelsea captain John Terry has revealed that the Blues are not interested in seeing Jose Mourinho return to Stamford Bridge and would rather Guus Hiddink stayed on instead.

The Dutchman has proved an instant hit in west London after replacing Luiz Felipe Scolari at the Chelsea helm.

Hiddink has improved the Blues' form, keeping them in touch at the top of the Premier

League whilst also guiding them to a superb 3-1 victory over Liverpool in the Champions League.

His role as manager of the Russian national team, however, means his future at the club is far from clear, which has led to speculation that former boss Mourinho may return.

Yet speaking to *The Observer*, Terry hailed Hiddink's influence and hinted that the 62-year-old may be persuaded to

stay, particularly if the club ended the season with some silverware.

"He has a good relationship with Roman Abramovich," said the defender.

"Things have gone very well and I'm sure there will be talks ongoing. If we keep progressing there's only going to be one option. He's done brilliantly. He's on at us every day in training, and he doesn't let anyone get away with anything."

## Tempers flare in Serie A games

Mourning for the victims of Monday's earthquake in the Italian region of Abruzzo did not stop tempers flaring in Serie A's first day since the disaster on Saturday.

Cagliari said one of their players was hit in the tunnel after their 2-1 defeat at Fiorentina, while the derby between AS Roma and Lazio was marred by incidents inside and outside the stadium.

"We have a player, (Diego) Lopez, who is hurt so he must have taken a punch from someone," Cagliari boss Massimiliano Allegri was quoted as saying by the ANSA news agency.

"There was a bit of commotion in the tunnel and it seems like there was an attack."

Three players were sent off in the second half of the Rome derby, which Lazio won 4-2, while Roma coach Luciano Spalletti and Lazio team manager Igli Tare were also red-carded because of a heated exchange at halftime.

Spalletti, who was angry about the opening goal coming from a corner wrongly awarded

to Lazio and a turned-down penalty shout, and Tare continued the row on television after the game.

Police used tear gas to separate fans of the rival Roman teams while one supporter suffered minor injuries in a clash after the game, newspaper *La Gazzetta dello Sport* reported on its website ([www.gazzetta.it](http://www.gazzetta.it)).

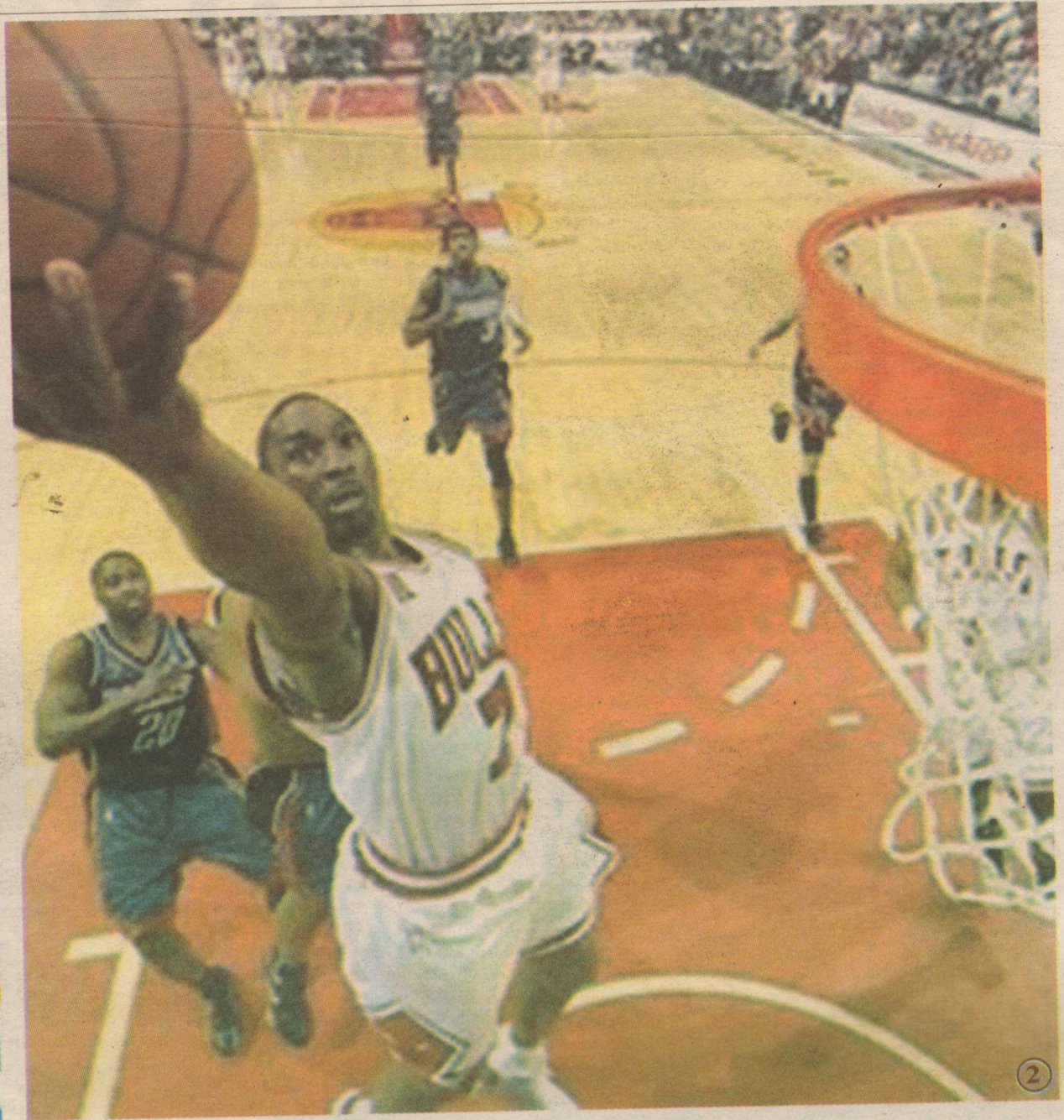
There had been calls in the media for Serie A to be on its best behaviour as a mark of respect following the earthquake and the day started positively in this regard.

A minute's silence was observed at the start of the games, with the receipts from some going to disaster funds, the players wore black armbands and there were messages of solidarity at the grounds.

Several footballers and coaches said this week that it would have been better to have postponed this weekend's Serie A programme.

The Serie B matches due to be played on Friday, when a mass state funeral was held on a national day of mourning, were postponed.

# Sports Illustrated



## CAPTION

1. Belgium's Tom Boonen reacts as he crosses the finish line to win the classic Paris - Roubaix race.

2. Ben Gordon, pictured, has scored 39 points to lead playoff-bound Chicago to a 113-106 victory over Charlotte in a National Basketball Association contest.

3. Everton's Steven

Pienaar postures after scoring during their Premiership football match against Aston Villa in Aston Villa at Villa Park Stadium. Villa's bid to qualify for the Champions League looks over despite a superb

second half fightback to draw 3-3 against Everton.

4. Jamaica's Usain Bolt, the world's fastest man, has admitted to experimenting with marijuana as a youngster.

5. Nick Watney reacts after missing a birdie putt on the sixth hole during the final round of the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, United States.

6. Phil Mickelson pumps his fist after his birdie putt on the fifth green during the final round of the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, United States.

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## SPORTS Bits

### Kaduna to honour KADA 2009 medallists

Kaduna State Government said that it would soon honour its athletes who won medals at the 16th National Sports Festival in February. The state Commissioner for Sports, Alhaji Shehu Adamu, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna.

"Very soon, we will organise a thank you party for the athletes, where we will give them our package promised before the commencement of the games," Shehu said.

He said that the government had taken steps to keep the athletes who did the state proud in preparation for the next festival in Rivers.

Shehu said that it would be difficult for athletes to abandon their states in the next edition of the games because of the high standard KADA 2009 set in the accreditation of athletes.

"Kaduna set a standard on accreditation during KADA 2009 and it will be difficult for athletes to abandon their states," he said.

According to him, athletes who wish to leave their states to represent another state need 12 months to meet the requirements.

"Any athlete who attempts that will be identified, that is why we are keeping our athletes intact for Rivers 2010," Shehu said.



### Agger in the dark over his future

Liverpool defender Daniel Agger admits he "does not have a clue" if he will still be at the club next season. The 24-year-old is out of contract in summer 2010 and despite Rafa Benitez saying he wants to keep him, Agger says he needs to hear more than flattery.

"It is nice to hear the manager wants to keep me, but the most important thing is what he tells me when I look him in the eyes," he said.

"It's not what he says in the paper, it is what he says behind closed doors."

Agger, who has been linked with AC Milan, scored a stunning goal in Saturday's 4-0 win over Blackburn, but injuries and the form of Martin Skrtel mean he has only had limited chances this season.

"I am at the stage of my career to play, and want to play, that situation has nothing to do with the contract talks," he said.

"I don't know when things will be decided. I don't have a clue. In my heart, I hope I will be here next season."



### Federer weds long-term girlfriend

World number two Roger Federer has married his long-term girlfriend Mirka Vavrinc in Basle. "It was a beautiful spring day and an incredibly joyous occasion," the 27-year-old Swiss told his website.

The couple, who are expecting their first child, met when they competed at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

Next week, Federer is due to take part in the Monte Carlo Masters - the opening clay-court tournament of the season - after he was given a wildcard.

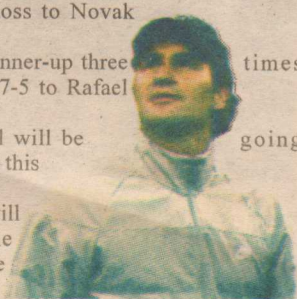
A three-time finalist, Federer originally chose to skip the event for scheduling reasons but has had a change of heart as he tries to find some form.

Federer has not won a tournament since October and played poorly in his most recent loss to Novak Djokovic in Miami.

The Swiss has finished runner-up three times in Monte Carlo, losing 7-5 7-5 to Rafael Nadal in last year's final.

World number one Nadal will be going for a record fifth straight title this year.

American Andy Roddick will be the only member of the world's top 10 missing at the clay-court tournament.



# A political Ponzi scheme

The issue of a second term in office for President Umaru Yar'adua, which exploded on the national political scene with an unusual fury last week, had all the trappings of a Ponzi scheme, such as was recently unleashed on the American financial system by the rogue investment manager Charles Madoff.

Even though it was unexpectedly intensified last week, and is expected to continue to gather storm as more and more AGIP men jump onto the bandwagon in the coming days and weeks, the scheme to award a second term to Yar'adua - on a platter of brass - has been in gestation for some weeks now. The official kick-off probably took place on the day of the Shehu Yar'adua Commemoration last month, when Chief Tony Anenih, in the opening prayer, asked God to give Yar'adua the health to finish his remaining six years in office. That Anenih prayer probably bemused the Almighty God, who could not remember having granted anyone a second term just yet.

Not long after Anenih, PDP's deputy national chairman Dr. Bello Haliru Mohamed announced that Yar'adua would seek a second term and that the party would grant him an automatic ticket. Two days later, PDP's national chairman Prince Vincent Ogbulafor upped the ante when he offered automatic 2011 tickets to PDP's national assembly members. To confuse matters a bit, PDP's national publicity secretary Professor Rufai Alkali issued a statement the very next day, saying the party did not grant anyone an automatic ticket because its constitution calls for primary elections to be held for every elective office.

Soon after that clarification though, all hell broke loose as FCT Minister Mohamed Adamu Aliero, Jigawa State governor Sule Lamido, Senate spokesman Senator Ayogu Eze, the president's Legislative Affairs Adviser Senator Abba Aji and Kwara State governor Bukola Saraki all said, one after another, that Yar'adua will seek re-election in 2011 and that the party and its governors would support him.

The most significant of the statements, as far as I could see, was Bukola Saraki's. In his capacity as Chairman of the National Governors' Forum, he told *ThisDay* that all the PDP governors have thrown their weight behind Yar'adua to get re-elected in 2011. In so far as the governors are the most potent political force in the party after the President himself, it looked like the deal is signed, sealed and delivered.

This morning, in line with many of our readers' wishes, I regret that we must throw a little sand into the Yar'adua Second Term *garri*. With due respect to all the prominent and not-so-prominent AGIP men who have been campaigning for an Yar'adua second term, I say *you don't miss road*, far as the public mood in this country is concerned. Most Nigerians are not thinking of a second term for Yar'adua, at this time. What they would rather want to know is, what has the President done with the last two years that he has spent in this country's most powerful office? More seriously, most Nigerians want to know what he intends to do with the remaining 25 months that he has to serve in the president's office, under existing law and mandate, not any imaginary one in the future.

As things stand right now, the president's cardinal Seven Point Agenda is stuck in the mud, as it were. Yar'adua's best known campaign promise, to declare a state of emergency in the power sector, came to naught. His best known current promise, to deliver 6,000 megawatts of power by December this year and 10,000 megawatts the following year, increasingly looks like a mirage. The oft-repeated promise to take this country into the ranks of the world's 20 top economies by 2020 is best described as a pipedream, given that the Presidency has as yet no plan as to how to get there. In this kind of situation, why is anyone talking about a second term for the president? I thought, as the processes of politics go, a second term is supposed to be a political reward for stellar performance in the first term?

You see, how does it look to you when an SS 1 student who has just flunked a classroom test asks you about his

**MONDAY COLUMN**  
with Mahmud Jega  
mmjega@dailytrust.com, 08054102925

admission into the university in two years' time? Of all the reasons advanced last week in support of Yar'adua's quest for a second term, the most curious was a report in *ThisDay* of last Thursday, which said, "It has also emerged that President Yar'adua has informed the PDP Board of Trustees [BOT] of his plan to seek a second term in office, *ThisDay* learnt that Yar'adua told the board that his plan was to use two years to properly study the situation on ground in the country and use six years to implement his programmes."

It is very important to know; did Yar'adua actually say this, or did Governor Bukola Saraki, who was the main source of the

*ThisDay* story, quote him as having said so and thereby put words into his mouth? For, such a statement would rank among the unwise ever uttered in Nigerian politics. Two years, just to "study the situation" while you are sitting pretty in the president's office? Even a university researcher, sitting harmlessly in his armchair, will hardly ask for two years just to study the Nigerian situation.

I never knew that the president's office was listed by the National Directorate of Employment [NDE] among those lined up for apprentice training programmes. Even if it were, how many months does the NDE usually allocate to an apprentice who is attached to a trades master to "study the situation", as it were, and acquire a skill? Apprentice welders, mechanics, tailors, vulcanisers etc all get

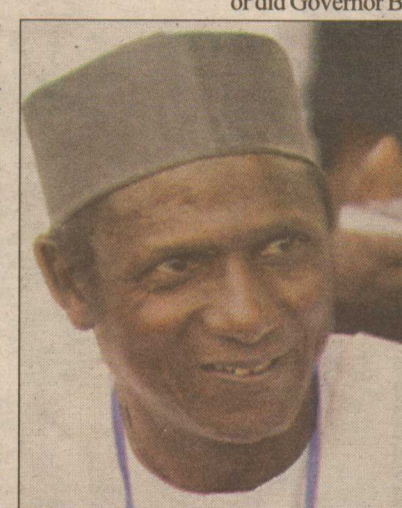
no more than 9 months to complete the study and get cracking. No one promises them a second term so that they can use the first one to study the situation. One begins to see why some Nigerian youngsters wistfully talk about Barack Obama. This is a young man whose total experience before his election was all of one term in the Senate. Yet, his presidency took off at supersonic speed last January, and in the 90 days he has been in office, he reeled out an average of a major policy a day—banking crisis, tottering automobile companies, AIG, company bonuses, foreclosures, mortgages, stimulus package, budget, national parks, appointments, Guantanamo, CIA rendition, G-20, NATO, Iran, Muslim world, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, North Korean satellites etc.

The big snag in all these is, the governors' support for an Yar'adua second term is seen by Nigerians as an entirely selfish enterprise, meant to cover their own political flanks and secure their own political futures. It is a selfish step at par with the governors' collective insistence on retaining the State Independent Electoral Commissions [SIECs], the prime vehicle for manipulating local government elections.

It is a puzzle indeed that PDP is in a hurry to nominate a presidential candidate for 2011 that in all likelihood will have to explain to the voters a less than stellar record of performance in office. Not only that; Malam Umaru Yar'adua's abilities on the campaign hustings is not stellar, to put it mildly. In Ekiti last week, he used most of his speech to translate Quranic verses about Allah being the one Who gives power. That had nothing to do with the issue at hand, since PDP used INEC to declare its candidate Segun Oni as winner in 2007 without waiting for Allah to give it to him. In any case, Yar'adua's speech blatantly violated the Electoral Act, which disallows the use of religious slogans for political campaigns.

Think of a ruling party candidate in 2011 with a skittish record of governance and zero campaign abilities, and you begin to see why PDP is hardly thinking of free and fair elections in the foreseeable future. That explains all the rigmarole around electoral reforms, including the government's deliberate misrepresentation of the Uwa panel's recommendations with regards to the appointment of the INEC chairman in order to reject it.

This campaign for an Yar'adua second term, at this time and in these conditions, backed by so many government ministers, advisers and top party officials as well as the AGIP men, is but a political Ponzi scheme designed to keep Nigerians big time. The task now is to identify its arrowhead: the Nigerian Charles Madoff.



President Umaru Yar'adua