

DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden


Visit us at://www.dailytrust.com

VOL. 13 NO. 32 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006 MUHARRAM 30, 1427 A. H. N80

You have done it before;
Transfer & Consolidation of Federal Capital
Baba Kyan Tafiya Dawowa
Courtesy: Dr. Haruna Usman Mashogu



STAR FEATURE
Abuja demolition victims:
Where and how they live
Pages 24 & 25



ORJI KALU
 For
PRESIDENT 2007
For Generational Change




From left are, Dr. Adras Szollosi Nagy the deputy Director-General UNESCO, the Water Resources Minister, Alhaji Mukhtari Shagari and the Italian Ambassador in Nigeria, Marcello Recoveri during the International Conference on water security and hydrological extreme towards sustainable development in Africa held at NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja... yesterday. Pic: Joe Oroye.

FG owes pensioners N2 trillion

The federal government owes pensioners across board a staggering sum of N2 trillion, an official of the National Pensions Commission (Pencom), Barrister John Ogolo, has revealed.

Nigeria's fiscal budget for 2006 stands at N1.8 trillion, about N200 billion lower than the pension liability.

Barrister Ogolo who disclosed this at a seminar organized by the Ministry of Sports and Social Development in Abuja yesterday, said that government was uncomfortable with the increasing burden of payments coupled with the general disenchantment against the existing pension schemes, noting that it decided to introduce a contributory scheme involving both the government and the beneficiaries.

He asserted that government resolved to introduce a new scheme that allows workers the choice of pension fund administrator sharply contrasting with the previous practice that denied workers direct involvement in the selection of pension fund administrators.

He said government was unable to meet the huge demand for pension payment due to increasing disengagement from service and the frequent response to economic hardship through salary increments, adding that the new scheme allows both the government and the beneficiaries the freedom to contribute with minimal hassles.

By Patrick Andrew, Assist Head, Sports Desk

Bomb scare in Abuja bound flight

Anxiety gripped passengers inside an Abuja bound Aero aircraft yesterday when a business class passenger announced that he was in possession of a bomb.

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

The incident happened at about 1.15pm at the domestic terminal of the Murtala Muhammed airport, Lagos; as

the airline, Eero Contractors was about to take off for Abuja.

According to a witness, the passenger simply identified as B. Mok, told the man seated next to him that all the

passengers inside the aircraft needed to pray hard because he had a bomb with him.

This scared the passenger who informed the others. They called the attention of the cabin crew to the development.

All the 78 passengers inside the B737 were asked to disembark for re-screening while the entire luggage was taken to the Aero terminal for a second screening.

Confirming the incident yesterday, Aero Fixed Wing Manager, Captain Dapo Olumide, said the passenger (Mok) was taken away immediately by men of the State Security Services (SSS) for interrogation.

He said, the passengers were identified through the manifest and screened for the second time. The incident had been reported to the aviation regulatory authority.

According to Captain Olumide, no bomb was found on the man during the course of interrogation and the aircraft departed for Abuja after the re-screening exercise.

Captain Olumide said

such incident is common, especially in the United States of America when a passenger can raise a false alarm to frustrate an airline to make it lose a day's revenue.

Meanwhile, *Daily Trust* was reliably informed that the passenger Mok, was released around 4pm when the men of SSS found out that the man was a "loose speaker" and has no connection with terrorism.

Mok was said to have been working with an insurance company and was heard complaining that his boss may sack him because he has missed an appointment in Abuja.

The NPC official said that the pension schemes failed, because the burden of contribution rested almost exclusively with government, stressing that workers were somewhat lackadaisical about pension fund schemes since claims were hardly met on demand.

Last week, President Olusegun Obasanjo, while presenting licences to 17 approved firms in the pension scheme, warned operators of the scheme against inefficient management. The president advised against distress in the

Cont. on Pg. 2

Dana buys Katsina Steel Mill N1.4bn

Dana Group of Companies has emerged the preferred bidder for the acquisition of the Katsina Steel Rolling Company (KSRC), having offered to pay N1.46 billion. Kura Holdings emerged as reserved bidder with an offer of N800 million.

By Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

The N1.46 offered by Dana Group brings to N6.46 billion the amount raised from the sale of the four inland steel rolling mills in the country.

The statement said the amount so far generated are from payments for the Jos and Oshogbo Steel Rolling Mills by the preferred bidders, Zuma Steel West Africa Limited and Kura Holdings Limited. Zuma Steel has already


paid N800m for JSRC, while Kura Holdings Limited paid N2.61 billion for the Oshogbo Steel Rolling Complex.

The two investors offered the highest bid in November last year. The three liquidators of the rolling mills were led by Babington Ashaye for the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE).

While the bid offer by Kura Holdings Ltd for OSRC met the requirements of the National Council on Privatisation (NCP), the Council

Cont. on Pg. 2

COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006
(21 - 25 March)
21 DAYS TO GO
ANSWER THE ENUMERATORS QUESTION TRUTHFULLY.
ALL INFORMATION GIVEN ARE CONFIDENTIAL



Courtesy: National Population Commission

News

Pensioners *Cont.*
from pg. 1

management of the novel scheme as was the case in the banking sector.

According to the president, the government will not hesitate to withdraw the licence of any operator that defaulted in the operation of the scheme, stressing that government is determined to work out modalities for the payment of the pension arrears of workers.

The Pension Reform Act, 2004, the president said, signifies the era of stability and hope for the nation's workers and must be managed carefully to ginger workers' confidence, focus on their job and future life in retirement.

The 17 operators who were granted licences are spread across three categories, including 12 pension funds administrators, four pensions fund custodians and one closed-fund administrator.

The president, who was visibly delighted during the ceremony, had urged *Pencom* to continue to monitor the operations of the sector to ensure compliance with the specifications of the scheme.

In view of the efficacy of the scheme, the president urged all public servants yet to register with the scheme to do so without further delay, noting that registration is compulsory.

At the seminar, participants learnt that increases in pension rates as high as 322 per cent within two years led to serious funding problems for government and employers, noting that the panacea to this burden is the introduction of a scheme that allows professional pension fund administrators the space to take up management of funds contributed proficiently.

Ogolo said government believes that direct involvement of the workers in the choice of pension fund administrators would engender greater commitment to saving for the rainy day as well as allow each worker the freedom to make extra contributions to the fund as he so desires.

Daily Trust recalls that the government has been inundated with demands for pension settlement by members of the armed forces, railway workers, civil servants and others from the parastatals.

The Ministry of Sports and Social Development is the first of such ministries to embark on a sensitization programme for all cadre of staff since the government granted licences to 17 pension scheme administrators in the country.

Governors endorse constitutional amendment

The Governors Forum met yesterday to present a common position on the issue of constitutional amendment, just as they constituted a 6-man panel to look into the riots in some parts of the country with the mandate of unraveling the causes of the crises and finding solutions to them.

Chairman of the forum and governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah told newsmen that the governors lauded the public hearings as a viable method of gauging public opinion on the constitution. He said that the state executives unanimously support a comprehensive review of the 1999 constitution.

The governors also commended the National Assembly, especially the committee on the review of the constitution.

On the spate of violence over cartoon controversy which recently led to loss of lives and properties in parts of the country, the forum ad-

By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor

vocated for peace stressing that their should not be an excuse to cause national disaf-

fection.

The forum also urged Nigerians to imbibe the culture of peaceful coexistence and shun sectarian differences.

The 6-man committee

comprise of governors from the six geopolitical zones of the nation. The Forum's meeting which held at the NICON Hilton had nine governors and five deputy governors in attendance.



From left are, Mr. Chukwu Ugochukwu, the Secretary General of Community Watch for Social Development, the President and Motivator of the CWSO, Barr. Igunanya-Chukwu, Iruoma Nwana and the Special Assistant to Vice President Atiku Abubakar on Media Matters, Malam Mohammad Yukob during their courtesy visit to the Vice President in his office at the State House, Abuja... recently. Pic: Joe Oroye.

Insurance coys get recapitalisation waivers

Regulatory authorities have released concessionary measures to fast track the ongoing reforms and recapitalisation of insurance and reinsurance firms.

The concessionary measures was confirmed by National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), Chief Executive and Commissioner of Insurance, Chief Emmanuel Chukwulozie. He said Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had accepted to apply one percent charge on the nominal value of securities of the companies instead of

By Abdulwahab Isa,
Business Reporter

the market value as the approval fee.

Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), according to him, had also granted 50 percent reduction on all fees payable by any insurance or reinsurance company that complies with the reform and consolidation requirements during the reform period.

Also, Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS), has accepted to offer statutory relief under various tax Acts on company by com-

pany basis as the exercise progresses while the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), promised to grant insurance industry the concessions it gave the banks for the consolidation exercise.

Another measures outlined by NAICOM boss to fast track the consolidation process is the reduction of certification fees payable from one percent to 0.5 percent.

The regulatory body is also to set up help desk to facilitate and guide market operators, insurance underwriters and their respective financial advisers on arising issues. It will also set up a committee of legal and insurance experts to handle the issue of liquidation of distressed and failed insurance companies.

Chukwulozie urged insurance and reinsurance companies to hasten action on re-capitalisation, warning that his commission will not grant an extension of time at the expiration of the 28th February, 2007 date stipulated as deadline for the consolidation exercise.

Commenting on the reform programme as it affects various areas of the economy, especially aviation which has witnessed various air mishaps in recent times, he said the commission has written to all air-

lines operating in the country to submit their insurance programmes for 2006 for evaluation. He assured that NAICOM will work with the aviation industry and regulatory arms to ensure that "there are established minimum levels of insurance cover interms of scope and limits for the protection of airports, airlines, passengers, crews, other third parties and airport facilities."

Accordingly, he said insurance sector post consolidation will increase total capitalization of insurance to N300 billion while the era will witness influx of foreign partners to complement indigenous companies.

Since NAICOM unfolded the new capitalization of N2 billion, N3 billion and N10 billion respectively for all classes of underwriters, insurance operators have contended that non-release of palliative guidelines also known as concessions, have slowed down the pace of mergers and acquisition talks among insurance firms.

With the concessionary measures now unfolded, analysts are of the view that it will speed up the merger talks among firms, more so when some insurance firms have commenced due diligence on those firms that approached them for merger and acquisitions.

Senators disagree over 3rd term

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

President Olusegun Obasanjo's alleged third term bid yesterday split senators with some vowing that the president will remain in office beyond 2007.

Senator Kola Ogunwale said yesterday that the agenda will succeed but Senators Saidu Dansadau and Sule Yari Gandi said opposition lawmakers will derail the third term train.

The senators spoke against the background of reported claims by Senator Arthur Nzeribe that the third term bid would scale through if tabled before the legislature.

Speaking to National Assembly correspondents yesterday, Ogunwale (PDP Osun), said:

"Third term is a realistic issue that should happen now because we need it. I am a Nigerian and I am entitled to my opinion and from all what I have come across since I came to the National Assembly, we need the gentleman to be there for another term of four years and of course, Nigerians have endorsed that.

"The public sittings have come and gone. It was not riotous. It was peaceful.

People have aired their opinion and people we thought would be against it came out supporting it. So what are we saying about somebody coming against it?"

Ogunwale said the only possible obstacle to Obasanjo's self-succession plan would be if voters fail him at the polls.

But Dansadau, in a swift reaction, said the third term agenda was as good as dead.

"Definitely, those of us that oppose it have not been sleeping and during the public hearings, we were strategising. So, I am optimistic that the third term will not go through the National Assembly. We have not been sleeping. We have been talking to our colleagues. We have mapped out strategies and we are seriously working to achieve our objective."

He said "third term is not designed to serve the interest of this country. It is designed to serve the interest of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the proponents of the third term agenda and therefore, I cannot be a party to it."

The recently held public hearings, Dansadau said, "was never intended to give opportunity to all Nigerians. It was to give opportunity to only those who support third term. If you start your memo by saying that you support third term, there will be applause and you will be allowed to speak."

Dana *Cont. from pg. 1*

cil asked that the offer by Zuma Steel be renegotiated having fallen short of the reserved price for the company.

Consequently, after negotiation, the company upped the amount to N800m which was accepted by the Council and payment already effected.

The bid of \$2.5 million for KSRC by Nigeria-Spanish Group was rejected and the NCP ordered a fresh bid for the complex.

The statement said the Director General of the BPE, Mrs. Irene Chigbue, represented by Elder Archibong Udofiah, Director, Industry and Solid Minerals, while speaking at the new bid opening said that lack of competition at the initial bid exercise which had only one bidder, accounted for the low bid of-

fer hence its cancellation.

She said the new exercise, which had three bidders, met the aspirations of Nigerians given that the bidders have the technical capabilities to run the complex. The three bidders are the Nigeria-Spanish Group, the Kura Holdings and the Dana Group.

At the end of the exercise, Dana Group offered N1.458 billion to emerge the winner following the offer of N800m by Kura Holdings and N769.5 by the Nigeria-Spanish Group.

The Dana Group is an international conglomerate with about 12 subsidiaries dealing in brands ranging from manufacturing to food and vehicle distribution. The group is the sole distributor of KIA Motors in Nigeria.

News



The FCT Commissioner of National Population Commission, Dr. Mrs. Dotun Odunley, standing addressing the Ona of Abaji and chairman, FCT Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Adamu Baba Yunusa, on the forthcoming 2006 Census at his palace in Abaji...recently.
Pix: Abubakar Sadiq Isah

Ex-Governor makes case for police

Former Governor of the defunct North-West state and retired Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Usman Farouk, has called on the federal government to cater adequately for the police to ensure security of lives and property in the country.

Speaking to newsmen on the state of the nation on Monday in Gombe, the former governor expressed sadness with the poor remuneration and poor equipment of the country's police, saying there is no justification for the current poverty in the force.

The former police boss who described the Nigeria police as ill-equipped, poorly remunerated and demoralised, said their poor condition is what causes the state of insecurity in the country.

From Muhammad Abubakar, Gombe

"Nobody is safe in the country no matter how highly placed one is because our police are poorly paid. We don't have any excuse for treating them this way. Nigeria is a rich country that can afford to equip and remunerate its police adequately," lamented Alhaji Usman Farouk.

He said blessed with the abundance of both human and material resources, it is a great shame that Nigeria has the kind of police it now has, calling on the authorities to immediately procure a solution so that security of lives will be guaranteed.

It will be recalled that the rank and file of the Nigeria police recently attempted to go on strike to protest poor remuneration, welfare and other related problems.

FG to settle N1.5tr contract debts, pension arrears with bond - Okonjo Iweala

The Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has disclosed that the federal government plans to use the bond market to resolve the over N1.5 trillion debt owed contractors and pension arrears facing it.

According to the minister who revealed this on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony of the Bond Market Steering Committee (BMSC), there is need to create an active bond market in Nigeria.

Top dignitaries that graced the event include former Minister of Finance, Dr. Kalu Idika Kalu, Director-General of the Debt Management Office, Dr. Mansur Muktar, Director-General, Pension Commission of Nigeria (PENCOM), Director-General, Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC), Mr. Musa Al-Faki and a host of others.

She posited that a local bond market confers numerous benefits to the economy, adding that "a well-functioning bond market, is essential for a by market determined resource allocation."

"It is also critical for boosting the resilience of its financial system and insulating against external shocks and contagion," she said.

Dr. Muktar earlier stated that the entire idea was to build a consensus on how to develop the bond market to curtail overdependence on internal borrowing.

From Bright Ewulu, Lagos

However, because of the complex nature of the market, he stressed that all stakeholders should work together to fashion a credible securities market.

The minister had disclosed that "the bond issuance programme has facilitated the restructuring of existing short term debts as well as sustainable, non-inflationary financing of the government's deficit."

"To promote and strengthen the government's bond market and indeed the entire fixed-income securities market, DMO, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the bond market, as finalising arrangements for establishing a system of primary dealer/market makers," he said.

Members of the steering committee including the minister of finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, DMO, Director General, Dr. Mansur Muktar, President, Money Market Association of Nigeria, Mr. Funso Shobande, President, Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers, Henry Olayemi, BGL Limited Managing Director, Dr. Albert Okumagba, Caleb A. Yaro, chairman cornerstone Securities etc.

According to Yaro who spoke for the selected members, there is a need to change the current situation where equalities control over

eighty percent of our market, saying that there is a need for creativity in the areas of derivatives.

Kano state PDP has washed its hands off the third term agenda being agitated for at the public hearing sittings across the country.

Speaking in Kaduna yesterday during a visit to Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, Kano state PDP

Public hearings: Third term not in our agenda - Kano PDP

chairman, Senator Masud Jibril Doguwa, stated that they believe in constitutional

From AbdulRaheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

amendments as it relates to state electoral commission, revenue sharing formula and traditional institutions but not the third term.

"Third term is not in our agenda. We have nothing to do with it. We believe in constitutional amendment as we want our constitution to be reviewed, especially in areas like state electoral commission, the revenue sharing formula and the traditional institutions which needs to be given constitutional duties."

"The public hearing is necessary because we cannot continue like this. We need to make corrections to maintain the corporate existence of the country. Thus, the constitution needs to be reviewed to allow the amendments though not on the issue of third term," he said.

Senator Doguwa said they were in Kaduna to thank Governor Makarfi for playing host to them during their retreat early in the year.

Makarfi in his response, assured them that the mistake that brought to power opposition parties in the north west zone will not be repeated as the ruling party will win all the north west states come 2007 and charged them to work hard for the party to achieve its aims.

Census: Kwara deploys commissioners

Kwara State governor, Dr Bukola Saraki, yesterday deployed his council members to their constituencies as part of the aggressive mobilization to sanitize the people on the forthcoming national head count.

The mobilization exercise is designed to educate the people on the need to ensure the success of the census in the three senatorial districts of the state.

Leading the team for the

From AbdulRazaq Adebayo, Ilorin

Kwara central senatorial district comprising two commissioners, permanent secretaries and special advisers, the commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hajia Nimota Ibrahim called for cooperation from the people in the bid to correct the mistakes of the past.

Hajia Ibrahim who addressed the people at the Ilorin West Local Government

Secretariat, said, "Our efforts in the impending exercise is to ensure that we guide against the pitfalls of the past "which led to the undercounting of people."

The effect, she stated was the major lapse on resource allocation to the state and the adverse impact on her development.

The commissioner said the government would use all machineries at its disposal to prevent reoccurrence of the ugly incidence which brought in its wake a lot of denials and associated inconveniences to the people of the state.

Hajia Ibrahim urged the people to cooperate with enumerators and supervisors of the National Population Commission saying the government attached high priority to 2006 census exercise.

The Commissioner particularly asked Local Council Officials to penetrate all the work and cranny of the state and persuade the people of the area to ensure the success of the exercise.

She assured officials of the commission that the state and Local Governments would place at their disposal all logistics necessary to make the programme a huge success.



Malam Abdulai Shuaib (right) Programme Director OIC briefing journalists on the cartoons at NUJ Press Centre, Ikeja. Sitting with him is Sheikh Dhikrullahi Shafimudeen, Chief Imam of NTA 10.
Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu.

NEWS



Mr. John Adzer, Director Marketing and Promotion of NTDC Abuja, (left), discussing with Mr. Denis Tor Orjume, General Manager of Nanet Hotels Kaduna, at the National Workshop on Tourism Awareness and Development in Nigeria, organised by National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism, held in Kaduna...recently

Pix Shehu K. Goro

Emirates skywards membership increases

Nigerian passengers are increasingly joining Emirates' frequent flyer programme - Skywards.

Skywards is a unique programme aimed at rewarding customers who choose to travel with Emirates to any of the airlines' 80 destinations in 56 countries.

According to Mr. Azeem, Emirates' Manager, Nigeria: "Skywards takes its members far beyond the immediate travel experience by providing more choices and rewarding passenger loyalty. Its numerous rewards such as free air tickets, upgrades to Business and First class and special hotel rates have prompted

By Shakirat Abdulmajeed,
Correspondent (Lagos)

many Nigerians to join this exclusive club."

He added: "It is encouraging to note that almost 10,000 adults and several hundred children have joined the Skywards and Skysurfers programmes respectively."

The two key drivers of the Skywards programme are innovation and the philosophy of superior customer services that touch all points. This innovation has led to the creation of Skysurfers, a club tailored towards the preferences and inter-

ests of young travellers between the ages of two and 16.

Skywards earning opportunities occur when flying with Emirates or SriLankan Airlines. With three tiers of membership - Blue, Silver and Gold - members can enjoy more privileges in higher membership tiers.

Skywards' recently introduced the Family Bonus programme whereby individual customers can nominate up to eight family members to receive 20 per cent of their own flight miles when flying with either Emirates or SriLankan Airlines.

When redeeming miles, Skywards' members can receive free tickets not only from Emirates or SriLankan airlines, but also from other Skywards partners worldwide such as South African Airways, Delta, Japan Airline, and United Airlines.

Mr. Deji Morohunfola, Skywards' Gold card member and President, Creative Digits Consult Limited, stated: "My accumulated miles often generate tickets for my family vacations. I also get upgrades and access to the Emirates' lounge and hotel at the Dubai International Airport, all of which come complementary owing to my Skywards membership."

"Skywards members can also choose from other exciting benefits such as guaranteed booking on any Emirates flight; flight upgrades; special hotel rates; unique travel packages with Arabian adventures; chauffeured transport to and from designated special meal considerations; fast track services at the airport; and Stopover packages at selected destinations."

The latest innovation from Emirates is a facility that ensures easy and convenient check-in for all Skywards members. All members traveling with just hand baggage can now check themselves in for a flight using the new Self Check-In Kiosks at Dubai International Airport. The facility is also available to customers who are members of Skywards' partner airlines.

Members insert their membership cards and their booking

is displayed on the kiosk screen following verification of the card's number. They can then confirm or change their assigned seat, register their Skywards or partner frequent flyer Miles, and print their boarding cards, which include the First or Business Class Lounge invitation.

Travellers can join Skywards by registering online or at the Emirates Lagos office located at Churchgate Building, Afri Bank street, Victoria Island. Registration can also take place at any of the Emirates booking offices worldwide. Registration is free of charge.

Skywards was launched in May 2000 and has won several prestigious awards including; Best Customer Service Award, along with an award for the Best Web Site and Programme of the year.

Public hearings: Group wants members released

The Coalition of Oodua Self-Determination Groups has asked the Nigerian police to release without further delay, all the activists who were arrested and detained since last week in Osogbo, Osun state by security operatives for allegedly protesting the just concluded public hearings on the constitution review at the venue of the committee's sitting.

But COSEG at a news conference addressed by the President of Oodua Youth Movement, Mr. Femi Obayori, in Ikeja on Sunday, condemned the arrest of the activists led by the convener of the United Action for Democracy, Mr. Abiodun Aremu, describing it as unconstitutional.

The group insisted that the continued detention of the people showed that constitution review was a private meeting of sycophants who are canvassing the extension of President Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure beyond 2007.

It also described the last

UAD to mobilise Nigerians against 3rd term

A pro-democracy organization, the United Action for Democracy (UAD), has vowed to mobilize people for civil disobedience against the alleged third term ambition of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The group said this at a press conference on Monday where it condemned the arrest and detention of its national convener, Abiodun Aremu and 23 other activists including students of the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology.

General Secretary of UAD, Taiwo Otitolaye, said the continued detention of the activists has further shown the repressive streak of the Obasanjo administration.

His words: "the life of this administration headed by Gen. Olusgun Obasanjo since 1999 has witnessed more state repression, assassinations, massacres, pogroms, corruption and apathy for the rule of law more than any other government in the political history of our country. The Odi village destruction, Zaki-biam massacre, Bola Ige, Harry Marshall assassinations are examples. The UAD is convinced that Obasanjo is poised to continue along this line if an overwhelming opposition is not provided to confront the fascist regime."

He submitted that the president is desperate to achieve the

From Olumide Bajulaiye,
Correspondent (Lagos)

plot hence the manipulation of the constitution being pursued by the government.

"This government had earlier set up a technical review committee in 1999 and the so-called national political reform conference, but when the outcome of these fell short of Obasanjo's expectations, he went in search of a manipulated public forum to amend the constitution through the 'pigeon hole arrangement,'" Otitolaye said.

The South-West coordinator of UAD, Wale Balogun, said it would be criminal if the south-west region does not take on the president on his ambition.

According to him, given the historical role of the region in Nigeria, it owes a duty to spearhead the struggle as it has always done and enjoined the people to get ready for mass action to stop the realization of the third plot and end bad governance in the country.

He called for the immediate and unconditional release of Babasola Da Silva and Olubunmi Taiwo, members of the UAD who were arrested in Idanre, Ondo state, since February 10, 2006, for being in possession of anti-third term posters and have been in police detention at Area 10, Force CID, Abuja.

Kano councillors allege attack by thugs

Six councillors from Karaye local government have taken refuge in Kano for fear of being attacked by political thugs believed to have been sponsored by the local government chairman, Alhaji Bashir Yahaya Karaye.

In a five page petition to the Kano State House of Assembly and the Kano State police command, the councillors accused the chairman of hiring thugs to attack them while in session in the local government council chamber.

From Musa Umar Kazuare,
Regional Editor (Kano)

They stated that their ordeal with the chairman started after reporting him (chairman) to the ministry of local government over his recent embezzlement of local government funds allocated to the council. The removal of the council leader whom they described as the chairman and accomplice did not go down well with the chairman.

The petition, dated 17th February, 2006 continued, "when we were conducting our normal sitting of the council at the council chamber yesterday, he (chairman) organized a group of hoodlums, and upon his instructions, they went into the council chamber and started beating and abusing us right inside the council chamber. They destroyed the chairs and injured some of us."

The petitioners representing Karaye/Haji, T/Kaya, Daura and Turawa wards pleaded with the State House of Assembly, to as a matter of urgency, bring the perpetrators to book as well as subject the chairman, Alhaji Bashir Yahaya Karaye, to a thorough investigation over funds allocated to the local government area. They also sought protection from the political thugs they claim are working for the chairman.

When contacted, the local government chairman, Alhaji Bashir Yahaya Karaye, said there is no iota of truth in their allegations and promised to furnish details of his defence on the matter later after due consultations.

He added, "When the situation was getting out of hand the police was invited to maintain peace in the local government chamber. It was supporter of the speaker from town that disrupted their sitting not mine."

FG negotiates \$200m World Bank loan for Lagos

The recent sovereign credit rating of Nigeria has placed the country in the same economic cadre and Brazil with Turkey, the Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has said.

She said with the rating of BB- that the Nigerian public and private sector can now access intentional finance at a much reduce rate unlike before.

Speaking at a breakfast meeting organized for her by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Corporate Nigeria, the minister disclosed that the federal government is currently negotiating for \$200m no interest credit facility for Lagos state courtesy of the World Bank.

She said the loan will be used for environmental clean up, solid waste disposal, slum upgrade and what have you, adding that President Olusegun Obasanjo is solidly in support of the effort.

Going further at the event graced by top officials from government and the private sector, namely the Minister of Works and Housing, Chief Adeseye Ogunlese, Minister of Communication, Chief Cornelius Adebayo, President of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Dr. Raymond Obieri and Chairman, Corporate Nigeria, Dr. Ndi Okereke Onyuke.

From Bright Ewulu,
Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

Dr. Okonjo-Iweala said that surveys show that incidents of corruption is falling.

According to her, the biggest challenge for the federal government is the issue of infrastructure but said that the government is set to combat it.

She said the government plans to resolve the issues of epileptic electricity supply and that this was responsible for the ongoing efforts to build seven power stations across the country.

Understandably, she opined that the economy will become better in the years ahead but maintained that there was need to ensure the rule of law, process and systems that will lead to sustainability.

On the purpose of country credit risk rating, she posited, "the purpose is to benchmark your economy in the global setting. By attaining a sovereign credit rating, your country could mitigate risks and attract foreign direct investment."

"But we will be rated yearly so we should work hard on the reforms to maintain this positive ratings. We have a three year plan to get us to where we want to be," she said.

News

Kano stakeholders oppose third term

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru, and Aliyu Saleh Machika, Correspondents, (Kano)

Kano state stakeholders have kicked against any tenure extension for President Olusegun Obasanjo and other elected political office holders.

They argued that the move will not augur well for democracy and the socio-economic development of the country.

The chairman of the stakeholders comprising elder statesmen and representatives of the various opinion leaders in Kano, Alhaji Magaji Dambatta, who addressed a joint press conference yesterday, said that tenure extension would undermine development, progress and the harmonious co-existence in the country.

Alhaji Magaji who is also the chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum Boards of Trustees, said that the stakeholders have no personal hatred for any person or political office holder, but only fighting to ensure justice, lay a solid foundation for development and to resist dictatorship.

"When you are talking of third term or extension of tenure for elected public officers who came into office on an agreed stipulated and pre-determined formula of two terms of four years and for them to now come in the

middle of the game to change the rules in order to facilitate their continuation in office for another tenure, might also be their beginning of continuation forever. This tactics has happened in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda among others," he said.

He expressed dismay that some leaders turned to dictators, terrorise people, shun advice and thwart the rapid development of a nation all under the guise of succeeding in power.

He insisted that Kano

stakeholders are out to halt such ugly trends, ensure true democratic ethics and principles which are the principal basis that would prove the way for development, peace and tranquillity among the people.

"This struggle is for every citizen. We fought for independence from colonial masters. We should not allow anybody to enslave us. We should resist and fight the imposition of any rule that would not favour our right to exist in peace," he said.

The chairman said that the so called public hearing on the review of the 1999 constitution was full of flaws and uncertainties, saying Nigerians should rally against any move to amend the existing constitution just to suit the interest of some individuals.

Swiss govt deports 25 Nigerians

By Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

Twenty five Nigerians were deported from Switzerland on Thursday.

The deportees, all male, arrived the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos, in the evening aboard a chartered flight.

Daily Trust learnt that two of the deportees had been convicted for drug related offences in Switzerland and had completed their jail terms before their deportation.

Daily Trust also gathered that four others were charged for drug pushing but not convicted.

Some of the deportees were job seekers who refused to leave Switzerland when offered free tickets to return

to Nigeria by the Swiss government.

Our sources hinted that the Swiss government paid for the Emergency Travel Certificates of the deportees and provided 6,000 Swiss Francs (about N800,000) to the deportees who did not commit crimes while those charged with crimes received nothing.

The source said 2,000 Swiss Francs were made available to them in Switzerland while the balance would be paid to them, in Nigeria through the Nigeria Immigration Service. Women with expired immigration papers, the source said, collected free tickets and left Switzerland quietly.

Presidency: Nothing can stop my ambition -Kalu

From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

The Abia State Governor, Orji Uzor Kalu, has declared that no amount of intimidation or threat will make him drop his ambition to contest the 2007 presidential election.

Commenting on the freezing of two of his bank accounts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), at the weekend in Lagos, Kalu told journalist that the action was taken by the presidency to force him to drop his plans to contest the 2007 presidential elections.

According to him, one of the frozen accounts is that of Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu for President Campaign Organisation, the platform on which he is seeking to actualize his ambition to contest the 2007 presidential elections.

He vowed that no amount of pressure or threat will hinder him, saying he will run against President Olusegun Obasanjo if he eventually goes for a third term.

Said he, "I am standing to contest this election and I hope the elections will be free and fair. These people have taken their turn and now they want to use our own time. We are not going to allow it. I have been haunted for almost six years but this will not

hinder me as there is a limit to which you can push the people. Nigerian people are now more determined than ever," he stated.

Commenting on some state governors' blanket support for a third term in office for president Obasanjo, he said that he was not surprised because they did not really mean it, but did so because of intimidation from state security agencies. He expressed dismay that people that were elected as governors could easily act against their people's interest.

Asked whether he can still realize his presidential ambition with majority of the state governors backing President Obasanjo for a third term, he said those governors supporting a third term agenda are not the Nigerian people, saying eventually, the majority will still have their way.

"My colleagues are not the Nigerian people. The larger majority will still have a say. I don't feel discouraged by their actions but rather, I feel stronger because I know that sooner or later, they will come back to their senses and back my ambition to become the president in 2007."



Right, Governor Ahmad Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna state, discussing with his deputy, Mr. Patrick I. Yakowa, left, and Director-General of Publicity, Alhaji Muktar S. Sirajo, during the visit of EU Ambassador on official visit to Kaduna state ...recently.

Pix: Shehu K. Goro.

Third term agenda will fail -Rights activist

By Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

A reknown human rights activists in Plateau state, Mr. Nanking Bagudu, has asserted that the third term agenda will fail, stressing that it is evident that Nigerians do not want a third term for President Olusegun Obasanjo and others.

Speaking to Daily Trust in Jos, Mr. Bagudu who is the Director, League for Human Rights, said it is clear that Nigerians are tired of the Obasanjo administration and would ensure that any exten-

sion of the tenure does not succeed.

"The third term agenda will not succeed. Nigerians are determined to ensure that it fails. It failed in 1972. It failed in 1991. It failed during the Abacha era. It cannot succeed now because we are not fools. Nigerians are determined to fight for what is right," the human rights activist asserted.

He said that if President

Obasanjo was not in power, he would have been part of the struggle against a third term.

Mr. Bagudu who described the public hearings as stage managed, noted that many of those who were clamouring for a third term during the hearings, went under organizations that do not exist.

Said the activists "the public hearings were merely stage managed. The information we got was that the con-

stitution was already prepared for a third term and to cover up, they ordered a public hearing."

He said the public hearing was a failure, noting that the general view is that people are opposed to third term.

Mr. Bagudu advised the proponents of third term to read the mood of the majority in the country while stressing the need for the political stage to be opened to Nigerians who would ensure good governance.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Armed robbers attack Platinum Habib Bank, kill two

Two people were killed and millions of naira reportedly stolen when armed robbers attacked Platinum-Habib Bank in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital in the early hours of Saturday.

According to a witness, the robbers numbering over 30, came in a vehicle with inscription 'The Nigerian Legion' at about 12.30 a.m and

From Edet Ekanem,
Correspondent, Uyo

shot sporadically into the air to scare people. The operation lasted till 5.30 am, leaving two persons dead.

Asked about the amount the bank lost in the operation, a staff of the bank Dr. Dabo Shebby, said "I am saying nothing was carted away, I am sorry," and walked away.

Efforts to get comments from the bank manager failed as security officers of the bank told *Daily Trust* that the manager was attending a meeting and would not want to comment on the matter.

It was observed that a lot of damage was done to windows and doors of the bank.

A security officer who spoke on condition of anony-

mity told *Daily Trust* that two of the banks security men were killed.

He said the two men who were killed were those who slept in Cross Country motor park opposite the bank.

Mr. Koko Ekpo, a worker with Cross Country Motors, Abak road, Uyo, told *Daily Trust* that windscreen of Cross Country buses that

were parked in the station were broken by stray bullets.

He said at the end of the operation, one of their buses was taken away by the robbers. He said a driver who was sleeping along with others in one of the bus was hit by bullets and was rushed to the hospital.

Others who were hit by stray bullets are currently ly-

ing critically ill at the Life-Camp hospital in Uyo.

The state police public relations officer, Mr. Suur Chafer, who spoke with *Daily Trust* confirmed the robbery but could not confirm how much was carted. He expressed hope that the robbers would be arrested as investigations have already begun in earnest.



Policemen lifting away a workers car during the Workers Mass Protest at Federal Secretariat Abuja...recently.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



Suspected students of University of Benin arrested over allegations of involvement in examination malpractices...recently. Pix: Shehu Abubakar

Man bags 10 years for terrorism

The federal high court, Kaduna, yesterday sentenced a 31-year-old man to 10 years imprisonment for terrorism. There is no option of a fine.

Joshua Makairah, according to the prosecution, went to Agip flow station at Tebidasa, Bayelsa state along with five others armed and dressed in military uniform with the intention of coercing the company to sign an agreement to provide social amenities for the community.

"They intended to attack the flow station to take the management staff hostage and force them to sign an agreement to provide social amenities for their people. The Nigerian Navy got wind of the planned attack and laid an ambush for them during which four of the assailants were killed.

Makairah and another assailant who is still at large escaped. Makairah was however arrested when he came back later to the flow station to carry out surveillance activities."

The trial which commenced in 2004 was brought to conclusion last Friday when Makairah was found guilty and convicted of terrorism acts. While delivering judgement yesterday, Justice

From Abdulraheem Aodu, Correspondent Kaduna

Abdullahi Liman said the accused showed no remorse for his dastardly act throughout the trial as he continued to claim innocence.

"The accused has contin-

ued to claim innocence of the offence even in the face of clear evidences to the contrary.

This shows that he is not remorseful of his dastardly acts. Such acts of terrorism if condoned, could destroy the

very foundation of the nation. Thus, we have to send signals to the others that there is no room for people with terrorist tendencies in this country. Justice Liman therefore sentenced the accused to 10 years.

Cornershop demolition: Defence challenges competence of plaintiff

Hearing continued yesterday at an Abuja High Court between Mr Paul Eguma and four others and the minister of the FCT, Mallam Nasir el-Rufia, in which the defendant is challenging the capacity of the plaintiff to drag the minister to court.

Defense counsel Mr. F. C. Obiamalu was responding to an earlier application made by the plaintiff claiming that he was attacking the writ of summons and statement of claims made by the plaintiff in a motion.

He said he was challenging the capacity of the plaintiff to bring the matter before the court because it is incompetent and has *no locus standi*.

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

Earlier, the counsel to the plaintiff, Mr Isaac Okpanachi, had told the court that he received a notice of preliminary objection to an earlier motion raised by the defendant late on Friday February 24, 2006.

He said the preliminary objection, which he was seeing for the first time, was attacking the writ of summons and statements made by the plaintiff in an earlier motion.

However, Justice Sidi Bage, who adjourned the matter to March 2, 2006, said he would entertain the notice of preliminary objection made by the plaintiff.

Meanwhile, in a sworn affidavit made available to *Daily Trust*, the plaintiff is

asking the court for a declaration that the defendant allocated shops to them to possess and use without limit, declaring that the demolition of their shops when none of them breached the conditions of grant was unlawful and therefore null and void.

The plaintiff added that the sum of N175m being the total value of the shops demolished by the defendant be refunded them and a perpetual injunction restraining the defendants, by himself his servants, agents and privies, from erecting any structure on the Wuse Zone 4 neighbourhood centre piece of land. The cost of the instituted suit totals N500,000,00 among others.

Two robbers shot dead in Lagos

The police in Lagos last Tuesday shot dead two armed robbery suspects who were believed to be part of a gang of nine that attacked a commercial bus in Iponrin area of Lagos and robbed them of money and valuables.

The robbers operating in an unmarked Volkswagen bus, held passengers hostage at gun point on Iponri bridge at about 10.30pm and robbed them of their belongings.

They however ran out of luck when a police patrol team arrived the scene. The policemen were attracted to the scene by the screams and shouts of the passengers. On sighting the police, the suspects tried to escape but were pursued by the police.

Daily Trust learnt that the hoodlums abandoned the vehicle at a stage, but two were shot and killed and two arrested while one escaped.

The Lagos state police spokesman, Mr Olubode Ojajuni, confirmed the incident to *Daily Trust*.

He said the policemen were able to recover the sto-

From Bola Ojuola, Correspondent, Lagos

len items from the robbers.

In another development, the police announced the recovery of a driver's corpse from his girl's friend's room in Festac town. The lover girl has long been arrested by the police. *Daily Trust* sources said the deceased was found in a pool of blood with matchet cuts on his head on Tuesday morning.

Elizabeth, the deceased girlfriend is now being detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) Panti street Yaba, in connection with the death.



Sunday Ehindero, IG of Police

POLICE COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1. Abia State	088-222868, 088-220073
2. Adamawa State	075-674012, 624012
3. Akwa Ibom State	085-200008, 201711
4. Anambra State	048-550022
5. Bauchi State	077-6542621
6. Bayelsa State	089-490060, 490132
7. Benue State	044-532962, 044-553015
8. Borno State	076-232915, 232043 <
9. Cross River State	087-231101, 230663
0. Delta State	956-281485, 280441<
11. Ebonyi State	043-25134, 20325
12. Edo State	052-253798, 253520
13. Ekiti State	030-250000, 250709
14. Enugu State	042-250335, 042-256257
15. Gombe State	072-223135, 221158
16. Imo State	083-233343, 083-2307113
17. Jigawa State	064-721138, 721128
18. Kaduna State	*062-249762, 062-245653
19. Ka no State	064-645862, 646469
20. Katsina State	065-431703, 430914
21. Kebbi State	068-321585, 320254
22. Kog i State	058-220999, 250709
23. Kwara State	031-221612
24. Lagos State	01-4960200, 4962157
25. Nasarawa State	047-221349
26. Niger State	066-221496, 066-221903
27. Ogun State	039-241500, 223117
28. Ondo State	034-240109
29. Osun State	035-243363, 240330
30. Oyo State	02-2412824, 2412322
31. Plateau State	073-457969, 073-451968
32. Rivers State	084-23347, 236471 >
33. Sokoto State	060-232896, 2335375 080-34228561
34. Ta raba State	079-222550, 223124*
35. Yobe State	076-522141, 522145
36. Zamfara State	063-202603
37. FCT Abuja	09-2341800

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

OPC leader appeals detention on health grounds

Leader of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Dr Fredrick Fasheun, yesterday filed a suit before the Court of Appeal for bail on health grounds, saying presently he is battling with a heart problem capable of killing him.

Chief G. O. K. Ajayi (SAN), told a three-member panel of the court that the condition of his client is seriously deteriorating.

Two other detained leaders of the OPC, Messrs Ajayi Edward Olushola and Mudashiru Adeniji, aligned themselves with Fasheun's application with the hope of securing bail.

Fasheun who is being detained at the Kuje prisons invoked the original jurisdiction of the appellate court for its intervention, notwithstanding the fact that he, alongside five others, had filed an appeal before the court to reverse the decision of the federal high court, Abuja, which denied them bail.

But the federal government objected to his request, saying that Dr Fasheun had agreed to a conditional bail for the purpose of attending to his health problems.

The prosecution stated that there was no urgent reason for him to travel out of the country as he failed to present any convincing medical report to make the court of appeal exercise its discretion in his favour.

The federal government also said that the application is an abuse of court processes, saying they had earlier brought a similar application before the high court for bail and are now doing same before the appellate court.

The prosecution consequently urged the court to strike out the motion especially when it had opened its case against them.

Meanwhile, Primate Solomon Aluko visited the

Ruby Rabiu Senior Reporter

OPC leaders in detention at the weekend and advised them to be submissive to

constituted authorities.

He cited the Book of Romans, Chapter 13 (1-14) to support his argument.

Dr Fasheun and the five

others were arraigned on December 1, 2005 by the federal government before a federal high court, Abuja, on a four-count charge of

treason and illegal possession of firearms.

Other members of the association arraigned with Dr Fasheun, are Gani

Adams, Ajayi Edward Olushola (30), Alhaji Oyinlola Awe (52), Chief Wahab Isiaka (52) and Alhaji Mudashiru Adeniji.



Suspected fake dollar bills confiscated from alleged money doublers by detectives from Edo State police command... recently

Manslaughter convict to pay N8.6m

fine in Bauchi

Anyone convicted for manslaughter in Bauchi state is to pay the sum of N8 million as compensation to the family of the deceased, the Bauchi state Sharia commission has ruled.

Also, the Commission said that anybody convicted for stealing anything worth more than

From Tashikalmah Hallah, Correspondent Bauchi

N2,164, would have his/her arm amputated, while a bachelor seeking the hands of lady in marriage would pay the sum of N2,164 as dowry.

Alhaji Mohammed Tata, a commissioner in charge of Zakkat and Endowment, told *Daily Trust* in an

interview Thursday, that the new fees were part of the Commission's policy for the new Islamic calendar 1427 AD.

According to him, "you first of all look at the sanctity of life. We don't hope that somebody would lose his/her life under whatever circumstances. But for murder, you know the penalty, it is punishable by death. This one, there is no compensation because you committed the offence

deliberately".

"However, for manslaughter, you committed the offence unintentionally, so it is here that you will pay the sum of N8,653,575.00 to the family of the deceased. And after the payment you're expected to go on two months continuous fasting to atone for your sins".

Alhaji Tata said that the families of the convict would be forced to pay the compensation in the event

that the convict failed to pay and when both fail, the government would be asked to pay.

"There are many ways of doing it. If the convict can't raise the amount, then the immediate family would be asked to pay. And if this one fails, then the society where he lives would be asked to contribute. Again, if the money is not complete, his emirate or the government pays".

Opinion

Ohinoyi and chieftaincy reforms in Kogi

By Y. J. Itopa

In his 77th year birthday address published in the *Sun* newspaper of February 10, 2006, the Ohinoyi of Epira land said inter alia: "The deputy governor introduced the Ohi traditional title to supersede all the chieftaincy titles in Epira land. The title is alien to Epira culture and therefore unacceptable. The deputy governor's action has sparked off communal crises in the area, which resulted in the loss of lives and properties in Ihima. This Ohi title introduced cannot succeed; it is going to cause crises. How can we call somebody Ohi? Ohi of what? What is the origin of Ohi? This is an insult and those who have been appointed to promote it... but if they don't stop this, our ancestors will be angry with them... I will not take it lightly."

The heart and soul of the above birthday message from the Ohinoyi of Epira land can aptly be described as a deliberate invitation to anarchy, strife and lawlessness to the domain of an Ohinoyi who is finding it difficult to come to terms with the burning reality that the stool of Ohinoyi of Epira land is based on rotational principle. Alhaji Ado Ibrahim's dream with regards to the ascension to the throne of Epira land has the potentiality of blowing up

the entire place. Ohinoyi's plan is to abdicate the throne at a ripe age to pave way for his son, Abdulmalik Ado Ibrahim, who he now refers to as the crown prince. With the establishment of Ohi system, he fears that his dream of planting the tree of aristocracy, feudalism and dynasty in Epira land would die and die forever. Epira is not royalty or dynasty-phobia, because Epira people were never a conquered race. Every person in Epira land is a potential king. When the white man came, he already met a perfect system. Every clan is equal to the other. No clan is dependent on the other. The affairs of each clan were being conducted by the clan head whose authority started and ended with his clan.

Now, for ease of administration, the colonial masters decided to create a central chief that would be charged with the responsibility of overseeing the affairs of the whole place. So, in 1917, the colonial masters appointed the late Ibrahim Onoruoiza as the paramount chief of Epira land. He was called chief of Epira tribe.

In our language (Epira), the equivalent of Chief of Epira is Ohinoyi. You will notice

here that with the creation of this central stool, Ohinoyi of Epira, the clan heads were still performing their role unhampered. In fact, their job was easier now. Their role complemented that of the paramount chief's statutory derivative, which did not clash with the cultural role of a clan head. Because of his ambition to establish a dynasty in Epira, Ohinoyi has been misinforming the public that Ohiship is alien to Epira culture. This is far from being true. He is only saying this to incite the people against the government. Ohi is only lower in rank to Ohinoyi. Dr Ado Ibrahim is seeing Ohiship or Adaship as the axe that would fell his tree of feudalism or dynasty. That is why he is calling it all sorts of names, building alliances in each district to keep unleashing mayhem on the land all in a bid to intimidate the government to abandon the project. Every Epira man is used to these antics of his. It was in his desperation that he ignited the crisis we are still managing in Ihima till today. This is true because he has said severally that the creation of Ohiship stool would cause crisis. If a witch cries today and a child dies tomorrow, your guess is as good as mine as to who killed the child.

In his futile effort to fight the reform exercise, Ohinoyi

said Ohi is alien to Epira culture. He even said Ohi means nothing. But we all know that Ohi when translated in English means headship. It connotes supervisor, leader. It could mean captain. The word Ada carries the same sense as Ohi. Ada means father in Epira dialect. Let us look at the title Ohinoyi which Ado Ibrahim is bearing today. Ohi as prefix here means head. Then the suffix inoyi means multitude of people. When Ohi and inoyi are joined, they become Ohinoyi, which means head of the multitude of people. The reader should note that the 'I' in inoyi is silent in Ohinoyi; this is just for ease of pronunciation. If today we say the title of Epira paramount chief is Adinoyi, Epira people will still accept it because it connotes the same meaning as Ohinoyi. Adinoyi means father of multitude. Ohi or Ada connotes a paterfamilias or a patriarch from whom the people draw inspiration, hope and succour. The word conveys something like quintessence of the soul of a people or their community; a sort of oases from which the people - the rich and the poor - derive their charm, and their strength especially in a situation of drabness. Ohi or Ada could mean a pillar; sort of central pillar to which the roof of a community is glued.

This is the philosophy that informed the quest by the generality of Epira people that given the rot, humiliation, desolation and misery that stared the once formidable Epira nation in the face, there is the need for the establishment of a paramount ruler in each of the five royal districts of the land, so that Epira can rise again. It is a pity that the Ohinoyi is standing in the way of the spring that will end the drought that has long drained Epira land of its sap of dignity. It is indeed unfortunate.

For an average Epira man, what is rather alien to Epira culture are titles such as Attah III of Epira land; Sodangi of Epira land; Makama of Epira land; Sadauna of Epira land; Mejdadi; Turaki, et cetera. These outlandish titles have no origin in Epira culture. Yet Ohinoyi is churning out these strange titles and selling them to people who enjoy being enslaved. Epira people should be watchful. For us in this part of the country, this phobia for alien titles being encouraged by the Ohinoyi should be discouraged.

The Ohinoyi, Alhaji Ado Ibrahim, got it wrong when he said our ancestors would not be happy with those illustrious Epira sons and daughters making patriotic

efforts to fight for the creation of more paramount chiefs in Epira land to usher in peace, harmony and dignity. We believe that our ancestors and the gods are sad because Epira people have refused to rise to the challenges of the time. There are pestilence, horror and wretchedness in the land today because Epira people are watching helplessly as the modern Oedipus is sitting on usurped throne. He is sitting on the throne he has desecrated with various crises he had and is still causing in the land, which have always resulted in the killing of many of his kinsmen.

There is a Cain that has shed the blood of a thousand Abels. The blood of these Abels has cried unto God from the ground. A taboo has been allowed in the land. The gods no longer could brook the growing turbulence of an Oedipus in the land. Over ninety per cent of Epira crises today is traceable to clannish or chieftaincy struggle. If the establishment of Ohi system will bring laughter back to the people, we should all encourage it. God's blessings can only await the apostle of the creation of the new first-class stools in the districts of Epira land.

Comrade Y. J. Itopa is the chief press secretary to the deputy governor.

NPC heads for another questionable census

By Ahmed Mohammed O.

My first contact with census activities is dated back to the 1991 census when I participated as an enumerator in the former Plateau State.

Since then, by destiny or professional calling, census has become a part of my life, and Census 2006 will surely not be an exception.

Consequently, when the National Population Commission, NPC announced vacancies for its ad hoc staff for the coming head-count, I was so optimistic that I said I needed not know anybody, as I have all that it takes to be a facilitator during the exercise.

First of all, I participated as an enumerator in 1991. Two, I'm a graduate of Mass Communications practising journalism with an international broadcasting organisation covering NPC as Census Editor; a part-time lecturer with a federal polytechnic and I would be on my annual leave by March when the census is expected to hold.

By these, I thought it wise and patriotic to participate in the exercise to ensure accurate and reliable 2006 head-count. To my surprise, my name was conspicuously missing in the names of those

picked for the ad hoc jobs.

As my finger went up and down the list, I felt sorry for the commission, wondering why people like me nationwide should be left out instead of the less experienced people that were picked by the commission to conduct Census 2006 in our place.

First of all, I count myself qualified for the job and need no lobby, but to my amazement, I was told by the FCT director of the commission that I never cared to intimate them of my intentions. And as such, the commission dropped my name.

Other senior officers contacted also claimed that their nominees' names were also dropped at the headquarters by some powerful officers, which is really confusing and embarrassing to the FCT commission.

The whole issue is not after the competence of the said staff employed, but of who is close to the powers that be. Imagine staffs that were employed based on ethnic affiliation and on the god-fathers they have performing this national duty after successive head-

counts ended up with imagined figures for Nigeria.

My worry is, if the NPC wants to have a credible census, the list of ad hoc staff employed for the exercise must be revisited as I consider it unfair if a fresh graduate doing his/her National Youth Service is considered more suitable for the job than the people with the aforementioned experiences nationwide. There is still time for amendment before the training of the staff early next month.

In the course of my dealings with the officials of the commission, they claim to know so much without giving room for advice, criticisms and counselling as they believe in too much 'talk' rather than doing the right things at the right time.

In one of the workshops where questionnaires were discussed between the top officials of the commission and the Census Editors in Ibadan, all the suggestions made by pressmen were ignored as the national chairman went on praising himself rather than accepting faults and making adjustments. During one of my attempts to get an interview with the federal commissioner in charge of

the FCT on the level of preparedness, especially on the satellite image-mapping exercise, the officials feigned indisposition of the commissioner as an excuse to dissuade me from knowing the truth by creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

All these actions don't augur well for a reliable and accurate census to come by in a country desperately in need of correct population figures for appropriate planning.

One area I tend to disagree with the commission is the mode of public enlightenments. As far as I am concerned, they don't imbibe the culture of creativity as they still use the old-fashioned way of blocking religious arenas on Sundays by the commission's officials to send out census messages. To me, it was not only archaic but maddening, especially with the uneasy calm in Nigeria these days.

Even those in charge of advertising and media are not left out, as they selectively enter into agreement with only those willing to share the fallout of advertising royalties not minding the number of listeners or viewers to be reached

through the said medium.

Again, media men attached to the commission are carried to their functionalities not only at the discretion of the commission's officials, but others are treated with great differences thereby leaving room for suspicion.

During a stakeholders' workshop on locality identification and verification in the FCT, the workshop never achieved its aims, as journalists who attended the workshop observed that the three hours of 'talk the talk' (sorry, Mtel) by the commission's officials never simmered in the minds of the stakeholders before the said forum ended.

Participants were never given room to identify their localities or see whether they were correctly demarcated; and if not, given room to complain for the omission.

If such attitude of the commission continues, then we are heading for another questionable census that will not only produce inaccurate census figures, but wrong tools for national planning.

In this modern age, when Nigeria's quest to reposition herself in the community of nations, especially with the much-talked about reforms, it will be a disgrace to come out

with an unacceptable census as a result of self-destruction by the commission.

Come to think of the large sum of money coupled with the human and material resources invested by the European Union for this exercise; it will be a disgrace if at the end of the day, a desired result is not achieved by the commission.

It will not only make foreign donor agencies sceptical of Nigeria's projects in the nearest future, but the desire to get things right through the introduction of SERVICOM will be a mirage.

Nigerians, children unborn and posterity will not only hold the commission's officials responsible for these foreseen failures, but their names will be written in the black books of record.

The earlier the commission retraced its steps and forge ahead with a resolution to have an accurate and reliable census through the use of efficient ad hoc staff and committed NPC officials, the better the story of Nigeria's unsuccessful census will avoid being written without their names boldly written for history to judge.

Ahmed Mohammed O., Kukwaha Street, Kubwa, FCT, Abuja.

Congratulations

To every true Democrat you are a role model,
as we emulate your policy of even spread of
dividends of democratic Governance in Arewa
Local Government Area.

WE ARE PROUD OF YOUR CHOICE

By

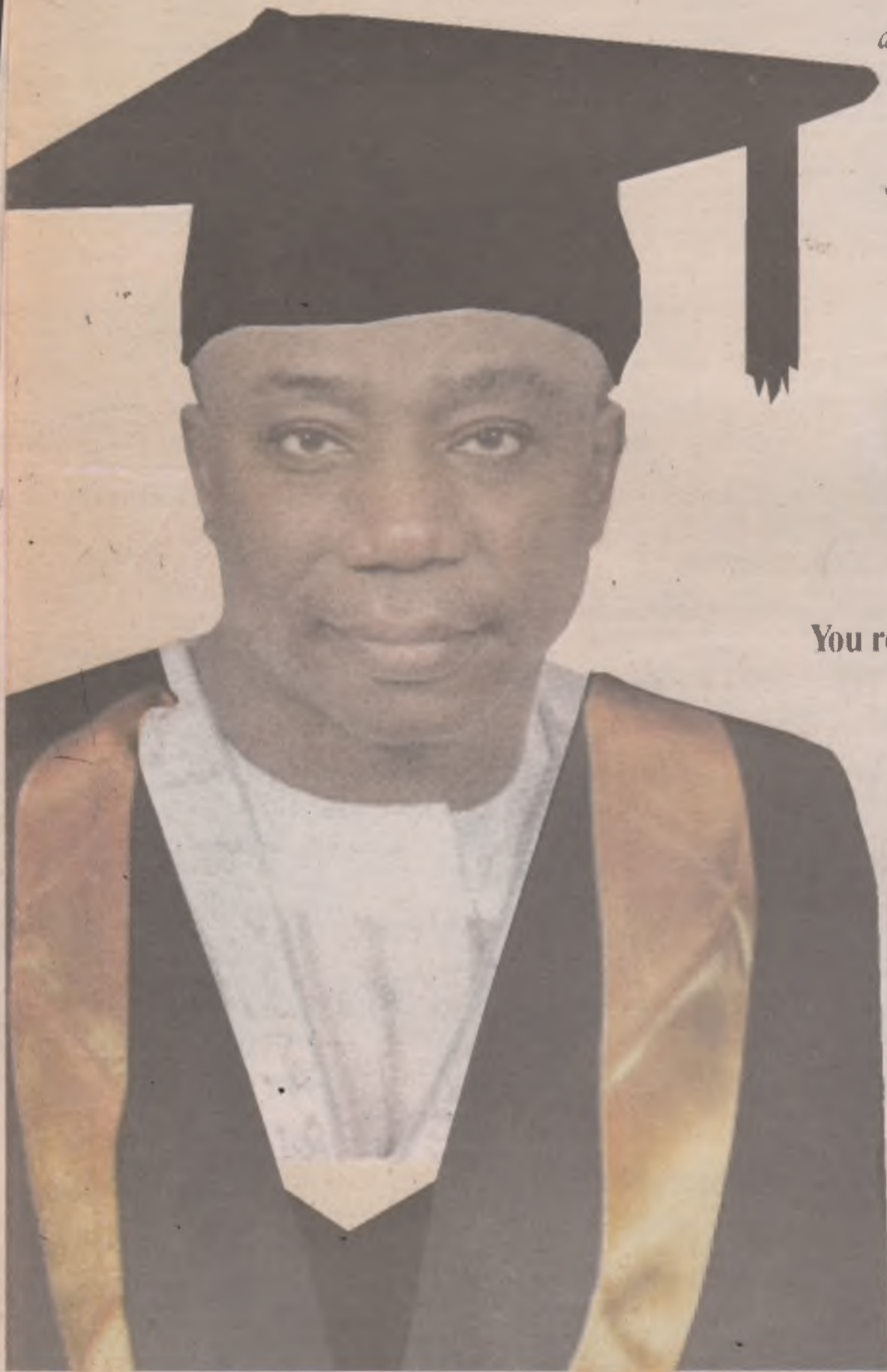
Nassarawa State University, Keffi.

For the award of

Honorary Doctorate Degree in Law
(LLB Honoris Causa)

On Saturday, February 18th, 2006.

You remain a pride to the people of Kebbi State

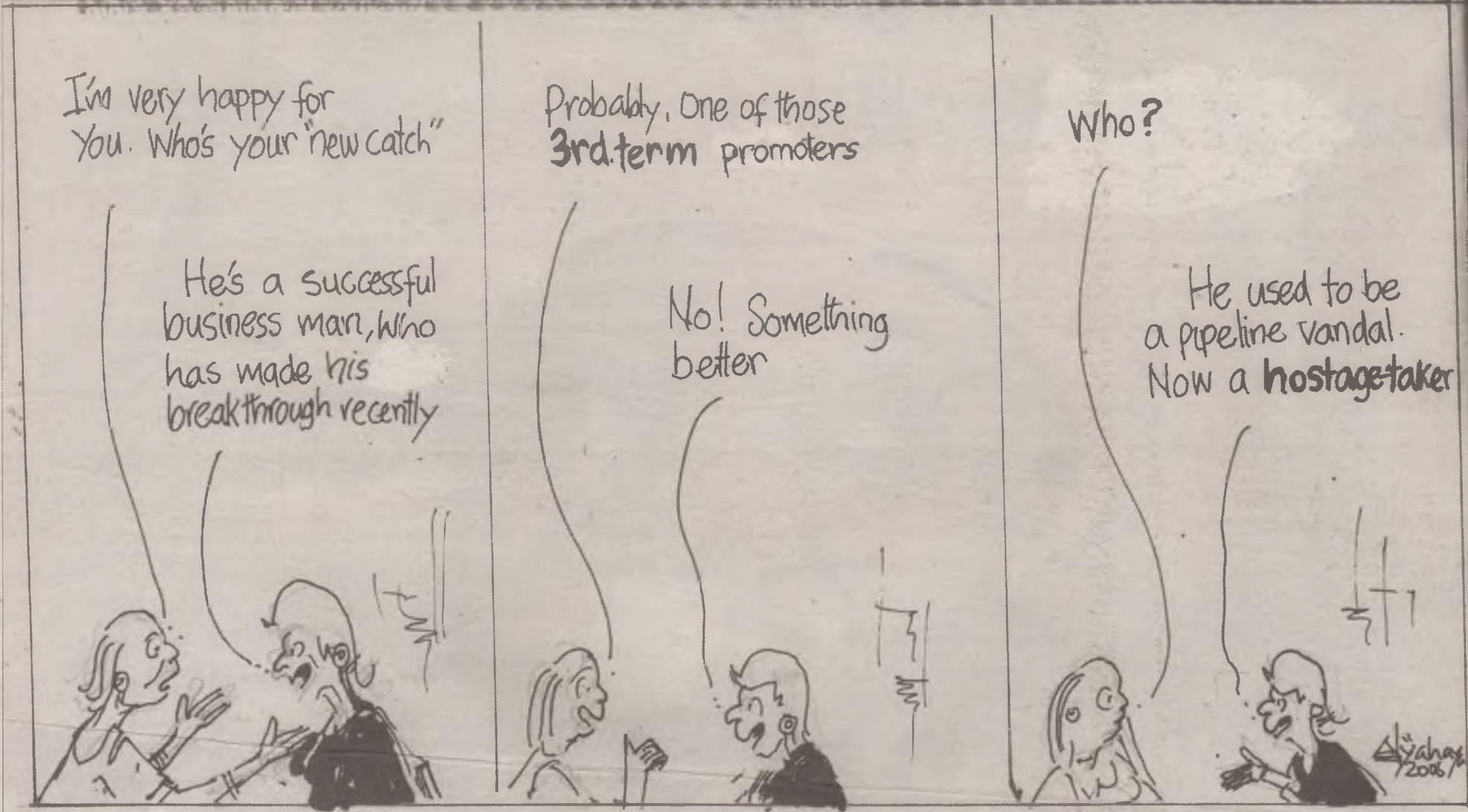


**His Excellency,
Alhaji (Dr.) Muhammadu Adamu Aliero, (Garkuwan Gwandu)
Executive Governor, Kebbi State**

Signed:
Alh. Sani Mohammed Kangiwa
Hon. Chairman, Arewa Local Govt. Council



Alh. Sani Mohammed Kangiwa
Hon. Chairman,
Arewa Local Govt. Council



YOUR LETTERS

Appraising ABUTH CMD

With the commissioning of the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital permanent site situated at Shika in Zaria, ABUTH prior to its commissioning by the present administration is now wearing a new look, befitting the status of a teaching hospital of international repute, so as to bring quality healthcare services closer to the people. The D-day was 11th of November 2005.

In fact, a new dawn in the healthcare management section of the North has been achieved. This silent revolution would not have been possible without a dynamic, courageous, sincere and patriotic leadership. Professor Aguye whom God Almighty has chosen to lead this revolution is a prince from Koton-Karfe.

To achieve this feat, immediately after his appointment as the new Chief Medical Director of the ultra-modern hospital, he ushered into the management a style of leadership which has visible signs of continuous orientation and a total breakaway from personal aggrandisement into leadership by example. There has been no denying the fact that this administration has recorded remarkable achievements despite the little resources made available to it.

After years of waiting in vein, the Ahmadu Bello University Hospital has now become a reality. With its ultra-modern equipment and other facilities, it can now be compared with any modern hospital in Africa and the world at large. The problem of water scarcity, which had been on and off in the hospital before the commissioning, is now being tackled systematically with the assistance of the state government, which directed the state Water Board to add more pumping to ABUTH and also

with the replacement of broken pipes, drilling of more boreholes, extension vis-à-vis solid plastic water tanks/reservoirs at strategic places in the hospital by ABUTH management. Since electricity plays an

important role in the socio-economic development of any society, the ABUTH management ensures a steady power supply through the 30.5KVA Power Holding Company (PHC) sub-station directly opposite ABUTH and

also a brand new generating set is always on standby in case of power failure and with adequate gas supply.

Staff welfare has been addressed properly put in order to move forward.

I urge the management - staff

and everyone concerned - to give the CMD maximum support and cooperation so that the facilities and services rendered in the hospital can be maintained.

Lastly, I wish the chief medical director who is the

father of this silent revolution more grease to his elbows. I also wish him long life, prosperity and continuous service to ABU Teaching Hospital, Zaria, Nigeria and humanity at large.

Shuaibu Abdullahi Galadima, No. 64/65, Sokoto Road, Samaru, Zaria.

Still on brothers' fight over chieftaincy in Kogi

My attention has been drawn to the news report on the recent Ihima crisis by one Shehu Abubakar, a reporter with the *Weekly Trust* newspaper in its edition of February 11 - 17, 2006. I was dismayed by the alarming level of distortions, misinformation and outright falsehood in the report. As an indigene of the area who was directly affected and deeply touched by the sad and unfortunate incident and who knows the truth of the matter after thorough investigation, I regard the report as repulsive and hereby wish to set the record straight and put all the issues connected to the gory incident in their proper perspectives for the necessary action by the state government aimed at nipping it in the bud.

First and foremost, the crisis which later snowballed into a horrendous fratricidal war with heavy human casualties started during the last Okehi masquerades festival; an annual festival which features various night masquerades from the clans in Ihima. The visitors who came from the neighbouring areas in Ebiraland were prevented from passing through the normal route to a shrine by the Ohianwa youths. A peace-loving and easy-going man from Emani Clan who came out to make peace by directing the visitors to a different route in order to ensure peaceful and

hitch-free celebration of the festival was attacked by the murderous Ohianwa youths and he later died in the hospital. A retaliatory attack was made by Emani youths against the actual Ohianwa youth that killed the Emani man who was out to make peace. The retaliatory attack led to the destruction of personal belongings of both parties.

While spirited and conscious efforts were being made to settle the problem so that peace could reign, a group of Ohianwa youths went to attack on one Mallam Idris Ijiji, a prominent Emani trader in Oboroke market and asked him to surrender his goods to them. He refused and he was shot by the youths. On noticing that their gunshot had no effect on him, they used machete on him and gave him deep cuts all over his body. The retaliatory attack from Emani youths led to massive destruction of property, burning of houses and human casualties on both sides.

The third phase of the untoward incident occurred immediately after a congregation prayer at Oboroke when the same group of Ohianwa youths took sadistic delight in unleashing mayhem on people, this later extended to the evening of that day.

If the reason for the crisis was the struggle "over who becomes the first-class chief (Adihima) of Ihima" as the reporter claimed, why is it that only two clans out of the six clans that make up

Ihima are mentioned in connection with the exalted stool? What about the remaining four clans who also have legitimate claims to the stool if created?

There was no picture of any of the burnt houses to show that the reporter was at Ihima for proper, thorough and in-depth investigation and accurate collation of the facts of the matter as demanded by the ethics of journalism before

rushing to write his spurious report.

It was after a Commission of Enquiry was set up by the Kogi State government to look into the immediate and remote cause of the crisis that the issue of chieftaincy tussle was introduced in it.

In conclusion, I wish to appeal to the state government to exercise considerable caution in resolving the crisis. The government should look beyond

all the information made available to it by those in government who are from Ihima district before taking decisions on the crisis.

More so, the government of Kogi State led by Alhaji Ibrahim Idris should not allow itself to be distracted from the laudable developmental programmes mapped out to benefit the entire people of the State.

Ibrahim Jimoh, ex-president, Ihima Social Club.

Hon. Sha'aban and Kaduna governorship race

Allow me a space in your newspaper to comment on why Honourable Mohammed Sani Shaaban will be the best gubernatorial candidate for Kaduna State in 2007.

Kaduna State is no doubt lucky to have man with the vision, mission and foresight of the current member representing Sabon Gari Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

It is a fact that Nigerian politicians do not stand by their promises out of greed and ingratitude. But Honourable Sha'aban is not such a politician. Kaduna State people will be relieved to see Honourable Sha'aban preside over our many problems with his maturity and sincerity in 2007.

Sha'aban has assisted a lot of the downtrodden in the state and that is why the masses

always troop to his house whenever he comes to town. They also troop to his house and Assembly chambers in Abuja for one favour or another.

Whatever the misgivings people might have about him, Sha'aban is humble and generous. In addition, he has what it takes to make Kaduna great. What we need right now is the support and encouragement of the people of Kaduna State for the gentleman to become the governor of the state.

Not only will he transform

the state economically and socially, he will also restore people's hope and confidence in government in the areas of prudent management of resources and policies like employment-generation, affordable food production, qualitative education, vibrant healthcare system, affordable houses and good roads.

I am, therefore, advising the people of Kaduna State to persuade Honourable Mohammed Sani Sha'aban to join the governorship race in 2007.

Joshua Kaza, Ungwar Kaje, Kafanchan, Kaduna State.

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



27th KADUNA INTERNATIONAL
TRADE FAIR

One network with enterprising ideas.

Do all you ever wanted to do on the Y'ello network at the MTN stand at this year's Kaduna International Trade Fair, holding from the 17th till the 26th of February 2006.

- Also win free gifts
- Take part in instant raffle draws
- Meet customer care consultants
- And get the latest information on MTN products and services, such as MTN Enterprise solutions, vehicle tracking, MTN messenger etc.

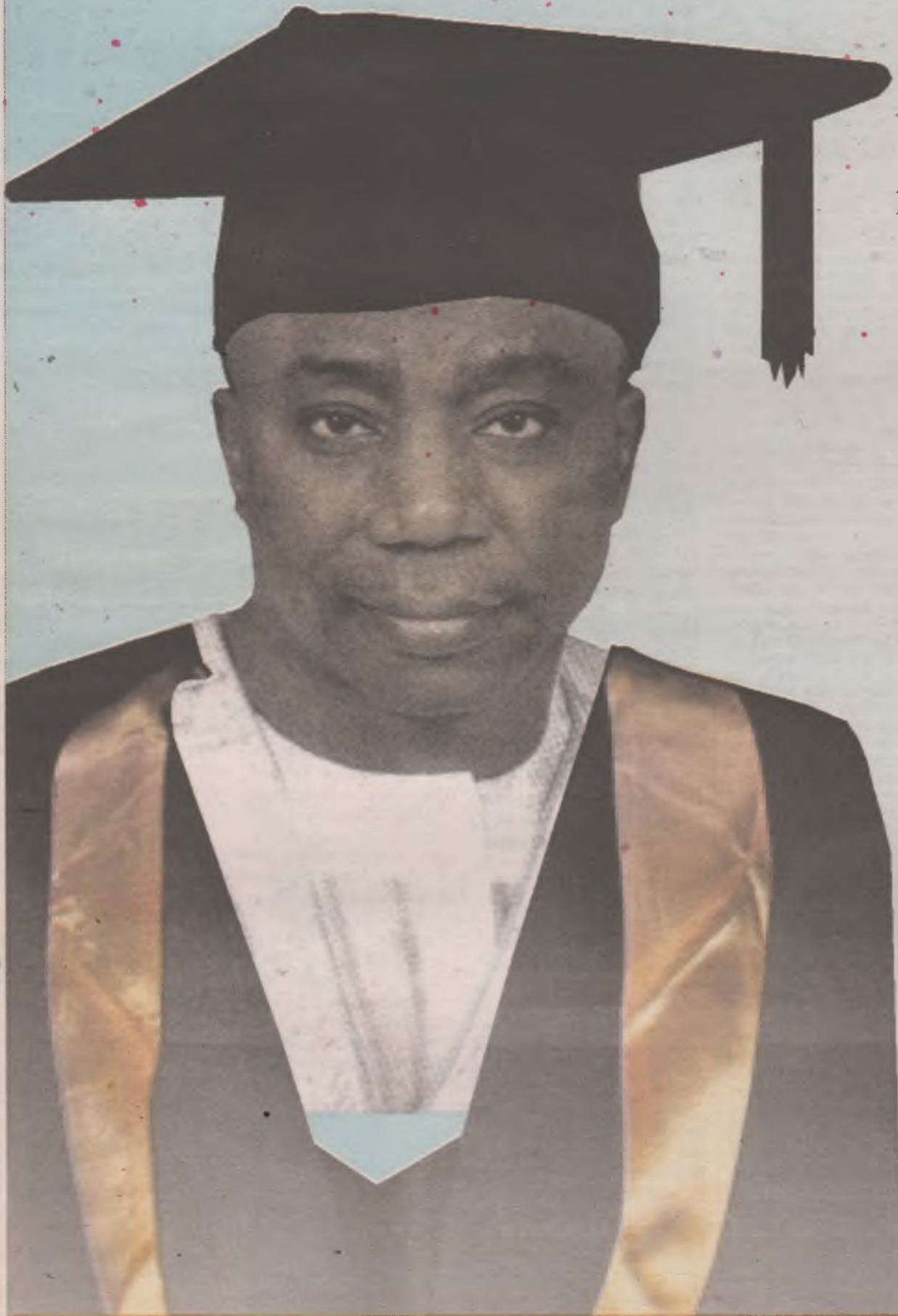


No one covers Nigeria better than MTN

Visit www.mtnonline.com

everywhere you go

Congratulations



“Your Excellency, you are and remain a great inspiration to me, the people of Birnin Kebbi Local Government and many other progressive people of Kebbi State”

We rejoice with you on the occasion of the Award of Honorary Doctorate Degree in Law (LLB Honoris Causa)

By
Nassarawa State University, Keffi.
On Saturday, February 18th, 2006.

We remain committed to your principles of Accountability, Action and Results.

His Excellency,
Alhaji (Dr.) Muhammadu Adamu Aliero, (*Garkuwan Gwandu*)
Executive Governor, Kebbi State.

Signed:
Barister Nasiru Ibrahim Junju
Chairman, Birnin Kebbi Local Govt. Council



Barister Nasiru Ibrahim Junju
Hon. Chairman,
Birnin Kebbi Local Govt. Council

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
tempthist@yahoo.com

Cartoon killings, incompetent leadership

"What has happened in Onitsha and other places as reprisals is an evidence of failure of government. One should therefore urge government not to allow the present preoccupation of politics of 2007 to distract it from facing adequately the crisis now engulfing the nation."

- Rev. Fr. George Ehusani Sec. Gen., Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria

As you read this, the neophyte whose fertile imagination resulted in the cartoons that triggered protests and violent riots across the globe is probably nursing an oversized glass of beer in a Danish pub - about the only thing Denmark is known for beside cheese and butter. Assured in the fallacy and hypocrisy of Western interpretations of democracy and freedom of expression, he would be totally oblivious of the mayhem and carnage his indiscretion caused in most of the Middle East and Nigeria in particular, where close to a hundred innocent souls perished in riots linked to the irresponsible cartoons. Even as I write, news reached me that the senseless killings had spread to Lokoja, that most cosmopolitan of Nigerian cities since the days of Lord Lugard. With the third term charade the only business in town, the signs are that it could spread even further in the coming days unless God touches the heart of the jokers in Aso Rock who also claim to be our leaders.

My grouse this morning is that it wasn't as if the riots, and the subsequent killings that followed, occurred in a vacuum. From the moment the first protests hit London, the Middle East, Pakistan and most of Asia, you just knew that they could occur in Africa too. Nigeria, with its sizeable Muslim population, is not an island to itself either and any responsible leader or government should have known that it was just a matter of time before the protests reached these shores. That the protests spread to Kano, therefore, did not surprise me in the slightest: the only surprise was that they were actually peaceful, given the fact that they could very easily have been hijacked by idlers and street urchins. Still, the mere fact that the protests took place should have alerted authorities to the possibility that they were likely to have a contagious effect on Muslims in other Nigerian cities offended by the same cartoons. Like in Kano, the chances that criminals could hijack their protests were equally very real.

In a nation with only one Commander-in-Chief, the president is the principal recipient and custodian of a sizeable chunk of the intelligence from the massive Nigerian security apparatus. Therefore, unless the president accepts that the men and women he placed in charge of such agencies should not be there in the first place, he cannot feign ignorance of the planned protests at other locations outside Kano. But unfortunately, these days, it seems the president is only preoccupied in intelligence on his political opponents. If it were not so, they would have taken appropriate precautionary measures to ensure that the protests did not spiral out of

control like I warned last week. Regrettably, even after violence erupted in Maiduguri, the government betrayed criminal incompetence, and a pathetic inability to forestall the reprisals that occurred in the East, or the predictable escalation of the mayhem in cities such as Kontagora, Potiskum and Lokoja. The question now remains: where and when will the killings end?

Like the previous orgies of mass slaughter of innocent Nigerians under the watch of this president, it is the ordinary, hard-working folk who bore the brunt of the scourge once again. Most were simply caught in transit at either Onitsha or Lokoja in pursuit of their legitimate livelihoods. Given the alarming rate of poverty and destitution in the land, others simply lacked the wherewithal to escape and were caught like fish in a barrel. What do you tell parents who laboured to train their children through university only to have life snuffed out of them in an avoidable riot while on national youth service? How do we console families who lost their sole breadwinners the same gruesome way, or children suddenly orphaned because our passivity enabled an incompetent chicken farmer to rig his way back to office in 2003? For, after all is said and done, the victims lost their lives because those in position of authority, from the president and his security chiefs down to the governors in the affected areas, took a bizarre, French leave when their decisive actions were required most.

Indeed, since the return of democracy in 1999, Nigerians have never had it so bad in terms of security. You may call Abacha different names, but at least our highways and cities were safer during his time. That was to change soon after Obasanjo took over, however. The OPC, which restricted its activities to the usual irritating noises about Yoruba supremacy, suddenly unleashed an orgy of violence on other ethnic groups in the south-west beginning from Sagamu. As could be expected, there were reprisals in Kano and other places and the nation has never known peace since then. But the greater tragedy is that throughout the crises, the president in characteristic fashion, pussyfooted and hid behind the façade of democracy even as blood flowed freely in the streets. And yet, while dissent and freedom of expression are essential ingredients of any true democracy, they can never be a licence for arson or murder.

For the last several months, it is the same incompetent president that proponents of the costly cocktail of reforms he introduced want to ram down our throats come 2007. And because of the prominence given the third term agenda, an obvious paralysis of government has occurred. The bloodletting and general insecurity in the land have not been accorded the priority they deserve. These days, even government officials with mere certificates from the Harvard Business School want us to believe they are geniuses at economic management. They literally walk on air, and constitute the president's kitchen cabinet. They deepen our enslavement to Western

capital and resources at every turn, and because they are hypnotised by economic theories of the IMF and the World Bank, they demand that we open our borders for the inflow of all types of manufactured foreign goods, while also cutting down drastically on the domestic workforce.

With a one-dimensional economy such as ours, even an elementary student of economics should be wise to the likely outcome of such foolishness. The Chinese after all tailored their own reforms to suit their own peculiarities, and are reaping immense benefits from their wisdom presently. Our reformers accept anything thrown at them as the gospel truth. They discarded Abacha's Vision 2010 report, which even his enemies admitted was a fine blue print for the nation's quantum leap from the ravages of underdevelopment. They came up with the contraption called NEEDS, whose sole purpose it seems is to hand over our inheritance, and much of our sovereignty to the neo-colonialist interests they represent.

They promised three million jobs in the interim, but only last week sanctioned the sacking of nearly the entire civil service! In a nation where most industries have either closed or are functioning at well below full capacity, the situation is almost like a death sentence for workers generally. Worse still, there is no well-structured social security system for them to fall back on. Social infrastructure remains at primitive levels generally, and don't even mention healthcare delivery! Even with oil selling at over 60 dollars per barrel for successive years, the economic team still can't find a way to end the hell that has become the lot of Nigerians since 1999. They fail to see the direct correlation between the high unemployment rate and escalating crime nationwide. And yet, central to their reforms agenda is the inflow of foreign investments. But even a grocery attendant should know that to attract the massive investments they crave, they first must guarantee an enabling environment as a rule.

We needed peace and good governance, but Nigeria as we have seen in the past several days is a far cry from achieving that presently. As things stand today, Nigerians have become so decidedly impoverished under Obasanjo to the extent that their tolerance level is now sub-zeroed. It is within that context that the regrettable killings must be viewed. Let the word go forth that the unfortunate slaughter of innocents has little to do with religion, but much to do with hunger and monumental failure of governance at different levels but especially at the very top. Obasanjo must be denied the opportunity to utilise the crisis to prolong his tenure by spreading crude and absurd tales about his indispensability. As for the millions sickened by all the cacophony of half-baked lies and deceit, by now, it must be obvious that the PDP and its brand of democracy are worse than the most brutal dictatorship. Half a world away, our friend in Copenhagen perhaps does not realise that there is nothing essentially comical about that truism.

Opinion

Goje's phenomenal exploits in Gombe

By Paul Samson

Amir Cabra, the German theatre scholar said, "Every society deserves the kind of leader it gets." If our society paved the way for a reckless leader to emerge as our governor as we experienced four years ago, it will be very bad for a new state like Gombe that is yearning for an accountable, prudent and people-oriented government that we desired. "A leader that makes changes impossible automatically makes violence inevitable." Violence, of course, is a product of underdevelopment. Even an accelerated development of every society is highly desirable and is the answer, especially when one is elected into any office. Provision of such development is the fulfilment of electoral promises made to the electorate, which in a way is a method of making the people to keep faith with one's administration.

Gombe State has never had it so good in the last nine years and four months of its creation even in the last dispensation. Some of us were shocked by the outburst of the former Minister of Mines and Power, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan, who accused Gov. Goje's administration indirectly by saying that the local government councils in the state are not performing. How can he accuse the government of indolence when he knows, sees and can verify what this government is doing? If a respectable leader like the former minister is berating the government for not performing, several reasons could be adduced for such outburst, among which are: he must have lost touch with the accelerated developmental realities in the state at the moment; (ii) perhaps he is one of those that closed their eyes to the recklessness, wasteful spree and the insensitivities of the defeated past government; (iii) I hope and want to believe that the criticism is not to draw attention to himself and the group he may be vouching for; (iv) I also hope the criticisms are genuine and borne out of constructive comments and the political concern for the advancement of the state and perhaps to make Gov. Goje's government sit up in order to execute more projects for the people. Perhaps, it is also an attempt to draw the attention of the government to himself and the other members of the old school that we are still very much around, patronise us. One, two or three of these reasons must be the genesis of the criticisms.

If the former minister is not aware of the activities of the

present government in Gombe State, let him visit the ultra-modern shopping complex built by the Gombe Local Government at Tudun Hafsi; the construction of the General Hospital by Nafada Local Government, the electrification projects by Kwami Local Government and the construction of township and rural roads by Yamaltu-Deba and Dukku local government areas. These are very a few of the people-oriented projects that the state government has directed the third tier of government to embark upon to justify the mandate that the people gave to them. I am not a civil servant, contractor or personally know Gov. Goje, let alone concluding whether I have been commissioned to defend the activities of his government, but courtesy demands that we should put the facts straight. These projects are all verifiable for anybody that claims to be ignorant of the seriousness and commitment of Goje's administration in the last three years of his administering the state. Goje has not left anybody in doubt that he meant well for the people who gave him their mandate, so to them he owes allegiance and even better in order to get their support again come 2007. All these are done within the scarce resources at the disposal of the government.

What would be the reactions of Alhaji Hassan and other members of his armchair critics club if Gombe State is getting the kind of revenue allocation accruing to any of the South-South states?

For the record, Alhaji Hassan and his ilk should know in case they still claim ignorance of what the Goje administration is doing in Gombe, that the government will be commissioning the multi-billion naira Gombe Water Scheme project in March. The Honourable Minister can contact the Government House, Gombe State to know when the event is coming up, so that they will be better informed of the programmes and the policies of the administration instead of criticising for the sake of criticism. Let me point out again to the critics of the government that by the special grace of Almighty God, going by the sense of commitment that Governor Goje and his council members have been displaying, we have one of the best state-owned universities in the country today. The critics can pay an unscheduled visit to the campus; it is located close to

them within the state capital where I am a student undergoing a university degree programme. Some of our leaders who are interested in sharing the state allocation instead of using the same for the good of the common man should please take a cue from the magnanimity and giant strides of this government, so that they can learn and see how to serve the people better.

The Gombe State School of Nursing is also within their reach at the state capital; they can go there to see the state of art equipment installed to train the sons and daughters of Gombe State to the glory of God. I hope they realised that four years ago, the state capital was a glorified local government headquarters rather than the befitting infrastructural facilities put in place now by the same government they seek to discredit instead of encouraging and giving it their moral support for it to continue its good work.

What about the massive good roads going on within and outside the state capital? Electrification scheme is another project of repute that we should thank this government for. I am using this medium to appeal to the opinion leaders in the state to please call some of the antagonists of Goje's administration to order for peace, tranquillity and understanding to reign in the state. Gombe Development Forum, GDF has a Herculean task to perform in this respect. What we need at this formative stage of the state is to join hands with the performing government to take the state to greater heights. It is to the glory of our leaders if the state grows, develops and prospers. The aspirants for the governorship seat should weigh themselves properly and see whether they can withstand the pressure of the large-scale development that our young state is yearning for, which Danjuma Goje and his government are currently providing in the state. Because Governor Adamu Mu'azu of Bauchi State, our next-door neighbour performed creditably between 1999 and 2003, as Governor Goje is doing at all cost to improve the standard of living of the people in the state, Mu'azu was given a second chance to lead the state, so Gombe State people should take a cue from Bauchi voters and support Goje for second term in 2007.

This contribution was made by Paul Samson of No. 1, Bauchi Road, Gombe, Gombe State.

Business Trust

Foreign & Diplomatic

Vietnam: The making of an economic tiger

It is not just because the Vietnamese defeated one great power, France and another super or even hyper power, the United States of America that the country is now very remarkable.

Vietnam, is the second fastest growing economy in the world, trailing behind only its northern neighbour, the Peoples Republic of China at 7.1% of gross domestic product, while China gallops ahead with 8% as the world fastest runner in economic growth. Among Vietnam's 84.9 million people, the gross domestic product per person stands at 670 U.S. dollars, not too bad for a country coming out from a devastating war. After a long drawn negotiation, the country would be acceding to the world trade organization (WTO) during the course of this year, thereby improving business confidence.

Vietnam since 1986 has been implementing a wide-ranging economic and political reforms. Its reform programme otherwise called *Doi Moi* is aimed at injecting free enterprise principles and reducing central control.

The "Draft strategy for Socio-Economic Stabilization and Development", is aimed to double GDP through the "socialist-oriented commodity economy, a market economy under state management" in which the state and collective sectors will play a predominant role. The 1992 constitution embodies the market reforms of recent years and recognized citizen's right to engage in private business. A bankruptcy law was passed in January 1994. Real gross domestic product growth has hovered consistently between 7%

By Charles Onunaiju,
Senior Reporter Foreign Desk
and 8%. Like the economic reform of its northern neighbour, China, Vietnam's economic reform was aimed at shaking off the bureaucratic inertia, that stalls growth and development. The economic reform measures designed to conform to market orientation did not in any way abrogate the centrality of the state in economic management but rather reinforces its role to provide the ground rules and enabling infrastructure.

The strategy has been effective in the sense that it has spurred the most astonishing and dramatic economic development and social progress, mankind has ever seen, comparable only to the dramatic economic growth of the Peoples Republic of China. More and more Vietnamese are being pulled out of poverty. More than 200 companies listed among the 500 in the fortune magazine as the world biggest are currently investing in Vietnam with the effect that since 1997, the country has had an estimated direct foreign investment of 8.3 billion US dollars. In February 1994 a year before Washington fully established full diplomatic relation with its former adversary, the US lifted the trade embargo it has imposed in 1975, following its defeat and the collapse of its puppet South Vietnam's regime.

But the current success of Vietnam cannot be taken in isolation of its history or of the party that is at the core of its national life. In 1940, Vietnam was occupied by the Japanese. In August 1945, the Japanese allowed the Vietminh movement to seize

power, dethrone the emperor and establish a republic known as Vietnam. On 6th March 1946, France recognize the "democratic Republic of Vietnam, as free

continued the struggle and drive for the reunification of the whole country.

The United States of America entered the war to maintain a divided Vietnam,



Mr. Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

state within Indo-Chinese federation. On 19th December Vietnam forces made a surprise attack on Hanoi, the signal for nearly eight years of hostilities.

An agreement on the cessation of hostilities was reached on 20th July 1954. The French withdrew and by the Paris agreement of 29th December 1954 completed the transfer for sovereignty to Vietnam which was divided along the 17th parallel in to North Vietnam, held by the communist party of Vietnam and the south held by the puppet regime of the departing imperialist power. However, the communist party under the leadership of the venerable HO Chi Minh

with the South as strategic staging post to compromise the independent struggle in Indochina comprising Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. In Paris on 27 January, 1973, an agreement was signed ending the war in Vietnam. However, the US continued to stoke the fire of hostility using the South Vietnamese as a proxy, until she was eventually routed after a protracted war in which Washington used both the deadly napalm bomb and its then newly built B52 bomber to sink many villages in Vietnam.

Having expelled both the French and America, coupled with the collapse of their puppet regime, the unification of North and South Vietnam into the socialist Republic of Vietnam finally took place on 2nd July 1976. The Vietnamese communist party founded by *Ho Chi Minh*, popularly and affectionately called uncle Ho from the period of anti colonial resistance to the reunification of the country was at the core of the country's political, social and economic life.

The travails of *Ho Chi Minh* who was desperately hunted by the French corresponds with the chequered fate of the party

which were destined to operate underground, under different guises till it established the North Vietnam, from where it mounted the drive and struggle for the total unification and independence of Vietnam.

Ho symbolizes and embodies the Vietnamese revolution up to this day, it is difficult to imagine the Vietnamese revolution without the active participation of *Ho Chi Minh*. Although the current historical fashion emphasizes the importance of great underlying social forces in unleashing the major events of our time, it remains clear that in many instances, such as the Bolshevik revolution and the Chinese civil war, the role of the individual can sometimes be paramount. Such was the case in Vietnam. Not only was Ho the founder of his party and later the president of the country, but he was its chief strategist and its most inspiring symbol.

A talented organizer as well as an astute strategist and a charismatic leader, *Ho Chi Minh's* image was part modern Russia's founder Vladimir Lenin and part India's Mahatma Ghandi with a perhaps a dash of Eastern Confucius. It was a dynamic combination. While the Vietnamese war of national liberation is an ineluctable fact that transcends the fate of individual human beings, without the presence of *Ho Chi Minh*, it would have been a far different affair, with far different consequences. Uncle Ho was an "event-making man", and "a child of crisis", who combined in his own person two of the central forces in the history of modern Vietnam, the desire for national independence and the quest for social and economic justice.

Because these forces transcended the borders of his own country, Ho was able to project his message to colonial peoples all over the world and speak to their demand for dignity and freedom from imperialist oppression.

Whatever the final judgement on his legacy to his own people and the rest of the world, he has taken his place in the pantheon of revolutionary heroes who have struggled mightily to give the oppressed of the

world their true voice.

Even in an era of imperialist triumphalism and liberalist globalization, the works of *Ho Chin Minh* continues to inspire many peoples of the world for independence and social justice.

Vietnam has equally remained faithful to the socialist construction, and has advanced in great leaps in economic growth, social development and political stability. By April of this year, the Vietnamese communist party would hold its party congress, and is expected that the party would commit itself to the deepening of the economic reforms and improving the standard of living of the Vietnamese people.

In an era, where unintelligent "common sense" have widely held that socialist construction is bankrupt and a failed social system, both Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Peoples Republic of China, the two fastest growing economies in the world are truly pointing to the path to which any People desirous to shake off the pangs of poverty and cyclic underdevelopment can turn to. Already in Latin America, from Venezuela to Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, the path is receiving serious attention.

NOTE: Vietnam as lacuna in Nigeria's foreign policy. Currently, Nigeria has no diplomatic presence in Hanoi, capital of Vietnam. Nigeria's rudimentary diplomatic relation with Vietnam is overseen by the Nigeria's embassy in Beijing, China.

This is rather unfortunate. Even, the US after its bitter war with Vietnam and barrage of economic sanctions and boycotts recognized the economic potentials of the emerging Asia tiger and quickly established full diplomatic relation in 1995. It is therefore most unjustifiable that Nigeria as a country in desperate need for trade and who could share experience in economic reform with Vietnam is maintaining low key relation with the great country.

To enter late to Vietnam when the world is rushing, to grab the expanding pie of Vietnam's economic opportunities is a diplomatic naivety of outstanding significance.

"Even, the US after its bitter war with Vietnam and barrage of economic sanctions and boycotts recognized the economic potentials of the emerging Asia tiger and quickly established full diplomatic relation in 1995. It is therefore most unjustifiable that Nigeria as a country in desperate need for trade and who could share experience in economic reform with Vietnam is maintaining low key relation with the great country."

Trust International

Africa

Bird flu spreads to Niger

Niger has become the third African country to have confirmed cases of the deadly strain of bird flu, experts say.

Test results have confirmed several cases of the H5N1 virus, said the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Niger, one of the world's poorest countries, has a long border with Nigeria, where bird flu has killed thousands of chickens.

No human cases of the H5N1 strain have yet been found in Africa but the UN has warned of a possible regional disaster.

The H5N1 strain was found in domestic ducks near Nigeria's border, the OIE said.

"We've been officially informed that the presence of the virus has been notified on the sample from Niger but we are waiting for official documents to know... what type of strain it is," said Niger's government spokesman Mohamed Ben Omar.

OIE director Bernard Vallat said it came as no surprise that bird flu had spread from Nigeria to Niger.

"We know that the virus in Nigeria has invaded a large part of the country. The measures of confinement were not taken and transparency was not applied from the beginning, he said.

"Now we know that all of the neighbouring countries of Nigeria are under a very big threat."

Niger, like most West African countries, had banned poultry imports from Nigeria.

Earlier, Nigeria's Information Minister Frank Nweke announced that the H5N1 strain had been found in two more Nigerian states, taking the total to seven - mostly in the north and centre of the country.

Bird flu has also been found in Egypt.

Last week, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recommended that Nigeria vaccinate poultry, saying the strategy of containment and slaughter of at-risk birds was not working.

There are also calls for clarification on the issue of compensation for farmers.

Almost 60 percent of poultry producers raise chickens in their backyards and health officials are worried that they would not tell the authorities if their birds fell ill.

More than 90 people have died of H5N1 bird flu since the disease's resurgence in December 2003 - most of them in South-East Asia.



Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni

Saudi Arabia denies detention of 13 Nigerians

The Saudi Arabia embassy in Nigeria has denied the allegation of detention and torture of Nigerians in Saudi prison saying that the allegation was baseless.

Responding to an editorial carried in one of the national dailies (not Daily Trust) that 13 Nigerians are in incommunicado and that they risk of death sentence and execution in Saudi Arabia jails, Mohammed Umar an official in Saudi embassy said such a thing does not exist.

Umar who expressed bitterness over the issue, said that Ministry of foreign affairs would have been in the picture of the incident if it exist.

According to the daily, the victims, are between the ages of 20 and 30, as were reported to be among Africans arrested in Saudi following a dispute between Saudi nationals and African nationals working as car cleaners in Saudi neighborhood. A Saudi policeman was alleged to have been killed in the aftermath of the row.

The paper said that a group fighting for the Nigerians, the legal Defense and Assistant Project (LEDAP) said in a press release that 13 Nigerian were

By Aisha Umar, Reporter
Foreign Desk

among 100 persons arrested of which many were deported while the 13 Nigerians were brought before three judges in a closed session on November 22, 2002, in a trial allegedly conducted Arabic without translation, and legal or consular representation.

The paper stated that there were reports of torture.

British govt issues travel warning on Nigeria

The British government has issued fresh travel warning to Nigeria, citing Bakassi Peninsula and to the riverine areas of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States as volatile areas.

According to the website of the Foreign and Commonwealth office, the government advised against all but essential travel to the rest of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. The website stated that "localised outbreaks of civil unrest can occur at short notice."

The website, which was updated on the February 20, reiterated terrorism threat in the country. It would be recalled that travel warning was issued based on a statement credited to Osama Bin Laden in February 2003 calling for an uprising by Muslims in a number of countries including Nigeria.

Ugandan polls: Museveni blasts opposition on results

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has accused his defeated opponent in last week's presidential elections of failing to understand democracy. He told BBC that Dr Kizza Besigye's plan to challenge the result in court was "neither here nor there" as he is not the one who decides.

Dr Besigye - once Mr Museveni's doctor - is currently out on bail having been accused of several crimes he denies.

UK and US diplomats have urged Dr Besigye's supporters to avoid violence.

Mr Museveni again accused Dr Besigye's Forum for Democratic Change party of links to "terrorist groups", which he said they must cut.

Dr Besigye, who has been facing treason and rape charges during the campaign, described the result as "outrageous", saying the Electoral Commission's compilation of votes was "illegal" and all part of an "illegitimate process".

Earlier, in his first address to the nation since his victory, Mr Museveni thanked Ugandans for rejecting "negative forces".

Mr Museveni said opposition supporters threatened "to cause havoc" but large deployments of security forces were ready for trouble.

He also referred to the protesters who gathered outside FDC offices on Saturday to demonstrate against the result. They were dispersed by riot police using tear gas.

"They tried [to cause chaos]. They couldn't. It's too late for that type of game," he said.

Mr Museveni - who has been in power for 20 years - won 59 percent of the vote, the Electoral Commission said on Saturday. Dr

Besigye took 37 percent.

Uganda's first multi-party vote in 25 years was seen as a test of its democratic credentials.

The outcome has been broadly endorsed by international monitors, although EU observers noted some problems with the campaign.

In their preliminary report, the observers said there was no "level playing field", pointing to Dr Besigye's arrest last year.

Sudan leader warns against UN force

Osama al-Bashir, the Sudanese president, has said Darfur will become a graveyard for any foreign military contingent entering the region against Khartoum's will, according to newspapers.

"We are strongly opposed to any foreign intervention in Sudan, and Darfur will be a graveyard for any foreign troops venturing to enter," al-Bashir was quoted on Sunday as saying.

His comments came amid stepped-up efforts by the

international community to send UN peacekeeping forces to war-torn Darfur in place of African Union troops, which have failed to quell the three-year-old bloodshed.

Al-Bashir, who accuses the US and its allies of fomenting a conspiracy to plunder his country's resources, again accused the West of seeking to use the western region of Darfur as a launchpad to spread its interests in Sudan.

The US, which currently holds chairmanship of the UN Security Council, saw its hopes of clinching a resolution for a UN mandate in Darfur by the end of the month dashed, but has said it will continue its efforts.

The transition is expected to be discussed during an AU Peace and Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa on 3 March.

Al-Bashir was also dismissive of the AU, which has hinted it will not oppose its own replacement in Darfur by a UN contingent.

"The African Union forces can leave the country if they believe that they have failed to carry out their duties," al-Bashir said.

The war in Darfur broke out in February 2003, when ethnic groups launched a rebellion against Khartoum that was brutally repressed by the Arab Islamist government of al-Bashir.

The combined effect of the war and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises has left up to 300,000 people dead and an estimated 2.4 million displaced.

There has been increased speculation that Nato would step in to operate the transition between AU and UN peacekeepers, an option supported by Darfur rebels but implacably opposed by Khartoum.

Al-Bashir found support for his resistance to a Western deployment among members of the opposition.

"We firmly reject any foreign intervention, particularly by the Americans, in Sudan," Fatima Ahmad Ibrahim, a communist legislator, said on Sunday at a parliament meeting.

Ivorian govt, opposition in peace parley

Major political and rebel leaders will hold talks in the Ivory Coast for the first time since a 2002 uprising.

President Laurent Gbagbo, opposition leaders Henri Konan Bedie and Alassane Ouattara, and rebel leader Guillaume Soro meet in the capital Yamoussoukro.

The four rarely speak and have not met on Ivorian soil

since Mr Soro launched a rebellion in September 2002, which split the country.

The meeting is aimed at achieving peace among the four important leaders.

President Laurent Gbagbo, the former head of state, Henri Konan Bedie, and the opposition politician Alassane Ouattara, have been squabbling for power for over 10 years.

The fourth member of the group, Guillaume Soro, leads the rebellion which cut the country in half more than three years ago.

Monday's meeting, organised by Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, is an attempt to get the four most important political leaders to sit down and work out their differences.

The leaders have met several times in peace summits over the last three years - but never before on Ivorian soil.

The prime minister's offices says the Yamoussoukro meeting, which should finish on Tuesday, is an attempt to get the Ivorian political class to take control of the Ivorian peace process.

All the same, the guideline should remain last year's Pretoria peace agreement and the UN resolution 1633.

The three-year long civil war has hurt the reputation, stability and economy of a country once known as the "African miracle".

Elkanah Chawai, Foreign Desk Reporter

Saudi forces kill five terror suspects

Saudi security forces yesterday shot dead five suspected terrorists believed to be involved in a foiled attack on the world's biggest oil processing complex, the Saudi Industrial Military zone. A sixth suspect was arrested.

The shootings came after security forces raided two houses in the Saudi capital of Riyadh that had been under surveillance, said Lt. Gen. Mansour al-Tajer, chief spokesman for the ministry. The suspects were killed during a shootout, the ministry said in a statement.

"We think all the suspects involved had something to do with an al-Qaida attempt," al-Tajer said, referring to Friday's attempt by suicide bombers to detonate car bombs inside the world's biggest oil stabilisation plant.

Earlier yesterday, the Saudi-owned al-Jazeera television channel said security forces were firing live rounds exchanged with the suspects in a rooming house in Riyadh. Police said they confiscated weapons and ammunition from the house in the suburb where the investigation has been taking place, according to the report.

The Saudi branch of al-Qaida claimed responsibility for Friday's attack, the first in Saudi Arabia's history of such incidents. The area is a fenced-in security zone that is a well-protected industrial complex, with a wall of barbed wire and a perimeter of guard posts. Thousands of the country's oil reserves are stored there.

Two guards and two would-be suicide bombers were killed. The Interior Ministry identified the attackers Sunday as Abdullah Abdul-Aziz al-Twejri and Mohammed Saleh al-Gheigh, and said both were on a list of the 15 most-wanted terrorists in the kingdom issued in June.

The deaths of the two meant that only four remain at large of the list of 15. Ten have now died or been killed, and one has been

arrested.

The Saudi branch of al-Qaida warned in an Internet statement Saturday that its suicide bombers would strike the oil industry again.

Al-Qaida militants launched a campaign of violence in Saudi Arabia in 2003. The country is the birthplace of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Saudi security forces have largely had al-Qaida militants on the run for the past year, arresting hundreds of suspects. They killed or captured all but one of the top 26 militants on a most-wanted list issued in December 2003, then issued the second list in June.

Saudi Arabia holds over 260 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, a quarter of the world's total. It currently puts out about 10 million barrels per day, or 11 percent of global consumption.



Saudi's hardline President Mahmmud Abumehdi, at talks in Riyadh, says he will not accept U.S. demands for a ceasefire in Iraq, but will accept UN Security Council resolutions to disarm Iraq, which is largely supported through the United States.

Philippine Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, 60, was elected president of the governing People's National Party in an internal vote.

She will automatically become prime minister when the incumbent, PJ Patterson, steps down in the next few weeks after 14 years in the post.

Mrs Simpson Miller, currently local government minister, narrowly beat the national security minister to the job.

Dr Peter Phillips had been seen as the favourite to succeed Mr Patterson but his record on tackling violence has been questioned.

There have been more than 4,000 cases of homicide in Jamaica since he took charge of security five years ago.

Mrs Simpson Miller, who has been a popular figure in Jamaican politics since the 1970s, took 1,775 votes to 1,538 for Dr Phillips in the leadership vote.

Jamaicans elect first woman leader

Philippine Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, 60, was elected president of the governing People's National Party in an internal vote.

She will automatically become prime minister when the incumbent, PJ Patterson, steps down in the next few weeks after 14 years in the post.

Mrs Simpson Miller, currently local government minister, narrowly beat the national security minister to the job.

EU gives \$140m to Palestine

Europe has stepped in to save the Palestinian Authority from imminent financial collapse with an offer of 120 million euros (\$140m, £83 million) emergency aid.

The European Commission said the money is for "basic needs" and will keep the authority running for about two months.

The international community is debating whether to fund the authority when militant Hamas group takes

power. Israel responded to the Hamas election win in January by cutting off monthly payments of \$50 million in tax revenues.

About 64 million euros will go through UN agencies to the poorest in the Palestinian territories, the Commission said. A further proportion will pay electricity and oil bills and about 20 million euros will pay the salaries of Palestinian Authority officials.

The 25-member Union has refused to indicate when it will

maintain its funding for the PA with Hamas running the government.

European foreign ministers are meeting in Brussels to discuss the issue, although officials say no decision is expected until a Hamas-led cabinet is formed.

"The issue before the EU is whether we resume aid to the existing interim authority, not to any Hamas government, that has yet to be sworn in," said UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

Hamas has been urged by donors to change its policies towards Israel, including recognising its right to exist and renouncing violence.

Hamas officials have called on aid donors to respect the Palestinian people's democratic choice of government.

"We are waiting to see a positive position from the EU over the support to the Palestinian people, who chose Hamas to represent them," said Hamas political leader Khalil Abu Latta in an interview with Reuters news agency.

The caretaker Palestinian government faces a salary bill of \$60m-\$80m for February which it needs to pay next week, according to international envoy James Wolfensohn.

The deficit is \$100 million this month and could still be as high as \$70m next month despite the EU emergency package. Mr Wolfensohn warned in a confidential letter seen by Reuters.

The EU has been the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority since its establishment under the Oslo peace process in 1994.

Philippines charges 16 for coup

Police in the Philippines have charged 16 people over an alleged coup plot to oust President Gloria Arroyo, the state prosecutor has said.

Soldiers, police officers and left-wing legislators were among those charged.

The country remains under a state of emergency, which was declared by President Arroyo on Friday after the army said it had foiled a coup plot.

Schools in the capital Manila stayed closed yesterday, and the situation remained volatile.

A government spokesman said three of the 16 suspects had already been arrested.

Four leftist members of the House of Representatives were listed as suspects, as well as former senator Gregorio Honasan who has been linked to several previous coup attempts.

The crisis began on Friday when the military announced it had uncovered a plan by senior

officers to overthrow President Arroyo.

Mrs Arroyo then declared a state of emergency, and a senior general, Brig Gen Danilo Lim, was detained on charges of planning the attempted coup.

A state of emergency bans rallies, but Filipinos took to the streets in defiance of the ban on Friday and Saturday to mark the 20th anniversary of a popular revolt that ousted Ferdinand Marcos as president.

Then on Sunday, the man who commands the Philippines marines, Maj Gen Renato Miranda, was removed from his post, prompting a brief stand-off between his supporters and those of the president.

Two groups of lawyers and citizens went to the Supreme Court yesterday to challenge the state of emergency.

Critics say the order reminds them of the use of martial law by Ferdinand Marcos.

Trust International

Odd World



Coca leaves being harvested.

Cocaine leaves better than milk!

Coca leaf has more nutritional value than milk and should replace it in school lunches, a Bolivian government official told reporters.

"Our children need calcium and the coca leaf has more calcium than milk," said the official, who in past interviews confessed to have stopped reading books since he discovered his Aymara heritage and claims to get his knowledge from reading the wrinkles of his ancestors.

"Our children need phosphorous and the coca leaf has more phosphorous than fish," he said.

"Perhaps instead of milk in school lunches, we should be giving coca leaf to our children," he mused.

The official said his information on the nutritional value of the coca leaf came from studies done by the Bolivian Health Ministry and Harvard University, in the United States.

Coca leaf is chewed by millions of Bolivians as a tonic and to stave off hunger.

It is also processed into cocaine and sold abroad, chiefly in the United States, in a multi-billion dollar illegal trade.

New Bolivian President Evo Morales, also of indigenous extraction, was elected in December with strong support from coca farmers, is under US pressure to repress the coca industry, both in its illegal and traditional roles.

Asked to comment on the official's proposal, opposition lawmaker and former education minister Tito Hoz de Vila

said coca's would have a detrimental effect on schoolchildren.

"Those poor students

would be dozing off in the classroom instead of paying attention to their schoolwork," he said.

Can't have three wives?

A small-town judge with three wives was ordered removed from the bench by the Utah Supreme Court, USA, on Friday.

The court unanimously agreed with the findings of the state's Judicial Conduct Commission, which recommended the removal of Judge Walter K. Steed for violating the state's bigamy law.

Steed said he was disappointed with the decision.

"I had hoped that the court would see my case as an opportunity to correct the injustices that are caused by the criminalization of my religious beliefs and lifestyle," Steed said in a statement.

Steed has served for 25 years on the Justice Court in the polygamist community of Hildale in southern Utah, where he ruled on misdemeanor crimes such as drunken driving and domestic violence cases.

The commission last year

sought his removal from the bench after a 14-month investigation determined Steed was a polygamist and had violated Utah's bigamy law. Bigamy is a third-degree felony in Utah punishable by up to five years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

"When the law is violated or ignored by those charged by society with the fair and impartial enforcement of the law, the stability of our society is placed at undue risk," the court's ruling said.

Steed, who also works as a truck driver, was paid a few hundred dollars monthly for serving in the part-time judicial position.

Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff praised the court's decision, saying someone breaking the law should not be in a judicial role. Shurtleff had declined to prosecute Steed.

He said his office intends to stick to its policy of only

prosecuting bigamy cases that involve other crimes such as domestic violence or sex with minors.

"If you charge one where do you stop? You start prosecuting 10,000 people and have 20,000 kids go into the (child welfare) system?" Shurtleff said.

A receptionist at the Judicial Conduct Commission said neither the commission nor its attorney would comment on the case.

Friday's court decision did not address whether Steed should face criminal charges, saying only that the judge acknowledged his illegal behavior and "has given every indication that he intends to continue his 'plural marriage' arrangement."

Justice Court judges are appointed to four-year terms by city councils or county commissions. They are not required to have any legal training.

Man forced to 'marry' goat

A Sudanese man has been forced to take a goat as his "wife", after he was caught having sex with the animal.

The goat's owner, Mr Alifi, said he surprised the man with his goat and took him to a council of elders.

They ordered the man, Mr Tombe, to pay a dowry of 15,000 Sudanese dinars (\$50) to Mr Alifi.

"We have given him the goat, and as far as we know they are still together," Mr Alifi said.

Mr Alifi, Hai Malakal in Upper Nile State, told the *Juba Post* newspaper that he heard a loud noise around midnight on 13 February and immediately rushed outside to find Mr Tombe with his goat.

"When I asked him: 'What are you doing there?', he fell off the back of the goat,

so I captured and tied him up".

Mr Alifi then called elders to decide how to deal with the case.

"They said I should not take him to the police, but rather let him pay a dowry for my goat because he used it as his wife," Mr Alifi told the newspaper.

Black cat saves owner

Bernice McDowall says she never thought black cats were unlucky. Now her own black cat, Joey, is her hero. McDowall, 87, said she was taking a nap when Joey woke her up early Friday afternoon and probably saved her life.

"He was having a fit, running around the bedroom," she said.

Then she saw smoke in the bedroom, got up and saw

smoke coming from the basement.

She and Joey got out safely.

Joey had found a home with the McDowalls after he was dumped off at a nearby mailbox awhile back. On Friday, he "really came in and sent the alarm," Bernice said.

Later, the black cat was rolling and romping in the yard near smoldering mattresses that firefighters had dragged up from the basement while his owner stayed in the warmth of a vehicle.

Sterling Fire Chief Dwayne Frederick said firefighters contained the blaze to the basement, but there was smoke damage throughout the ranch-style home. He said the cause likely was electrical.

The McDowalls were not able to be in the house Friday night, but Cheryl McDowall, Bernice's daughter, told firefighters they had a place to stay.

Bernice McDowall had dinner at her niece's home. Joey was there too, walking on the piano keys. And he was scheduled to get his favorite dinner, a gravy-style canned cat food.

Killer dog up for adoption

She's a suspected killer, she's in custody, and at least four people want to adopt her.

But animal rights campaigners say the Romanian dog accused of killing a Japanese man in Bucharest last month with a bite to the leg is frail, frightened and innocent.

Authorities rounded up a dozen animals to find the culprit, narrowing their suspicions down to a big-eyed, dark-haired mongrel who has been nicknamed "Coco" by dog charity Cutu-Cutu.

The dog has lived in a shelter since and on Friday the Romanian courts turned

down a case brought by the charity, which sought to force the city into allowing Coco's adoption.

"She couldn't have done it, she's very shy. I went to visit her and she was just sitting at the far end of her cage, afraid to come closer," said Marcela Lungu of Cutu-Cutu, which means Doggy Doggy in English.

"The authorities are just using her as a scapegoat."

A lawyer representing the charity, which said it has had four requests to adopt Coco, said she would appeal the decision.



UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

NOTICE TO ALL UNILORIN ALUMNI

This is to inform all the Alumni/Alumnae of the University of Ilorin working in any capacity any where in the world to please complete the format below and return it to the Alumni Relations Officer at the Endowment and Alumni Relations Unit of the University (Main Campus) for the update of the University records immediately.

Photocopy is also acceptable

ALUMNI BIO-DATA FORM

We want you to stay in touch send:

Full Name & Title.....

Maiden Name if Married.....

Matric. No.....

Dept/Faculty:.....

Year of graduation:.....

Present Employment/Position (s) held:.....

Current Postal Address/ E-mail:.....

Telephone No:.....

To the Alumni Relations Officer, University of Ilorin,
P.M.B. 1515, Ilorin.

Signed:

Olufolake O. Oyeyemi (Mrs.)

Registrar.

Business Trust

Currencies

West African

Unit of Account

Country	N Equivalent
The Gambia	6.0320
Ghana	0.0143
Guinea	0.0588
Liberia	1.8633
S/Leone	3,563.84
Nigeria	192.48

Parallel Market

	Average
Dollar	144 145
Pounds	261 175

Flight schedule

Virgin Nigeria

Los - Abj: 7.00am, 10.55, 6.55pm
 Abj - Los: 9.00am, 12.55pm, 8.55pm
 Los - PHC: 7.15am, 3.00pm
 PHC - Los: 9.00am, 4.45pm
 Los - Acc: 2.55pm; Acc - Los: 3.35pm
 Los - Douala: 6.30pm;
 Douala - Los: 8.30pm

Bellview Airlines

Monday - Friday
 Lagos - Abuja
 0650, 0950, 1130, 1400, 1600, 1955
 Abj - Los - 0800, 1130, 1320, 1600, 1800
 Los - P/H - 0715, 1130, 1320
 Los - Kano - 0630

Saturday & Sunday

Los - Abj - 0800, 1130, 1600, 1950
 Abj - Los - 0800, 1320, 1600, 1800
 Los - P/H - 0800, 1340, 1700
 P/H - Los - 0945, 1520, 1830
 Los - Kano - 0800
 Kano - Los - 1130

IRS Airlines

Los - Abj - 7.15am, 8.15am, 11.00am,
 12noon, 3.00pm, 4.15pm,
 Abj - Los - 10am, 11am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.15pm, 5.15pm.
 Los - PHC - 11.45am, 12.45am,
 PHC - Los - 1.30pm, 2.30pm,
 Los - Kan - 5.30pm, 6.45pm,
 Kan - Los - 7.45am, 9.00am.

Weekend

Los - Ab - 9.15am, 10.15am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 11.00am,
 12.00pm, 9.30am, 10.30am,
 Abj - Los - 11.00am, 12am, 2.45pm, 3.45pm, 12.45pm,
 11.15am, 12.15am,
 Los - PHC - 11.5pm, 2.15pm.



Managing Director, Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, Tayo Aderinokun, with Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of UBA Plc, Tony Elumelu, at a ceremony to celebrate Aderinokun's choice as Banker of the year at the 11th Annual Thisday Leadership Awards in Lagos ...recently.

CBN faults MAN over banks' return to capital market

The Central Bank of Nigeria, (CBN) has faulted claims by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) that the return of banks to the capital market to raise more funds would reduce the inflow of investments in the manufacturing sector.

By **Anas A. Galadima**, Asst. Business Editor

MAN said in a statement recently that the return to the capital market by deposit money banks was induced by CBN's fresh demand that banks jerk up their capital base to \$1 billion (N130 bil-

lion) as a condition for participating in the management of the country's foreign reserves.

But in a statement in Abuja over the weekend, the apex bank said it did not mandate any bank to go to the capital market to raise funds, saying that banks that have disclosed plans to return to the market are doing so on their own accord and not forced by the apex bank.

The statement which was signed by the bank's head of Corporate Affairs, Festus Odoko, said it made it clear from the beginning that December 31, 2005 was the end of the CBN induced consolidation, adding that "subsequently, a bank can on its own volition consolidate at its own pace to the level of the capital base it so

desired, in line with its set corporate goals and objectives. Specifically, the CBN made it clear that the next level of consolidation was going to be market-induced. It is also optional since no bank was being compelled by the authorities to further consolidate."

The statement added that "Perhaps members of MAN need to be reminded of the challenges inherent in the overall banking reform programme which they did not address. With the banks now having a larger capital base even with the obligor limit unchanged the amount available for them to assist the real sector is considerably larger and it is only those that are competitive that might ultimately benefit from the expansion".

Customs impound 27 containers in Lagos

The Apapa Area I command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has impounded over twenty-seven (27) assorted containers loaded with prohibited items with a street value of over N200 million.

Customs Area Comptroller (CAC) Rasheed Taiwo while conducting newsmen round the seized containers at the government warehouse Apapa, last week disclosed that over 7,00 containers (over time cargoes) have been abandoned inside the Apapa port.

He expressed surprise that despite all that the NCS

From **Adelanwa Bamgboye**, Correspondent (Lagos)

had done to fight smuggling to a stand-still, there has been no respite by now.

He said that some of the impounded containers were seized not because they have absolute prohibited items laden on them but due to other malpractices.

These malpractices include where an importer imported eleven containers but declares only one container. The duty paid on one container is usually used to clear the other ten containers.

These people would not only be apprehended but also punished as deterrent to others after their conviction.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Dollar	131.86	132.86
Pounds	239.27	241.09
EURO	164.42	165.66
YEN	1.20	1.21
WAUA	193.58	195.04
RIYAL	35.15	35.42
CFA	0.240	0.250
Rand	20.54	21.55
S/Dollar	8.00	9.52
Yuan	16.00	17.00

First Bank ready to partake in Nigeria's forex mgt

The Managing Director CEO of First Bank of Nigeria (FBN), Mr. Jacobs Ajekigbe over the weekend confirmed that the bank's ongoing growth aims to build the capacity that will enable her manage some part of the nation's external reserve.

Ajekigbe who was speaking on Sunday in Lagos on the occasion of its products launch, stated that the bank is committed to remain at the pinnacle of banking in Nigeria.

According to him the launch is "a major feat in the bank's customer-oriented and

From **Bright Ewulu**, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

innovative financial plans. This confirms the Bank's interest in its customers, their lifestyles and businesses.

"These products will enable the Bank contribute to the growth of customers' and non-customers' businesses, and also grow personal banking relationship by providing financial support at times of critical needs," he said.

He said the products will empower Nigerians and growth in the economy as enshrined in the federal government's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

INSIDE

JOMALIC moves to register dockworkers ...P20



More civil servants get free Glo lines ...P20

Has NEPZA delivered on its mandate? ...P21



Motoring ...P22



Stock market report ...P23

Prizes at Kaduna fair

Prizes at Kaduna fair

The prizes which ranged from mobile phones, sim cards, recharge cards and vouchers were given away by the company during a raffle draw held at the occasion.

The prizes which ranged from mobile phones, sim cards, recharge cards and vouchers were given away by the company during a raffle draw held at the occasion.

Saheed's 148 winning number is announced. "Today, as my happy day, we only wanted to share the fun and happiness that we are happy to win the MTN main prize when I reach home I will decide what to do with the phone," Saheed said.

Mr Samuel Oregomi, a worker was also lucky as he won a Nokia 5110 mobile phone. Mr James and Mrs Anguon won packs of phone accessories and sim packs among others.

Speaking at the occasion MTN Regional manager, North Mr. Mike Kpolo, said the company would continue to carry out its social responsibility to show gratitude to the people for their cooperation, belief and support.

FOR WHOM

- Government & Non-Governmental Organisations
- Multilateral organisations
- Real estate/property developers and property financiers
- Housing related NGOs
- Co-operative Societies
- Banks, especially mortgage-commercial and industrial banks
- Housing research organisations
- Manufacturers, importers, distributors and users of building materials
- Professionals in the built environment
- Housing related professional bodies
- Construction companies
- The academia
- Exhibitors of building materials and other related equipments

EXHIBITION

The Event shall feature the display of building materials, construction equipments and machinery, packaged insurance products etc.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop an affordable housing strategy to reduce the cost of housing
- To develop a more functional mortgage structure that would guarantee easy home ownership
- To address the needs of stakeholders (Government, developers, financiers and occupiers) in provision of and maintenance of infrastructure to help reduce the overall cost of housing
- To examine existing land and building laws and documentation policies with a view to recommending possible reviews towards speedy housing delivery
- To examine the feasibility of using mass housing production as a tool of financial empowerment for the people
- To provide a forum of interaction for all major stakeholders in housing internationally to showcase, demonstrate or market local and technology for affordable housing

THE WORKSHOPS

- Urban and Suburban development
- Banking and Finance
- Technology and Production
- Curative Government Policies
- Environmental Issues
- Housing Finance
- Planning, Design, Management
- Legal Documentation

PARTICIPATION FEES

For the Exhibition (all inclusive package) of N150,000.00 (\$1,110) per person or N72,500 per person
 For Conference Participation only is an all inclusive fee of N50,000.00 or \$360 per person
 AHON members N40,000.00
 Corporate Presentation is an all inclusive fee of N250,000.00 or \$1,800

All Fees cover conference materials, tea/coffee break, group lunch, guided tour of Abuja and Gala night/group dinner per participant



ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING CORPORATIONS OF NIGERIA (AHON)

For housing enquiries contact

Eniola Oluosin
 Shelter Africa 2006 Secretariat
 AHON Secretariat, ISTDPC Headquarters
 Town Planning Way, Ilupeju, Lagos, Nigeria
 Tel: 01-7943641, 08038882568, 08023409308
 E-mail: shelterafrica2006@housingcorpahon.org
 website: www.housingcorpahon.org

Victor Mkpang
 Chairman, 5th City Planning Committee
 c/o Akwa Savings & Loans Ltd
 42, Union Road, Uyo, Nigeria
 08036281486, 08055871344
 E-mail: victormkpang@villages.com

Business Trust

Analysis

NEPZA and the Free Zones Scheme: 12 years after

Twelve years after the Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) was established, has it enhanced economic activities at the nation's free trade zones? In this feature, Business Trust looks at the progress so far made by the authority and the free zones in contributing to national development.

The development of free trade zones has been at a fore front in attaining economic growth and development in most developing economies world over. Realising this, the federal government established the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) to be the country's investment promotion agency through regulating and facilitating incentives at the nation's free trade zones.

NEPZA was established by Act No 63 of 1999, with a mandate to license, monitor and regulate the activities of all free zones in Nigeria. The authority is also responsible for investment facilitation to the free zones.

The free zone globally contributes to the development of national economy through attracting foreign investment, promoting international trade and local development by assuring free manufacturing, and trade in the free zone.

Several factors are responsible for the adoption of the free zones scheme in Nigeria amongst which are:

1. Facilitation of inflow of foreign direct investment. This is more compelling based on the fact that the inflow of foreign direct investment into sub-Saharan Africa is less than 3%.
2. Systematic creation of "centers of industrial excellence" that can provide conducive business environment.
3. Accelerate economic development by promoting exports, increasing employment opportunities, facilitating the transfer of technology and promoting advance regional development.
4. Boost export through service industrial and transport facilities.
5. Make Nigeria as an ideal distribution hub for the African region.
6. Provide a plank and be the driver for the promotion of Nigerian content in all sectors of the economy.

In addition to making infrastructural facilities and good conducive environment

By Hamisu Mohammad,
Business Reporter

in the free zones issues of major consideration, there are also other fiscal and regulatory incentives that make the free zones haven for investment activities, namely.

Up to 100% ownership of business, Quota free for expatriate staff, On-site processing of combined expatriate residence permit and Arleen law (CERPAC), Exemption from all federal, state and local government taxes, Exception from Value Added Tax (VAT), capital gain tax and corporate income tax, Duty free importation of raw materials and components including spare parts, On-site custom processing, Repatriation of foreign capital investment with capital appreciation of anytime and Remittance of profit and dividend earned as required.

Presently, there are eleven free zones in Nigeria and almost all are admitting investors in all sectors of the economy. The free zone authority has been able to successfully impact the one-stop-shop concept. This is because the success of free zones worldwide depends on the official administration of the incentives and regular review of the regulations to suit the prevailing cir-

cumstances. It was in recognition of this that additional variants of the free zones scheme was introduced to the earlier purely Export Processing zone in order to create room for the scheme to serve its full potentials.

So, how far has NEPZA been able to accomplish in its mandate? According to the managing director, Mr. Sina Agboluaje the Authority has been able to bring about a



Amb. Idris Waziri, Commerce Minister

paradigm shift based on the existing Act. Hitherto, the general impression was that it is only the Federal Government that can develop and operate free zones. "We have been able to involve the private sector in the management and development of free zones. This leaves govern-

ment to creating the environment while the business is left to the private sector," he said.

He also noted that the application of free zones is limited only by the imagination of the operator.

The general manager, Corporate strategy, Mr. Bisi Opejinmi said that the free zones admit investors into the various sectors of the economy.

He cited the example of



Mr. Sina Agboluaje, MD NEPZA

the collaboration of the Authority and NNPC in seeking the private sector development of deep sea ports in some free zones to enhance the nation's agenda of the Nigerian content in the oil and gas sector.

He added that part of its mandate and in line with the

federal government's NEEDS policy, the free zones in Nigeria currently have more than 20,000 peoples as workers in various cadres.

According to him, over \$2billion worth of investment is in the operational free zones while up to \$11 billion is expected as investment in flow for the development of Olokola Free Trade Zone, Lekki EPZ, Lekki Free Trade Zone, Snake Island Free Zone among others.

In his 2005 ministerial press briefing, the minister of commerce, Ambassador A.D Idris Waziri said that the ministry though NEPAZ was able to achieve transfer of modern and adaptable technology to Nigerian export from backward linkages. He said, local production of semi-finished materials for sale into the zones are being encourage, saying that at the moment, cotton, leather, gum Arabic, sesame seed, rubber among others are being supplied as raw materials from different parts of the country to the operational free zones.

Ambassador Waziri noted that in Calabar Free Trade zone there are over 35 companies that operate with over \$800 million worth of investment, "this, is an indic-

ation that our plan to attract FDI is yielding positive result"

According to him four companies with a total investment worth over \$200 million and capacity to employ about 2,500 workers have begin operation in Kano zone, stressing " efforts are being made to get the zone fully operational by 1st quarter of 2006 hence, contract for the construction of internal road networks within the zone was awarded.

He said the factories in Kano zone include a vehicle assembling plant, kitchenware factory and two textile industries.

The minister noted that a wide range of support companies involved in oil and gas production had been attracted to the free zone at Onne, Port Harcourt.

"At present, all Nigerian major operators such as Shell, Chevron, Conoco Phillips among others are being serviced by enterprises operating within the oil and gas sector free zone in Onne", he said.

The Onne oil and gas free zone has become a permanent transit and support base for their Nigerian and West African exploration and production activities thus making it a one-stop shop for oil gas logistic services within the sub-saharan Africa.

According to Waziri, Onne, is well in the excess of one billion dollars.

After twelve year of its operations in the country, one of the obstacles that trigger the development of the NEPZA is conducive working environment. Since 1994, NEPZA was temporarily located first at Army Headquarters building, Mohammed Buhari Way, Garki, Abuja, it later moved to Radio House, at Herbert Macaulay Road in July 1994. In September 2001, it become necessary to move the authority again to a rented apartment located at 211 Shehu Shagari Way in Asokoro.

As it commissions its new headquarters today, the authority is expected witness a new beginning.

The office accommodation consists of 52 standard office rooms with 2 modern conferences rooms and an exhibition hall.

What is unique about the office building is the management's use of 100 percent materials from Nigeria with the roofing, tiling and the EPS compound board made from the Calabar Free Zone.

GTB MD wins 'Banker of the Year' award

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, Mr Tayo Aderinokun has won the coveted "Banker of the Year" award. The feat, recorded at the recent 11th Annual *ThisDay* Leadership Awards, is in recognition of Mr Aderinokun's outstanding contributions to the growth and development of Nigeria's financial services industry.

Mr Aderinokun co-founded Guaranty Trust Bank Plc in 1990. A thoroughbred banking industry professional, Aderinokun holds graduate and post graduate degrees in business administration from the University of Lagos and the Graduate School of Management, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Fondly called Tayo by all staff of Guaranty Trust Bank (in consonance with the bank's first name corporate culture), Mr Aderinokun's over two decades working experience has seen him applying his astute manage-

ment skills in fulfillment of the corporate and operational goals of several financial institutions. He began with the Central Bank of Nigeria in Calabar, Cross River State where he did his National Youth Service in 1977.

He later worked with Chase Merchant Bank Nigeria Limited (later renamed Continental Merchant Bank Limited) between 1981 and 1988. He was at Prime Merchant Bank Ltd between 1988 and 1989 where he was an Assistant General Manager and head of the financial services division of the bank. In 1989, he setup First Marina Trust, a non-bank financial institution, which he ran for a year prior to setting up Guaranty Trust Bank Ltd, which got listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) in September 1996.

In June 2005, Fitch, a leading international rating agency assigned a double A minus (AA-) rating to Guaranty Trust Bank Plc. This is the highest rating ever received from a global rating agency by any Nigerian or

West Africa-based bank.

Guaranty Trust Bank has a capital base of over \$226 million, Group profit before tax of \$50 million, total assets and contingents of over \$1.45 billion and gross earnings in excess of \$175 million.

A member of the governing council of the Lagos

State University (LASU), Mr Aderinokun is a patron of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), a director of several companies and lectures regularly at various professional institutions. He holds the national honour of the Member of the Federal Republic, MFR.

Union Bank gets new group MD/CEO

The Board of Directors, of Union Bank of Nigeria Plc has appointed a new Group Managing Director/Chief Executive to succeed Dr. Godwin Ajabue Thompson Oloh. He is Mr. Bartholomew Bassey Ebong.

According to UBN's senior manger corporate affairs, Francis D. Barde, prior to Mr. Ebong's new appointment, he was executive director, management services.

Born in 1946, in Itu, Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Ebong attended Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Minnesota,

USA, where he obtained a Master of Business Administration degree (MBA) with specialization in Finance and Management Information System.

He later qualified as Certified Public Accountant of the American Institute of Public Accountants. He also obtained a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree from University of Wisconsin, USA, with accounting major. Mr. Ebong has attended several banking, management, accounting and leadership courses in United Kingdom and United States of America.

Business Trust

Motoring



STS Cadillac

STS: Cadillac's best-looking car

The STS essentially is a stretched version of Cadillac's hot CTS sedan and is arguably the best-looking Cadillac. The 196-inch-long STS replaces the aged, venerable Seville, which was Cadillac's most "European-style" model.

The 2005 STS is considerably different than the Seville the company said, adding that one major change is the new rear-wheel-drive design, shared by BMW and Mercedes, instead of the Seville's front-wheel-drive design. Rear-wheel drive allows better weight distribution and thus sharper handling. The new STS also

is offered with all-wheel drive, which is a "first" for a Cadillac auto the company said.

The 2005 STS is offered with a 255-horsepower V6 or with a 320-horsepower V8. Cadillac says some 70 percent of STS buyers will get the V6 and about 10 percent will order all-wheel drive.

The company said both engines work with a responsive 5-speed automatic transmission, which is the same Hydra-Matic unit put in BMWs. The transmission has an easily used manual shift feature that seems superfluous for most driving.

The V6 only requires 87-octane gasoline, while the V8

calls for 91-octane fuel. The V6 provides an estimated 17 mpg in the city and 24 on highways. The rear-wheel-drive STS is rated slightly higher at 17 and 26 because that engine's larger size lets it use a more economical rear-axle ratio. The all-wheel-drive V8 version is rated at 16 city and 22 highway.

The brakes are strong and activated by an easily modulate pedal with a nice progressive action.

The quiet interior provides good space for four tall adults. The rear seat area is especially roomy, although the center of the back seat is too hard to be comfortable.

The driver's seat is well-

bolstered and back-lit gauges are easy to read under various lighting conditions. Cup-holders and controls are easily reached.

Auto Briefs

Honda to sell low-cost hybrid car

Honda Motor Company plans to sell a low-cost hybrid car, a version of its popular Fit subcompact, a Japanese daily reported, signaling the auto maker's long-term commitment to the fuel-sipping powertrain. Japan's third-biggest auto maker aims to sell the Fit hybrid as early as next year for around 1.4 million yen (\$11,790), or about 200,000 yen more than the gasoline-only version, likely making it the world's first hybrid to cost less than 2 million yen (\$16,840), the leading Japanese business daily said on Wednesday.

The model could be launched in the business year starting April 2007 and would be sold globally, the paper said.

A spokesman denied Honda had made any decision on whether to hybridise the Fit, but added it had the technological wherewithal to mount its hybrid system, which twins an electric motor and a conventional engine to save fuel, on most of its vehicles.

Chief Executive Takeo Fukui has long said the price premium for a hybrid over a gasoline-only car needs to fall below 200,000 yen (\$1,680) for the powertrain to go mainstream.

Nissan to unveil light commercial models

Nissan Motor Co. said Tuesday that it will introduce four new light commercial models by the end of March 2008 to enhance its sales of buses, vans and small trucks. The Japanese car maker, in which Renault has a 44 percent stake, has made the light commercial vehicle business one of the key areas in its three-year business plan that started in April 2005.

The four models will be among 28 new models that the automaker plans to roll out under the business plan.

Nissan may launch two more new models in the light commercial vehicle segment on top of the planned four new models, Andy Palmer, vice president of that Nissan division, said at a round-table meeting with reporters. Under the three-year plan, Nissan is aiming for the light commercial vehicle business to double its operating profit margin to 8 percent and lift its sales volume by 40 percent to 434,000 vehicles worldwide by the fiscal year ending in March 2008, compared with the results in the fiscal year that ended in March 2005. In a bid to reach that profit goal, the company is working to reduce costs, Palmer said.

PAN takes 407, 307 to Fair

Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN) Limited has showcased the new 407 and 307 as star products at the on going 27th edition of the Kaduna International Trade Fair.

A statement from the company signed by the Public Relations Manager, Baba Yahaya Mohammed said PAN has also displayed various new generation vehicles at its pavilion at the fair.

The Managing Director, PAN Limited, Mr. Francois Serre, said, his company has a lot of confidence in the Nigerian economy and the current reforms initiated by Obasanjo's Administration.

Mr. Serre spoke at Peugeot Pavilion shortly after the official opening ceremony of the Fair in Kaduna with the reforms currently put in place, the middle class strata of the

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

population which was before the advent of the reforms was extinct, has now re-surfaced with appreciable level of purchasing power.

This, according to Mr. Serre, would enable the citizens of the country to own new cars with less financial crunch. He said the present cash and carry purchase system is militating against the desire of many Nigerians to own new cars and called on the Government to introduce a policy that will be friendly or convenient.

He said there is need for consumer credit scheme that will make cars more affordable to workers, saying that his company has introduced a scheme known as C.O.M.E. (Car Ownership Made Easy) about four years ago with the aim of assisting Nigerians to

own a brand new Peugeot car of their choice through credit scheme with some banks.

The C.O.M.E. scheme according to Mr. Serre was not encouraged by the selected Banks owing to structural constraints. He however revealed that his company is presently working with federal government on a new scheme that will enable Nigerians to own a new car.

The Secretary to the Federal Government, Chief Ufot Ekaete who represented the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo at the official opening ceremony, visited Peugeot pavilion shortly after he declared the Fair open.

He was accompanied by the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi and the Hon. Minister of Commerce, Ambassador Idris Waziri and European Union Ambassadors.

P. P. MADUS NIGERIA LTD.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS
Civil Engineering, Building, Estimation & Allied Services

HEAD OFFICE

Plot 10, Phase 1, State Capital Scheme, Abuja

NORTH BRANCH

Plot 10, Phase 1, State Capital Scheme, Abuja

LARGE OFFICE

Plot 10, Phase 1, State Capital Scheme, Abuja

Congratulations

Yet another honour to a honourable gentleman

The Chairman, Board of Directors, Management and Staff of P.P. MADUS NIGERIA LTD

Wishes to celebrate with the Government and people of Keffi State on the occasion of
THE AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORAL DEGREE IN LAW (HONORIS CAUSA)

By

Nassarawa State University, Keffi

On Saturday 18th February, 2006

We are happy to be associated with your successes



Paul I. Madukaife
Managing Director



The Excellency
Alhaji Idris Waziri, Minister of
Commerce and Industry, Keffi State

Signed:

Paul I. Madukaife
Managing Director

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
ADSWITCH PLC.	2	1.55	276,999	392,668.59
CUTIX PLC	4	2.64	50,100	125,764.00
Sector Totals	6		327,099	518,432.59
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	2	1.07	15,400	16,498.00
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.90	1,000	900.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	8	18.00	3,400	61,200.00
PRESCO PLC.	17	11.50	487,100	5,586,120.00
Sector Totals	28		506,900	5,664,718.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	32	2.57	268,806	664,296.17
R. T. BRISCOE PLC.	14	5.25	54,198	283,101.40
Sector Totals	46		323,004	947,397.57
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	164	2.56	8,224,181	21,181,372.61
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	3	9.10	3,382	30,776.20
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	1	5.11	950	4,854.50
FIDELITY BANK PLC	6	2.93	17,370	50,894.10
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	631	37.50	4,794,816	177,858,067.98
GTBANK PLC.	204	13.70	1,765,972	24,458,562.39
GUARDIAN EXPRESS BANK PLC	26	1.51	6,007,700	9,071,627.00
INVESTMENT BANKING	3	4.57	28,050	128,188.50
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	349	11.40	35,466,962	389,521,800.96
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	1	1.40	6,000	8,400.00
NAL BANK PLC.	1	2.80	1,955	5,474.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	56	5.61	1,954,743	11,115,603.71
PLATINUM BANK PLC	1	2.60	100,000	260,000.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	140	11.80	3,770,599	44,934,969.28
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	119	25.48	1,836,662	46,798,147.76
WEMA BANK PLC.	14	3.74	187,684	701,938.16
ZENITH BANK PLC	15	19.64	195,844	3,846,376.16
Sector Totals	1,734		64,362,870	729,977,052.71
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC.	1	2.31	1,870	4,319.70
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	85	103.11	778,433	82,597,445.39
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	324	36.00	2,734,697	96,657,735.31
Sector Totals	410		3,515,000	179,259,500.40
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	85	33.80	827,590	27,793,699.40
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	5	6.50	55,000	357,500.00
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	11	6.87	516,305	3,413,457.75
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	116	18.01	1,014,865	18,375,483.59
Sector Totals	217		2,413,760	49,940,140.74
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
AFRICAN PAINTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	0.40	30,000	12,000.00
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	20	3.41	96,165	345,371.73
CAP PLC.	9	8.51	16,750	136,256.93
D. N. MEYER PLC.	4	3.85	51,589	197,942.86
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	9	4.20	63,581	269,440.20
Sector Totals	43		258,085	961,011.72
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	3	1.51	9,208	13,904.08
Sector Totals	3		9,208	13,904.08
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	2	1.23	15,000	18,450.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	6	3.74	5,472	20,087.24
CHELLARAMS PLC.	4	0.83	13,348	11,078.84
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	35	16.20	111,600	1,807,920.00
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC.	86	16.74	422,236	7,028,155.70
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	124	20.42	1,111,150	22,472,685.11
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	5	0.79	247,383	186,612.61
Sector Totals	262		1,926,189	31,544,989.50
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	1	0.99	337	333.63
Sector Totals	1		337	333.63
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	34	31.40	187,625	5,782,090.65
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	97	56.95	347,375	19,812,145.41
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	72	28.50	515,278	14,440,952.60
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	46	61.50	339,602	20,808,329.61
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	44	191.00	92,935	17,711,342.90
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	1	15.75	3,000	47,250.00
UNION DICON SALT PLC.	1	5.17	625	3,231.25
Sector Totals	295		1,486,440	78,605,342.42
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	12	2.49	155,300	373,189.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	23	9.98	111,726	1,118,231.68
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	1	5.36	2,000	10,720.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	0.76	9,000	6,840.00
NEIMPH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	1	3.23	2,377	7,677.71
Sector Totals	38		280,403	1,516,658.39
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION INDUSTRIES PLC.	2	2.18	2,000	4,360.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC	10	2.30	56,522	134,520.60
NIGERIA ENAMELWARE COMPANY PLC.	2	3.63	2,375	8,621.25
VITAFAM NIGERIA PLC.	36	3.35	151,090	512,994.90
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	5	1.26	6,473	7,403.22
Sector Totals	55		218,460	667,899.97
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	58	0.79	69,700	55,069.00
AICO INSURANCE PLC.	4	2.39	63,300	151,287.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	13	1.36	350,450	465,434.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	3	1.20	96,870	116,338.20
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	7	0.62	250,415	148,739.10
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	1	0.85	6,547	5,564.95
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	3	3.26	47,594	155,156.44
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	5	2.49	17,067	42,499.63
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	2	2.80	6,050	16,940.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	6	1.30	52,100	70,012.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	10	1.17	241,651	281,551.25
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	15	3.09	372,672	1,133,261.00
Sector Totals	127		1,574,416	2,641,852.57
MACHINERY(MARKETING)				
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC	1	0.56	1,787	1,000.72
Sector Totals	1		1,787	1,000.72
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC	2	1.10	26,000	28,600.00
Sector Totals	2		26,000	28,600.00
PACKAGING				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	3	1.73	19,150	33,105.50
Sector Totals	3		19,150	33,105.50
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	57	39.00	81,864	3,187,400.09
CONOIL PLC	81	89.86	30,392	2,677,521.82
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	15	2.52	90,402	236,215.39
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	34	160.50	32,276	5,223,087.96
OANDO PLC	137	91.05	168,640	15,367,070.70
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	16	95.00	70,444	7,011,150.60
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	59	192.90	180,776	34,552,498.40
Sector Totals	399		654,794	68,254,944.96
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	3	4.44	16,445	73,015.80
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	1	1.57	2,000	3,140.00
Sector Totals	4		18,445	76,155.80
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	22	9.26	469,894	4,286,964.78
Sector Totals	22		469,894	4,286,964.78
TEXTILES				
APPRINT NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.37	20,200	7,474.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	8	1.76	44,102	81,533.52
Sector Totals	11		64,302	89,007.52
Overall Totals	3,707		78,456,543	1,155,029,013.57

TOP 10 TRADES AS YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
UNILEVER	1,111,150.00	22,472,685.11	124
GUARANTY	1,765,972.00	24,458,562.39	204
UBN	1,836,662.00	46,798,147.76	119
OCEANIC	1,954,743.00	11,115,603.71	56
NB	2,734,697.00	96,657,735.31	324
UBA	3,770,599.00	44,934,969.28	140
FIRSTBANK	4,794,816.00	177,858,067.38	631
GUARDIANXP	6,007,700.00	9,071,627.00	26
ACCESS	8,224,181.00	21,181,372.61	164
INTERCONT	35,466,962.00	389,521,800.96	349

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	185.00	192.90	+7.90
CONOIL	87.00	89.86	+2.86
7UP	30.00	31.40	+1.40
FLOURMILL	27.20	28.50	+1.30
NB	35.00	36.00	+1.00
FIRSTBANK	36.99	37.50	+0.51
INTERCONT	10.92	11.40	+0.48
UACN	16.26	16.74	+0.48
CCNN	6.55	6.87	+0.32
UAC-PROP	9.00	9.26	+0.26

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
GUINNESS	108.49	103.11	-5.38
TEXACO	100.00	95.00	-5.00
MOBIL	165.10	160.50	-4.60
NBC	63.97	61.50	-2.47
CADBURY	58.25	56.95	-1.30
AP	39.55	39.00	-0.55
GUARANTY	13.99	13.70	-0.29
OCEANIC	5.80	5.61	-0.19
BERGER	3.56	3.41	-0.15
WAPCO	18.16	18.01	-0.15

JDA can't sign contracts on oil blocks five years after

The Nigeria-Sao Tome and Principe Joint Development Authority (JDA) has suffered a setback. The setback is the inability of JDA to sign the Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) on five blocks in the Joint Development Zone two years after the contracts were awarded.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that JDA had in November 2004 awarded five oil blocks to a consortia of oil companies, including some multinationals.

But there has always been some elements of distrust on the side of the Sao Tomeans in the venture, which was established in February 2001 between their country and Nigeria on a 60/40 ratio in favour of Nigeria.

This development had impacted negatively on the activities of the joint venture since inception. The Sao Tomean attorney-general had in November last year conducted an investigation into the award of blocks in the JDZ and concluded that the awards of the contracts were fraught with irregularities.

The attorney-general's office had called on the U.S. authorities to probe the award of five oil block licenses to ERHC by the JDA based on the reports of the investigation.

ERHC is a U.S. based company involved in exploration and production of oil in Africa. It won stakes in all the five blocks awarded because of its pre-JDA oil activities in the JDZ.

As a result of the report, two American oil firms (Noble energy and Pioneer) that had an MOU with ERHC to develop blocks two and three pulled out of the venture.

The development led to ERHC wooing Swiss Addax petroleum to take up their stakes in the blocks.

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr Edmund Daukoru, while reacting to the call for a probe said the award of oil blocks in the Nigeria-Sao Tome and Principe Joint Development Zone (JDZ) was transparent and without irregularities.

"We worked hard as a team to arrive at who gets what in the JDZ," Daukoru told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja.

The report had alleged that the U.S. based ERHC made improper payments to key decision makers in Sao Tome in a bid to get the contract awarded to it.

According to Daukoru, the report is based on the lack of information and high internal wrangling at the top of the Sao Tomean government. "I have a copy of the report and I have rejected it in its entirety," he said. The minister said Sao Tome and Principe was struggling to cope with a multi-party government, with the president in one party and the prime minister in another.

He explained that ERHC was prospecting in Sao Tome and Principe before the establishment of the JDA and had been providing assistance to the country in areas of infrastructure and transport among others.

The venture suffered a heavy blow at the weekend in Abuja, when winners of block four assembled to sign the PSC, only to learn that the Sao Tomeans had requested for more time to study the PSC that was earlier outlined with their full participation.

The winners of the block led by Addax Petroleum of Switzerland expressed surprise at the turn of events.

Chief Executive Officer of Addax Jean Clude Gandur lamented the situation and said such behaviours would discourage investment in Africa.

Daukoru had apologised to the international investors on behalf of Nigeria and demanded an apology from the Sao Tomean government in the interest of the venture.

He said the delay in signing the PSCs was denying the two countries huge revenue for development and expressed optimism that all the PSCs would be signed in no distant future.

Abuja demolition victims

So, in spite of the prayers all these people have been making against el-Rufa'i's coming, could still enter Karmo?" a medium-height dark complexioned man asked rhetorically, in an exhortatory tone, grimacing as he hurriedly passed a fresh demolition site along the Wuse-Karmo road, adjacent the market of this prominent satellite town of the Federal Capital Territory on Sunday, 19th February, 2006. He appeared into the main bowl of the market at the right hand side of the road without uttering another word.

His quick abandonment of the subject was expressive of the general resignation to fate which the residents of the territory have developed in respect of demolition over the last two years.

That Sunday was another demolition day at Karmo, and the exercise was said to have commenced by 8 am. By 2 pm, not only had a vast area been reduced to rubble, virtually all those affected had either since melted into the Karmo population, or were on the roads to other satellite towns, or towns just outside the territory like Kuchigoro, Kuje, Nyanya, Karu, Masaka, Dei-dei, Zuba and Madalla, with whatever they could rescue out of the belongings.

They would live there with relations and friends in the difficult and uncertain life of relocation. While some would leave Abuja "for good", many would not contemplate leaving, and would gradually constitute problems to those relations, as many others would, instead, follow the process of acquiring plots of land illegally, and building new houses somewhere. These would be new illegal settlements. So the problem would continue.

Furore over demolition of illegal structures and squatter settlements, the demolition itself and its consequences have, over the last two years, ceased to strike the residents of the Federal Capital Territory and other Nigerians, except the owners and residents of such structures on one hand, and the FCT authorities on the other. They have all become routine activities in normal life within the FCT.

The owners of illegal structures and the residents of squatter settlements, are always baffled over the manner they, as Nigerians, are chased out of their places of abode in "our own country" and their structures mangled, frustrating them out of their normal life pattern, and throwing them into deep trauma and anguish. The FCT au-

By Uthman Abubakar
Senior Reporter (Features)

thorities always feel satisfied to have tidied the territory of some filth in the process of restoring the capital city's master plan. What strikes people now is where and how those displaced by demolition, including those consequently relocated by the FCT, live.

Daniel Salihu was expelled from Chika by the demolition exercise a few months ago. He is now a squatter at Kuchigoro. "I had a house at Chika where I resided. All of a sudden, my wife called one afternoon and said caterpillars had come for demolition. I said Ah! Ah!, won't they enumerate before demolition again? I had to leave work and rush home. By the time I reached home, they had already begun the demolition. That was how we were able to drag out the little we could, and the rest were destroyed in the process," he recalled his ordeal on the demolition day, which sent him packing out of Chika.

"Fortunately, I have a brother at Kuchigoro, who came to my rescue. This is how I found myself at Kuchigoro now, squatting with him, but my family is scattered, some members are in Lagos, while some are in our village in Edo state."

He said consequent upon the demolition and his relocation to Kuchigoro, he had incurred greater losses than he could imagine. "I lost so many things. In fact, my brother just gave me a room to squat in order to calm me down from the trauma of the great loss I incurred. It has seriously affected my business. While I was in the process of relocating my family from Abuja to the village, I was off business. None of my customers could reach me any more. So, they all decided to disperse to other trades. It is like I am new in the business now. I am just starting afresh."

Mr. Salihu said demolition and relocation always have grave consequences on those affected, because of the great losses incurred in the processes. "Most of the affected have lost their jobs. Some have even lost their lives in the process, because they could not withstand the destruction of what



Pegi, a settlement for relocated victims of Idu/Karmo demolition

they earned throughout their lives. They just faint and die."

He explained how demolition and relocation cause more social problems, saying, "There are people who don't want to leave Abuja because of the nature of their business. That is, their business is done in the city here, and they cannot go out of it. As a result, they keep looking for houses here and there, and wherever they go to, they create more problems than they can bear."

According to Mr. Salihu, those whose structures are demolished move to other villages. Those who still have cash at hand, start bringing up other illegal structures as well, which would cause more social problems in the FCT.

Mrs. Mary Ambrose also had her own house at Chika, which was demolished, forcing her to relocate with her family to a room in their guest house at Kuchigoro.

"I had a 5-bedroom flat at Chika. I had travelled to Lafia (Nasarawa state) on the demolition day. Before I returned it was crushed and my properties were destroyed. How we packed out of Chika and relocated to this place is a terrible story to tell. I suffered before I packed here. The proper-

ties I lost in that demolition were worth N400, 000. I left there crying."

She spoke about the fate of her business in her new place of abode. "I cannot say I have been able to settle down here, because I don't have anything doing now. When I was at Chika I had a shop for petty trading to sustain the family. My husband has lost his job. I don't sell even soft minerals now. I don't have money. We have sold even the fridges we had. My sister was feeding us. Now she has been sacked. If I had money now I would return to our village, because I don't know how and where to start doing business."

According to her, as a result of demolition and relocation, many people have died, believing, "If I were not a woman who has experienced a lot of hardships in life, I would have followed suit. The trauma can make anyone affected to collapse." She advised all affected by demolition to return to their villages, "but el-Rufa'i should give us money to go and build houses there and start afresh."

Mrs. Rabi Usman is another lady expelled by demolition from Chika. She recounted what el-Rufa'i "did" to her. "He demolished

my father's house, my mother's house, my younger brother's house and my own house. My children and I escaped with only our lives from that demolition. The little I could rescue that day was what I sold to realize money for our rent here at Kuchigoro." She said she lost her fridge, TV set, VCD and many other properties, estimating the total loss at about N10, 000.

"My brother who was at Kuchigoro gave us some money," she said, adding, "At Chika, I had a shop where I was selling food items and provisions. Now I am not doing anything. Only God knows how we feed. I have no money now. I can still recall the day the foundation of my house was laid at Chika. We suffered that day when we were to buy zinc, we could not feed, so that we could collect the little money we had, to buy zinc to roof the room where we would rest."

According to Mrs. Usman, "We are residing in Abuja because we are used to it. Otherwise, if I had even N100, 000, I would thank God, and we will leave Abuja for good, leave for el-Rufa'i and Baba (Obasanjo)," as she expressed fear that even if victims of demolition

were allocated plots of land to build houses at a location within the FCT, a future government could still expel them with a plan to "build a games village, technology village or any other thing. So the houses will be demolished again."

She said passionately, "We are Nigerians. We cannot become refugees in our own country. If we are refugees, what of foreigners coming into the country?", remarking, "So, help us tell landlord (el-Rufa'i) that if he owns today, he doesn't own tomorrow."

At Karmo, on the most recent demolition day, Pastor Elijah Eshiene was too devastated to comment, beyond saying: "people should return to their villages than stay in Abuja," as he pitifully surveyed the undulating rubbles covering the wide expanse of the demolition location.

However, Sulaiman Abdullahi, who was at the site to help an affected brother rescue the little property he could, said already three of five of his affected brothers had relocated to his house at nearby Madalla in Niger state. In due course, he said, they might have to save money to rent their own houses, move out to squat elsewhere, or even return to their village because "it is not easy these days."

Pegi, about ten kilometers from Kuje in Kuje Area Council is a village where those displaced by the demolition at Old Karmo and Idu, have been relocated to by the FCDA, which allocated them plots of land to build their own houses there. A trader at Wuse market called Victor is one of those relocated there.

"We paid for the plots of land allocated to us," he revealed, explaining, "Those of us relocated from Idu and Old Karmo are in thousands, and each of us was allocated a plot of land. Actually, everybody paid N21, 000 for the plot of land allocated to him. If your own is 300 Sq metres, you pay N12, 000 more, which adds up to N33, 000, but if its less than 300 Sq metres, you pay N6000 more to add up to N27, 000. Most of us paid N27, 000 for their plots."



A section of a demolition site at Karmo.



Another squatter settlement springing up near Karmo

s: Where and how they live

He spoke of life in their new place of abode, and the difficulties they encounter in continuing their normal businesses. "Here, there is no light and no water and the road is not tarred. Moving out of here is a devastating problem. I spend N700 to N800 daily to reach Wuse Market to do my trading. Transport is very expensive for us. This is one of the difficulties everybody is facing here."

Victor complained further: "There is no latrine here in Pegi. We defecate in the bush. There are no bathrooms. We are just manag-

ing. We have just been compelled to pack in here, but our situation is very bad. We drink well water here, and if you see its colour, you will think it is *Burukutu* (locally brewed wine)," saying, however, that they had resolved to endure so that they could build their permanent homes there.

He appealed: "We want government to come and provide us with water, electricity and market here. No market here. We find it very difficult to get our daily provisions here. Everything is expensive."

Irimiya G. Sarki is an indigene of Pegi. He said the indigenes of the village have been helping those relocated there to feel as comfortable as the environment could afford.

"They say they don't have the money to build their houses immediately. They rent houses from us to enable them build their houses at their own pace, and according to their earnings. We have been helping them. We don't charge the normal rent for them. Where we charge N1000 per room, we recognise that they are in difficulties, so we charge

them N700 per room. We have always observed that they are grateful to us," Irimiya said.

He added: "We live in peace and harmony with them. Whoever among them wants to lay the foundation of his house, we troop there to help him. Where we should be paid, we do it for free."

Another resident of Pegi, Baba Mohammed, gave lack of good roads, water and light, as some of the main reasons delaying the movement of most of those relocated there from Old Karmo and Idu, emphasizing, however, that

"Some of them cannot relocate here immediately, because they don't have money to build their houses. They believe they would rather look for cheaper places round town to stay, but some of them have already rented houses among us here."

The fact is: while demolition has expelled many so called illegal squatters back to their respective home states, or other "more tolerant territories" in the country, especially merchants and traders, who could not withstand the devastation and frustration following

the near total loss of their earnings and business capital to an early morning demolition, it has rather hardened most others who seem to have trained well in melting into unaffected locations within the territory, to continue squatting after every demolition exercise.

So, because they believe demolition cannot scare them away from whatever they gain in the new federal capital city, and they must find places to reside in it, according to the circumstances and their earnings, they gradually build new illegal settlements, and dare el-Rufa'i to come forth.



YOUR PENSION IS YOUR FUTURE

In growing your pension fund, we put the IBTC Group's wealth of investment management experience behind you. As your Pension Fund Administration (PFA), we ensure that the future never meets you unprepared.

Let us show you the way to a better future.

Call us on 01-2716000, 0802 PENSION, 0804 PENSION, 0805 PENSION

Forms available at all offices of
 IBTC Chartered Bank Plc
 Access Bank Plc
 Oceanic Bank International Plc
 Zenith Bank Plc
 DHL, UPS, Fedex



IBTC PENSION MANAGERS LIMITED

Lagos Office:
 1st, 2nd, 3rd Floor,
 25A Ademola Street,
 Victoria Island Lagos, Nigeria.
 Tel: 01-2716000
 Facsimile: 01-27162132
 E-mail: pensionservices@ibtc.com
 Website: www.ibtc.com

Abuja Office:
 Total House 790/247 Herbert Macaulay Way,
 Central Business District Abuja.
 Tel: 09-2348175; 2348177; 08022961900
 08041581050; 08052061009
 E-mail: ipw@ibtc.com

Port Harcourt Office:
 254 Alia Road 1st/2nd Floor,
 Port Harcourt.
 Tel: 084-074725; 462563; 08074023107
 E-mail: ph@ibtc.com



Think IBTC

KANO TRUST

Fire razes foodstuff at Warawa

Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent (Kano)

Property worth over N2m have been razed by fire at Yandallah Village in Warawa local government council of Kano State.

The secretary to the council, Alhaji Isah Musa Gogel who spoke to newsmen on the incident, said already a committee had been formed to investigate how the incident occurred and to advise it on the modalities for compensating the victims.

He said that even as a committee was formed, donations from well meaning individuals had started coming in with the executive secretary of the state's pilgrims' board, Alhaji Sani Lawal Kofar Mata, doling out twenty bags of foodstuff together with cash.

The local government secretary called on public spirited people to assist the victims, while charging members of the area to reciprocate the gesture.

Also speaking, Alhaji Sadiq Sidi urged the victims to have the courage to bear the loss, adding that such calamities could have been averted if adequate precautionary measures were taken.

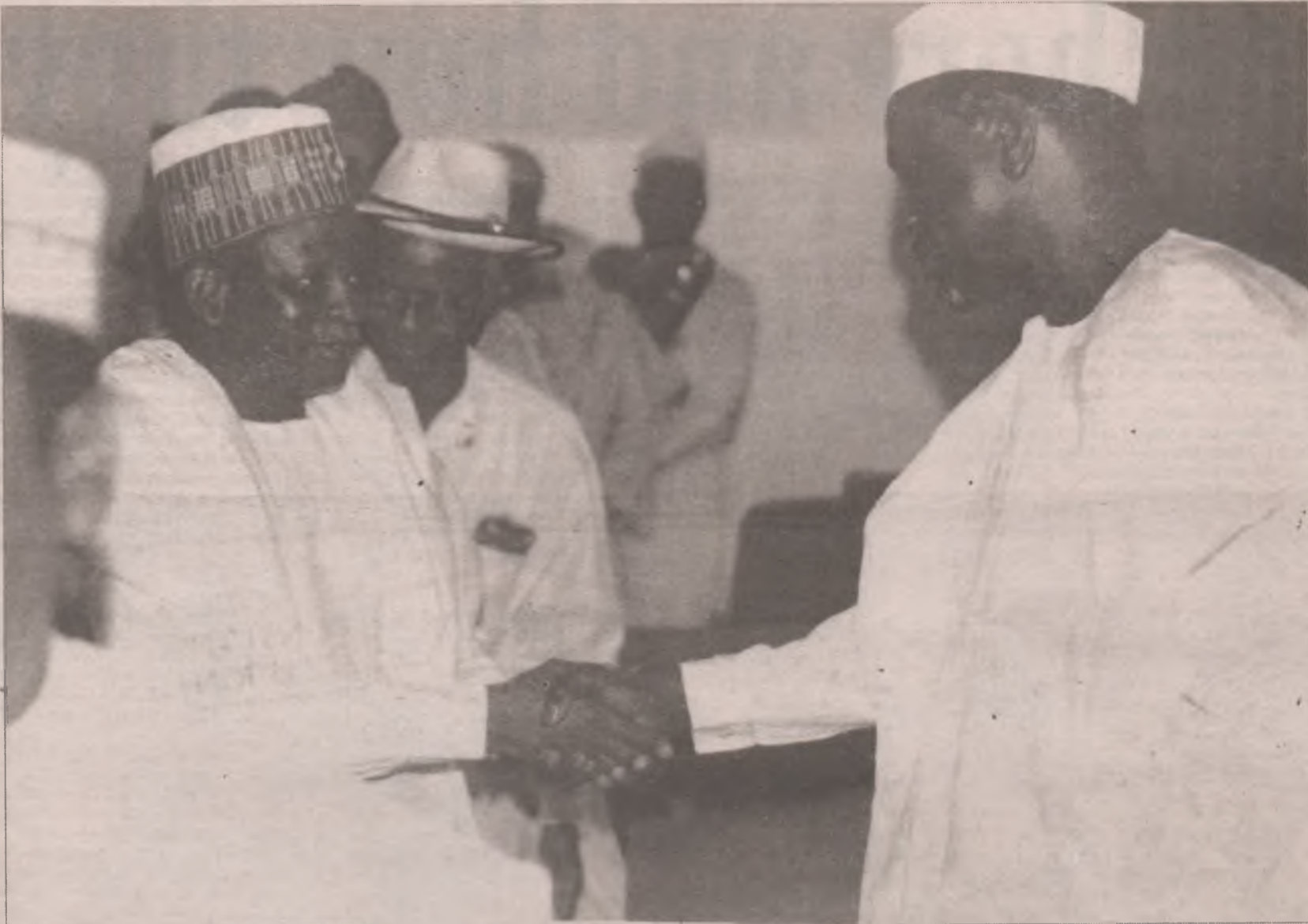
NAKSS wants hisbah reinstated

By Aliyu s. Machika,
Correspondent, Kano

The National Association of Kano State Students has called on the federal government to reinstate the hisbah board, saying its establishment followed due process as stipulated by the Nigerian Constitution.

Speaking through the senate president of the national body, Comrade Kabiru Ado Lakwaya, NAKSS said the federal government had empowered states through the constitution to enact laws suitable to their people, hence the establishment of hisbah by the state legislature to assist its Shari'ah implementation.

According to them, the essence of federalism is to accommodate and recognize



Governor Ibrahim Shekarau shaking hands with Prof. M. Yahaya Bichi, provost, Federal College of Education, after his courtesy call on the governor at Government House, Kano...recently

Census, tool for nation building, says c'ttee chairman

By Aliyu S. Machika,
Correspondent (Kano)

The chairman, Kano State Committee on the 2006 Census, Alhaji Muhammad Lawal Na'Allah, has charged people of the state to support the forthcoming national census, saying the

exercise is the bedrock of socio-economic development of the nation.

Speaking to *Kano Trust*,

the chairman said this year's census was intended to ascertain among others the availability of social facilities, upon which some companies would invest in, adding that it would assist in

bringing in foreign investment to the state and the country as a whole.

He added that if such investments were established in the country, it would also go a long way in creating

employment/job opportunities to the teeming populace.

Also speaking on the distribution of facilities by the federal government, he said, such distribution was being done considering the number of people in a given area, adding that it was necessary for the citizens of the state to support and partake in the headcount for the state to be adequately considered in the distribution of social amenities.

According to him, participating in this year's national headcount by the state was essential, because "it is through this that we can maintain and upgrade the status of our religion, dignity, children and grandchildren."

Alhaji Lawal Na'Allah disclosed that his committee was partnering with the federal office in the area of training, especially the enumerators in order to equip them with relevant skills to avoid making similar mistakes as it happened during the trial census last year.

He therefore thanked the state government for doing everything possible in terms of funding, saying the committee has no problem of funds.

Kano people asked to eschew bitterness, live in harmony

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent, Kano

People of Kano State have been urged to eschew bitterness and accommodate one another for the progress of

the country.

the country.

The state's deputy governor, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, stated this at a special prayers session organized by the Tijjaniyya Movement Sect, held at the Kano Emir's palace during the weekend.

Magaji Abdullahi said for leaders to be focused in discharging their responsibilities, there should be harmonious existence between the indigenes of the state and other people.

The deputy governor assured that the government was determined to empowering the youths through harnessing their potentialities to make them more productive in the society.

He appealed to the youth in the state to shun violence and drug abuse, which he said were capable of ruining their careers.

In his speech, the Emir

of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, stressed the need for peaceful coexistence among various ethnic groups in the state, saying that, "unless peace and harmony prevails, no positive development could be realized."

The emir enjoined the people of the state to actively participate in the forthcoming census as a way of bringing out the actual figure of the people with a view to having positive development in the area.

Hundreds of Tijjaniyya groups who converged at the emir's palace offered prayers at the occasion, asking God for continuous peace and stability in the country.

Prominent Islamic scholars that included Sheikh Khalifa Isyaku Rabi'u, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, Sheikh Sisi from Senegal, as well as emirs of Kazaure, and Ringim attended the congregation.

EKO TRUST

3rd term: YCE challenges Tinubu over bribery allegation

The Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) has asked Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State to substantiate a statement credited to him, which accused YCE of collecting N17.5m bribe to endorse the third term agenda of President Olusegun Obasanjo. YCE Secretary General Dr Kunle Olajide, in a statement issued weekend, said the governor was playing 'pedestrian politics' with the allegation.

Olajide dismissed the allegation of receiving money on behalf of the YCE to rally support for President Olusegun Obasanjo's alleged third term plot.

"I wish to state that I did not receive any gratification to make any statement in support of a third term agenda of the president at the public hearing (on amendment of the Constitution).

"My participation at the public hearing was principally to submit the memoranda prepared by the South-South, South-East and South-West people on behalf of the YCE.

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

In any case, the position of the YCE has been clear in the communiqué of the central working committee meeting widely circulated and published by the media on Friday, February 24, 2006," he said.

He challenged the governor to substantiate his claim with special attention to the date, time and venue where the money was received.

"I am very happy that Tinubu has expressed his readiness to substantiate his allegation; so I invite him to prove his claims by stating the names of the so-called facilitators."

"Olajide was disappointed that such an unguarded and unfounded rumour could be peddled from a highly placed individual, like Tinubu who the council treats with reverence.

"It is a shame that having spent six years as governor, Tinubu is yet to go beyond such pedestrian tactics of

politicking. It is indeed a great tragedy that a person of Tinubu's status could descend so low and to throw caution to the winds and impugn my character for cheap political gain."

He maintained that he would not have reacted to such a spurious allegation if it had not emanated from Tinubu. "Ordinarily, I would not have reacted to such a wild, spurious and unfounded allegation because I am quite aware of the usual style of politicians who resort to unfounded allegations whenever they feel their parochial interests are threatened."

He reiterated that his reaction became expedient in view of the sensitive nature of the issue.

"This reaction is therefore necessary in view of the very sensitive nature of the issue and the damage silence would do to my reputation and that of the other elder statesmen who are members of the YCE."

No fewer than sixty-one secondary schools selected across the six educational districts of Lagos State will this Wednesday share N600,000.00, while another school will get N88,800.91k.

The funds are to enable the schools to complete/repair dilapidated structures within their premises. This was disclosed by the chairperson of the Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Mrs. Oluwagbemiga Benson, while affirming that the stage was

61 schools to share N600,000

set for the formal launch of the UBE in the state.

According to her, the signing into law of the state's universal basic education in Lagos by Governor Bola Tinubu and the inauguration of a board to manage the scheme were parts of preparations for the commencement of the programme in the state.

Barring any last minute change in the schedule, stakeholders in the education sector will this Wednesday

assemble at the parade ground of the Police College, Ikeja, where the governor is billed to officially launch the programme in the state.

The SUBEB executive chairperson said all arrangements had been concluded to ensure a smooth take-off of the UBE programme in Lagos.

Education Minister Mrs. Chinwe Obaji is expected to be the special guest of honour at the launch and will flag off the UBE pet project, Self-Help Community Initiative Project (SCIP), in the state.

Mrs. Oluwagbemiga listed some of the local government councils that will present schools for the collection of cheques on Wednesday to include Ajeromi/Ifelodun, Agege, Badagry Epe Ikorodu Ibeju/ Lekki, Mushin and Surulere.

At least, nine junior secondary schools will partake in the gesture, which according to Mrs. Oluwagbemiga is the pilot phase of the scheme in the state.

Also expected at the Police College, venue of the inauguration, are officials from the Abuja headquarters of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), including its chairman, Professor Anezi Okoro; executive secretary, Professor Gidado Tahir, as well as all SUBEB chairmen from all the states in the South West geo-political zone.

LASG to combat flood

The Lagos State government has expressed the readiness of its 570 flood abatement gang to combat flood as the rainy season draws nearer. Environment Commissioner Tunji Bello stated this while commissioning new equipment procured for the gang to enhance effective operations.

Bello said that the gang had been working assiduously to ensure that flooding was brought to an end as adequate provision has been made to that end.

He said it had been clearing and pumping water from the manholes in areas like the Olushi street, off Adeniji

Adele road, Lagos Island, Karimu Kotun, Akin Adesola, and Sanusi Fafunwa Street, all in the Victoria Island; Bombay crescent by Oyenekan street in Apapa and Kehinde Eta Oko community road, as well as Amuwo Odofin.

The gang is working presently at Oyadiran Estate, Yaba, LSDPC Estate Ebute Meeta, Oloto Street, Agege motor road, Olosa Mushin, Oba Akran Avenue, Ikeja Apakun Oshodi and Apapa Oshodi expressway, as well as Ikorodu road, Ojota and Eluku Street, Ijede, among others.

With the efforts of the gang, Bello assured that Lagosians would no more entertain any fear of flooding, as all the spots prone to flooding are being cleared and opened up so that water could flow freely in the drainage system.



A cross section of Muslims at meeting of religious leaders called by Gov. Bola Tinubu of Lagos State...recently.-Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Collapsed buildings: Authority organizes interactive session in Ajegunle

The Lagos State Physical Planning and Development Authority, in its effort to check the menace of incessant building collapses in the state, has organised an interactive session at Ajegunle, Ajeromi/Ifelodun local council area of the state.

Addressing the audience at the session, the general manager of the authority, Mr. Suliamon Alabi Yusuf, explained the benefits of planned environment to individuals, communities, as well as local governments.

He stressed the need for strict adherence to construction procedure and obtaining necessary development permits before commencement of property development.

The head of Physical Development Intervention Department, represented by Mr. Akinlabi, stressed the need

for a proper management and development of land in the state for the attainment of a sustainable environment that would bring lasting benefits to the government and people of the state.

He reminded participants that the purpose of the forum was to enlighten members of various communities on the right approaches to physical and property development in line with government's policy, guidelines and building regulations.

The secretary to the local government area, Mr. Odumade, commended the efforts of the authority for organising the interactive session, which he believed would bridge the information gap between policy makers and industry players, as well as put an end to the ugly incident of building collapse and its attendant colossal loss.

He implored the people to engage the services of professionals in building industry, who are equal to the task of upholding professional ethics in the building industry.

Concluding, the general manager of the authority urged the people to imbibe the culture of not building on drainage systems, along power lines and to always observe prescribed setbacks as provided in the state's urban and regional planning law.

Kosoko chieftaincy tussle: Tribunal chairman reads riot act

Retired Hon. Justice Akin Holloway, the chairman of the tribunal of inquiry into the Kosoko chieftaincy family dispute, has foreclosed the strict adherence to law during the hearing, adding that no one who is party to the dispute should see any member of the tribunal.

The retired judge of the High Court handed down the warning during the inaugural

session of the tribunal at the Lagos High Court over the weekend.

In his opening remarks, he said that the Kosoko chieftaincy family dispute, which had been on for some time had in the past two months taken a violent dimension and now spreading to other areas in the state.

He said that goods worth several millions of naira had been destroyed while many

people died or became wounded in the incident.

According to him, "not only have the commercial activities in the areas disrupted, but there has been a breach of peace."

He said that the tribunal would look into the remote and immediate causes of the problem.

It would be recalled that following a wave of violence on the Lagos Island of late,

the state government set up the tribunal to look into the remote and immediate causes of the disputes over the headship of Kosoko family, and identify groups or persons responsible for the civil disturbances that followed the disputes.

The tribunal will determine the extent of damages, loss of lives and property caused by the disturbances, as well as ascertain the origin

and validity of the declaration made by the royal family concerning the selection of the head of family, if any, and whether there is more than one ruling family.

The recommendation of the tribunal is expected to guide the LASG in finding a lasting and amicable solution to the dispute.

Further hearings have been fixed for Wednesday.

News

'Public hearing is a fraud'

By Andrew Agbese, in Jos

The former chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, has described the ongoing public hearing for amendment of the 1999 Constitution as fraud, saying there was no way amendments could be made in 108 sections of the constitution in just three days.

Ogbeh, who spoke at the first formal launch of the Action Congress of Democrats (ACD) in Jos recently, where most of the supporters of the state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, publicly declared their crossing over to the new party, said the public hearing was suspicious, and laden with ulterior motives.

The former PDP chairman said even in America where Nigeria copied the presidential system of government, it took them 230 years to effect only about twenty-seven amendments to their constitution.

"Today the country is witnessing the ongoing amendment of the constitution where 108 amendments are supposed to be carried out in three days. Even in America, where we copied our constitution, they have practiced it for 230 years, but have carried out within that period only twenty-seven amendments," he stated.

Ogbeh, who gave reasons for the formation of the MRDD, said

the association was formed primarily to stop President Olusegun Obasanjo's third term bid.

He said it was while they were working towards stopping the alleged third term bid of President Obasanjo that Chief Acese Aniello, along with others, registered the ACD with INEC and they all moved along to join the ACD.

Chief Ogbeh described the PDP as a party that is dictatorial and does not allow dissenting opinion.

The former PDP chairman explained that he was victimised into leaving the PDP because he insisted on defending democratic norms in the country.

He said his exit from the PDP was particularly due to a statement he made on the then state of emergency in Jos where he insisted that all democratic institutions in the state must be restored.

"Because I made a statement on the state of emergency and said all democratic institutions in the state must be restored, for that, I became a victim of tyranny in Abuja," he said.

At the rally, which held at the former PDP secretariat in the state, various speakers that included

former Deputy Senate President in the Second Republic, Senator John Wash Pam, Ambassador Yahaya Kwande, Senator J.K.N. Waku and a host of others, all denounced what they described as the oppressive tendencies of the PDP.

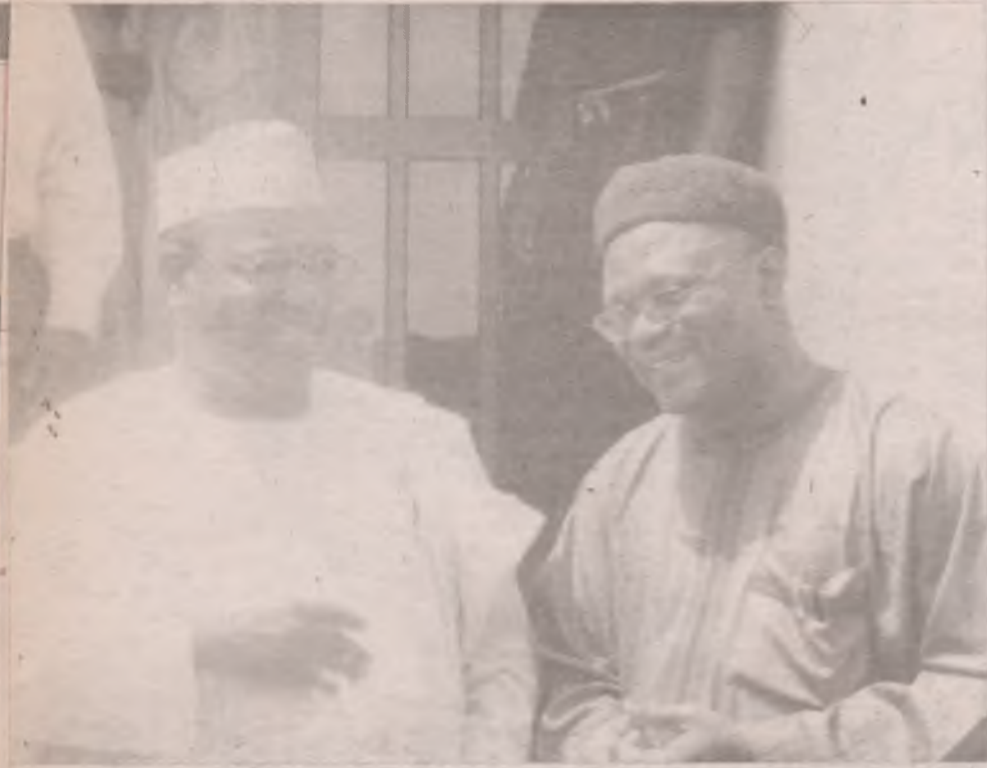
Senator Waku said he had earlier warned Nigerians that Obasanjo is not competent to be the president of the country. He said he had been vindicated by what is going on now as, according to him, it is evident that Obasanjo has failed the nation.

He also stated that the ongoing constitutional amendment is fraudulent as it was conceived with the sole aim of securing a third term for President Obasanjo.

Ambassador Kwande on his part said they were leaving the PDP because they were not allowed to participate in the affairs of a party they had laboured to build.

"Today, we are all here because this same party we laboured to build all these years has been hijacked by anti-democratic forces."

The motion for the former PDP stalwarts in Plateau to decamp en-mass to the ACD was moved by Alhaji Danjuma Maina and was unanimously carried; after which the ACD flag was hoisted at the secretariat.



The Deputy Governor of Kano State, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi (left), discussing with the Managing Director of New Nigerian Newspapers, Mr. Ndanusa Alao, during meeting of six Northern Governors held in Kaduna ...recently

Pic: Shehu K. Goro

Planned attack on Christians, a rumour

Niger State government has dispelled rumours of an impending attack on Christians by Muslims in the state and advised the public to remain calm and go about their normal business without fear.

From Aideloje Ojo, in Minna
The government in a state-

ment signed by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), and issued yesterday assured that members of the security agencies have been placed on 24-hour alert to respond promptly to miscreants that may wish to take the law into their hands.

Daily Trust learnt that tension has been mounting in Minna, the state capital especially among the Igbo residents who are afraid that the Muslims may soon attack them in reprisals for the reported riots in the Eastern part of the country.

It was further learnt that many of the Igbo traders have ran out of Minna in panic and fears that they may be the target of the rumoured attack.

Most of them who have the courage to remain in Minna, are said to have moved to the military barracks for protection.

This may have informed the government's statement which is aimed at cooling the tension.

The government, in the statement, advised religious and community leaders to warn their followers and subjects against acts capable of leading to the breakdown of law and order.

Once more, you are enjoined to maintain the peaceful co-existence between our peoples and disregard any calls to disrupt the peace in any way. Thank You," the statement read in part.

I cannot be used by Dariye - Catholic Archbishop

The Catholic Archbishop of Jos, Most Reverend Ignatius Kaigama, has denied reports that he is being used by Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State, for the latter's political career.

The archbishop who denied this during a press briefing in Jos, made particular reference to the occasion of his recent book presentation during which the forum later went into a closed door session with stakeholders in the state including Governor Joshua Dariye and Senator Ibrahim Mantu.

Most reverend Kaigama asserted that contrary to some reports, the meeting was never convened at the instance of Governor Joshua Dariye.

The archbishop who was represented by the Vicar-General, Catholic Archdiocese of Jos, Very Reverend Charles Goman, said it was in furtherance of his peace

By Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Jos

mission in Plateau State that he convened the meeting to allow stakeholders in the state to resolve their political differences.

"We must state that even Governor Dariye himself knows that the Archbishop cannot be used by anybody in any way," the Vicar-General stated.

He added that the Archbishop did not convey the meeting in his capacity as the chairman of the Plateau State Interreligious Council, but was planned long before his appointment into that capacity without any government influence.

While noting that the book presentation was aimed at presenting practical demonstration and how Christians and Muslims can live together, the Archbishop maintained that the occasion was not a book launch with no intention to raise funds.

5,000 cattle die annually in Plateau

Between 1,000 and 5,000 cattle have been estimated to die annually in Plateau State due to hunger-related diseases resulting from bush burning.

Legal Adviser, Miyetti Allah Association, Plateau State chapter, Alhaji Abubakar Gizo who stated this in an interview in Jos, stressed the need to redress the situation.

Alhaji Gizo noted that the cattle depends heavily on grazing for survival, but lamented that bush-burning destroys several acres of graz-

By Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Jos

ing reserves which the cattle would have fed on.

He appealed to those who engage in bush burning to exercise caution as according to him, it causes unprecedented losses to the Fulani nomads.

While stressing the importance of cattle rearing to the socio-economic development of the nation, Alhaji Gizo emphasised the need for the cattle to be protected.

The legal adviser who also

- Miyetti Allah

spoke on the state of the Miyetti Allah Association at the national level, called on the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, to order for elections into the office of its national chairman.

According to him, the association needed an able leadership to guide its members towards the up-coming 2005 national census even as he urged all nomads to actively participate.

POWER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE CONFERENCES ALLIED BOND CONSULTING

IN COLLABORATION WITH



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

HOSTING A 3-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

DATE: 6-8 MARCH 2006

VENUE: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE/LE MERIDIEN, ABUJA

TIME: 9.00AM - 5.30PM DAILY

AIM: To enhance the development of rural infrastructure

CONTENT: Rural Development Strategy & Policy; Capacity Building; Maintenance; Financing; Promoting Development; Meeting Development Targets; Community & Private Sector Participation.

FACULTY: Renowned Nigerian & Foreign Resource Persons.

FOR WHOM: Local Government Chairmen, Supervisors, Councillors and Heads of Works Department; State Commissioners responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development, Public Utilities and Infrastructure; Heads of Rural Infrastructure Departments, Agencies & Parastatals at the Federal & State levels; Legislators, Bankers, Development Partners & NGOs, etc.

FEES: N40,000.00 per participant. Group discount applies

For registration and further information, please contact

DIKA O. ISAAC
Allied Bond Consulting
08035253443, 08045903113

A.O. FADARE
Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development.
08035898188

Registration commences 2.00pm 5th March, 2006 at Le Meridien, Abuja.

N/B. This supersedes the previous publications in *The Sun*, *Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers.

Inside Politics

Ogbeh: The politician and his phantom travails

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
Special Correspondent

In concluding this protest I wish to ask some of you, members of this body how you would react if, some day, after leaving office, you are accused, tried and condemned in your absence. It may be sweet now because I and my NWC are at this end of the barrel, but this is evil and evil always crashes under its own weight". Audu Ogbeh.

The challenge was long given by Audu Innocent Ogbeh, former National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic, four months after he was forced to resign from his plum position in the party. Specifically on June 24, last year, in a letter he wrote to the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party, in which he questioned the verdict of guilt returned against the former National Working Committee (NWC) under his leadership by the Chief Tony Anenih-led Committee on Anambra political crisis, Ogbeh had challenged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate a petition filed by certain members of the NEC alleging that he stole N5 billion of the party funds.

According to Ogbeh, "When in January 2005, certain persons in NEC alleged that I had stolen N5 billion of the party funds and filed petitions in EFCC, I assured Nigerians I would remain in Nigeria, travel nowhere, until the party had had enough time to investigate the allegations. I remained here, waiting for an invitation by phone, or letter or word of mouth. None came. So, I never got a chance to say a word, until conclusions were reached and NEC passed a verdict. Now, the world has heard that a fraud of N2.9 billion or thereabouts was committed. Really? Just how much was the PDP worth for N2.9 billion to be stolen outright?"

Now, with the news of his sudden arrest weekend at his Abuja residence by suspected officials of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), amid reported denial by the Commission that Ogbeh was not in its custody, it seemed that a grotesque drama was being acted with the consequence of a heightened tension, until Ogbeh, suddenly emerged to announce to apprehensive Nigerians that he was not arrested. He was quoted as saying he has been away in his cashew farm where there was no mobile telephone reception. For those who do not know Ogbeh, a brief description would do at this point: he read theatre arts in the University even though

he majored in French Language. So, if he is good at acting, it is understandable. But, the suggestion in political circles was that Ogbeh must have been a victim of some sort of blackmail, which was why he cooked up the story of about being in his farm while people were trying in vain to reach him.

Indeed, if Ogbeh had not surfaced with his seemingly ridiculous story, which Daily Trust learned was embarrassing to the leadership of his new-found party, the Action Congress of Democrats (ACD), the searchlight should have been beamed on the custody of the EFCC as it had been done already before Ogbeh's claims, giving the Commission a clean bill. Reports that members of his family in whose presence he was arrested would not want to comment was indicative of yet a possibility: a threat by whoever "arrested" Ogbeh that they should keep mum on the issue or else. But political associates of Ogbeh in the ACD had quickly raised alarm over the safety of Ogbeh, thinking some political capital could accrue to them from the incident.

National Director of Organisation and Publicity, Mr. Toyin Razaq had said such a claim by the EFCC that Ogbeh was not in its custody was dangerous, pointing out that it would be sad if we woke up one day to see Ogbeh's lifeless body along the road. According to him, "Ogbeh could not have disappeared into thin air. Besides, there were reports that some members of his family were contacted but would not want to comment, which means they must have been threatened by some means, whatever it is. This is dangerous, sad and has far-reaching implication for opposition elements in the country". The timing of Ogbeh's "arrest and detention" had confirmed the reported fears within the ruling PDP over the growing influence of the ACD in whose fold a majority of the founding members and leaders of the PDP have quietly found solace and accommodation. The incident, which came on the heels of PDP's recent press conference on the activities of the ACD had reinforced the position in opposition circles that the action was deliberate and calculated to cripple the opposition.

Had Ogbeh been arrested immediately he gave the challenge in June last year, it would have been a different kettle of tea altogether. It

would have been seen in the context of internal affairs of the PDP. But now that Ogbeh had resigned from the PDP and pitched his tent first with the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD) before gravitating into the ACD, a party

defence of himself and actions. He did it four months after his forced resignation when he faulted the Chief Tony Anenih-led Committee on Anambra political crisis, saying the purpose of the enquiry by the party was to establish guilt and prepare



Audu Ogbeh

which is believed to be an assemblage of democrats of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) pedigree, with the alleged quiet but very strong backing of the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and the equally subtle complements of many state governors, the "arrest" was easily interpreted as an attempt to intimidate and silence the opposition elements.

Ogbeh's position as former National Chairman of the PDP, under whose leadership the PDP government perpetrated the perceived landslide rigging of 2003, has made it possible for him to access so many secrets about the party, a development that the powers-that-be would not find funny. This may account for why he was "arrested", particularly if the purpose of the "arrest" was to engage him for a short while to enable the powers-that-be instill some fear into him. Hitherto, Ogbeh was largely seen as a dogged fighter. He had taken on President Obasanjo in his infamous letter on the Anambra crisis, which culminated in his forced resignation. Brilliant and articulate, he has the eloquence of speech to put up a spirited

grounds for the final take over of the party.

Ogbeh, who said that he was not invited to defend himself, had, in a four-page letter dated June 24, 2005 and addressed to the PDP NEC through the National Chairman of the party, Col. Ahmadu Ali, said "the enquiry could not supercede the audited accounts of the party by Messrs Akintola Williams, our external auditors, a most reputable firm of accountants". According to him, "something was fundamentally wrong and NEC has to address it". But in a swift response, Col. Ali had said, "the Anenih-led Panel, which investigated the financial mismanagement in the party, did not invite Chief Ogbeh to explain his role in the scandal, because there was no where he was directly accused of financial impropriety". A one-page statement issued by the former Special Assistant to the PDP National Chairman, Theophilous Abbah, had said, "Those that were questioned by the Panel were persons who had explanations to make with regard to how the party's funds were utilized. It was not the National Chairman, Senator Ahmadu Ali

alone that complained about the party's book keeping based on the Panel's report. Even the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had variously complained that the parties, including the PDP, did not keep good records. Hence, it would be unfair to allege that the Chairman's observation that the financial records of the PDP had not been well kept was in bad faith. At present, the party is engaging the services of accounting experts to draw up PDP's accounting system in order to avoid such occurrences".

Ogbeh had reacted in his letter thus: "I have finally been able to see a copy of the National Chairman's memorandum to the 26th meeting and media and public reactions to your findings and conclusions and all the actions taken thereafter. Ordinarily, there would have been no reason for me to react, since the committee did not involve me in either the Anambra crisis or the alleged fraud in the party. I am however compelled to address this protest to NEC on the grounds that I was, after all Chief Executive of the Party for the period in question, although Party Secretary, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor was the Accounting Officer. On that ground, whether I was personally accused or not, I do hold vicarious responsibility for the operations of the Party and cannot therefore pretend not to be affected by these grave conclusions.

"It is for this reason that I want to ask our respected National Executive why, in the nearly four months of the Anenih Committee sittings, I was never, not once, invited to say a word. In the name of the living God, what manner of investigation was this? When in January 2005, certain persons in NEC alleged that I had stolen N5 billion of the Party funds and filed petitions in EFCC, I assured Nigerians I would remain in Nigeria, travel nowhere, until the party had had enough time to investigate the allegations. I remained here, waiting for an invitation by phone, or letter or word of mouth. None came. So, I never got a chance to say a word, until conclusions were reached and NEC passed a verdict. Now, the world has heard that a fraud of N2.9 billion or thereabouts was committed. Really? Just how much was the PDP worth for N2.9 billion to be stolen outright?"

"Now that the conclusion has been drawn, I just wanted to ask our distinguished NEC: Was this a Committee set up to establish facts or merely to

dramatize fiction? If we, the ruling party can conduct an enquiry of this nature and refuse to question or interview the Chief executive, whatever happened to the good old principle of fair hearing? Not even the Spanish inquisition in those ugly days of medieval barbarism sent people to their doom without letting them speak. And this is the 21st century Nigerian democracy? Did I hear, Dr. Ahmdau Ali and Chief Anenih. Chairman of the Board of Trustees complain recently that the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State was not given fair hearing in his impeachment saga?"

"And that, as a result, the process should be nullified? Really? Did they apply the same principle to me in the course of this enquiry? Since they did not, what is clear then is that there is one set of rules for the "beloved" and another for the perceived "enemies" in PDP.

The failure to give me a chance to appear suggests an increasingly worrisome development in our Party, a blatant disregard for legal norms, and a steady widening of the highway to judicial anarchy. Recent pronouncements by some of our leaders suggest no less, and this is at a time when we seek world respect, we the ruling Party. In concluding this protest I wish to ask some of you, members of this body how you would react if, some day, after leaving office, you are accused, tried and condemned in your absence. It may be sweet now because I and my NWC are at this end of the barrel, but this is evil and evil always crashes under its own weight".

Ogbeh's protest and/or reaction contained in his June 24, 2005 letter may serve to give a useful background to his "arrest" by whoever did it. His "arrest" might not be unconnected with the alleged misappropriation of PDP funds, for which some former NWC members had also been quizzed by the EFCC. If it was a continuation of that routine investigation, then it could safely be assumed that the EFCC and the PDP had taken up Ogbeh's challenge, notwithstanding his denial that he was not arrested. Daily Trust gathered yesterday that Ogbeh's denial was taken by a majority of his associated with a pinch of salt. How incredulous it reverberated through the opposition circles. Then the question: was it a phantom arrest or was it that Ogbeh was a victim of intimidation and/or blackmail by his temporary captors?

News

Jigawa signs \$103 electrification contract

As part of efforts towards boosting socio-economic activities in the rural areas, the Jigawa State government has signed a \$103m electrification contract with a Chinese firm.

The contract *Daily Trust* gathered is the biggest of its kind to be entered into by the state government since its election in 1999 in the area of rural electrification. He added that it targets over 1014 communities.

Signing the contract on behalf of the state government, the secretary to the state government, Alhaji Lawan Yau Roni, said government is determined to provide a source of energy to the people as part of its strategies to boost rural industrialisation.

He said 1014 communities would benefit from the gigantic project which is expected to last till 2008, stressing that already thousands of other villages in the state have been electrified in the last six years.

The secretary also announced that the project is to be financed through a joint funding by the twenty-seven local government councils and the state government.

From Hassan A. Karofi, Dutse

'I want to say that before the end of this year, most parts of this project would have been completed and with our ongoing capacity building measures being put in place in the areas of small scale industrial development, skills acquisition initiatives and massive roads and water projects, the area of economic emancipation will be enhanced' he added.

Lawan Roni disclosed that already, the state independent power project which is another project aimed at improving energy supply in the state was nearing completion and would be connected to all the villages as part of measures taken to reduce the epileptic power supply in the country.

leptic power supply in the country.

"We are right now discussing with relevant authorities to ensure we connect our villages with the national grid and we believe this contract will bring an end to cases of epileptic power supply," he added.

Responding, members of the Chinese Energy Development Company promised to complete the project as agreed.

Daily Trust quotes officials of the state's Ministry for Local Government as revealing that already, some substantial amount of the project cost had been released in order to ensure prompt completion of the work.

A two-day summit on the public procurement bill being organised by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) is scheduled to commence in Abuja on March 6.

The executive director of CISLAC, Auwal Rafsanjani, told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* that the meeting was being organised with the support of Restructured Economic Framework for Openness, Reform and Macroeconomic Stability (REFORMS) project of USAID.

He said the project was designed to strengthen the capacity of key government agencies and civil society groups involved in economic policy making, coordination, and implementation in support of the country's NEEDS programme.

Rafsanjani said that the fate of the bill had become a source of worry to all stakeholders, especially as no substantial progress had been made on its enactment.

Stakeholders meet on public procurement bill

holders, especially as no substantial progress had been made on its enactment.

"It is in this context that CISLAC and REFORMS are partnering on this important stakeholders' Summit to speed up the process of its passage by the National Assembly," he said.

One of the topics for discussion at the event includes "An Overview of the Due Process in Nigeria" by Prof. Humphrey Asobie, President, Transparency in Nigeria.

"Public Procurement in Nigeria" by Prof. Adekunle Wahab, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit.

The objective of the session, he added, was to achieve a sharper perspective of the idea of public procurement bill in terms of the socio-economic, cultural, political and institutional linkages in relation to democratisation.

According to him, it is also designed to ensure the enforcement of the public procurement practices regime in the Nigerian context.

Taraba govt introduce Due Process

Taraba says it will from now vet all government contracts through its Project Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit, otherwise known as the Due Process Office.

Mr Rebo Usman, the governor's Special Adviser on Due Process, told the *NAN* in Jalingo yesterday that the due process office would "monitor the way contracts are awarded and the payments made to contractors."

The measure was aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in government, he said.

Usman added that special workshops on due process were being organised for commissioners, permanent secretaries, directors and other top government officials.

"All subsequent payments to contractors must be vetted by the due process office to ensure that such payments are commensurate with the work done," he explained.

Meanwhile, relevant circulars on the matter had been sent to the various ministries, the special adviser said.

Nnamani reshuffles cabinet

Enugu State Gov. Chimaroke Nnamani has reshuffled his cabinet.

A statement signed by the secretary to the State Government (SSG), Dr Dan Shere, in Enugu Sunday showed that the SSG and thirteen other commissioners were retained.

Three commissioners were, however, dropped, while the names of six commissioners-designate were forwarded to the state's House of Assembly for confirmation.

The statement said the commissioner for health, Dr Festus Uzor, takes over the responsibilities of the special adviser to the governor on Political and Local Government Affairs, a position formerly held by Prince Sam Ejiofor.

Mr Cyril Ede now serves as the Acting Accountant-General, replacing Mr Chineyeaka Oha.

The statement listed Mr Luke Mamelu as the new special adviser on Project Development and Implementation.

Mr Francis Okolo was appointed as acting head of service in place of Mr Clement Okwor "who is on leave."



The National President of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, Mrs. Margaret Ya'u, Social Mobilisation Officer UBE and Kaduna State Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education, Hajiya Nafasa Abba Ka'u, at the flagging-off training of self help project implementation committee, organised by Kaduna Universal Basic Education Board held in Kaduna...recently. Pix: Shehu K. Goro

Nigeria hosts African conference on poultry in March

African countries are billed to hold a conference in Abuja before the end of March to fashion out a common policy of poultry matters.

The president of the Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN), Chief Tunde Badmus, disclosed this to the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* in Abuja yesterday.

The conference comes on the heels of the outbreak of avian influenza or bird flu in some parts of Africa, with the first case reported in Kaduna at Sambawa Farms. Badmus said the conference

was a result of a memorandum of understanding which Nigeria signed with other African countries late last year.

He said its focus was on how the countries could evolve a common policy on poultry matters.

Badmus criticised what he called the negative media reports on the recent outbreak of avian influenza in the country, saying members of PAN were saddened by such publications.

The association president said the publications had an adverse effect on the members' business, both

within and outside the country.

"Up to now, only six states are affected (by bird flu); why not give positive reports on the remaining thirty states that are not affected?" he asked.

Badmus explained that media focus should not even be on the affected states, but rather on poultry farms because some states could have more than 400 farms and only two or four farms would be affected by the flu.

"The interpretation of various publications was that the whole poultry in Nigeria was affected and this has

gone a long way to damaging the activities in the industry," he noted.

He said the total number of birds so far affected was about 100,000.00 out of more than 2.8 million birds in the country.

Badmus said various poultry samples so far taken across the South-West, South-East, South-South and the North-East had proved negative for bird flu.

He, therefore, advised journalists to always uphold the national interest in their reporting, instead of causing unnecessary fear and apprehension.



Gov. Rebo Usman

work in a Science Trust Fund to finance the operation and activities of science oriented institutions and agencies in Nigeria.

Director general of the centre, Professor Sam O. Aje, made the demand while delivering the Dr. Kwame Ninsin investment lecture in Abuja.

Aje recommended that university admissions should be on the basis of 60:40 in favour of science courses.

Professor Aje also attributed the disparity between developed and the less developed states to the inclination to science by developed countries.

He said though successive governments in Africa have made concerted efforts to deal with the growing effect of population pressure, it may be dealt with through the application of science.

Professor Aje recommended for the mounting of a Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, adding that the centre should be one of the ways through which science is being applied to its basis.

In his address before the Institute, Bureau Chief of West African International Magazine, Mr. Felix Okonkwo, described Dr. Kwame Ninsin as a man who lived and died in the struggle to free Africa from the shackles of underdevelopment.

He said the struggle for development can be better appreciated because of the several years of devastation caused by colonial rule, and described Professor Aje as a man with an indomitable African spirit, who has championed the reversal in peoples' perception of the mathematical sciences since he assumed the post of director general.

any solution after 2007 and called for an effective and vibrant leadership that can promise a better tomorrow.

Addressing the gathering shortly before Mato's speech, the president of the organization, Miss Bintu Satomi, said that the organization is a non-political, non-partisan and with no tribal affiliation or religious inclination with sole aim of making the society a better place for human survival.

"We found it necessary to stage this programme within the university community where average attitude of every youth is neglected, most completely lost direction and focus without mind being corrupted that will lead them to riches", she added.

Illiteracy bane of crises in Nigeria -DG SSS

By Mustafa Abubakar.
Abuja

The director general, State Security Services (SSS), Alhaji Lekan Are, has attributed the outbreak of crises in the country to lack of education and enlightenment on religious and political issues in the country.

He stated this while delivering a lecture on "Security of the State: Roles of the Imams" at a two-day workshop for Imams and preachers, theme "Education and Security for the Nigerian Ummah," organised by the Committee of FCT Imams (CFI) in conjunction with Islamic Peace and Development Initiative

(IPDI) held in Abuja over the weekend.

The director-general, who was represented by the directing officer, Alhaji Sadiq Dal'hat, noted that crises cause state of insecurity in the Nigeria.

"The Imam as a source of enlightenment is therefore expected to use the platform of the religion to educate and re-orient the Islamic faithful on the socio-political programmes of government and the general happenings in our society".

He said that most violence, including the current crisis on the cartoon saga were borne out of religious and ethnic intolerance of other religions, urging that verses of the Qur'an preaching peace and tolerance should be used in their sermons.

Alhaji Are added that investigations revealed that activities of the radical Islamist all over the world started since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, describing the Islamist activities as political, aimed at radical implementation of Islam in the society.

"This attitude has been another source of conflict and intolerance that have severally snowballed into full crisis. It is the responsibilities of our Imams to let you, our youths know that radical revolution in an heterogeneous community like ours could not be achieved except through legal and constituted means", he said.

Alhaji Are implored the Imams to manage the perception of such youths by refocusing their vision and engaging them in constructive activities.

Delivering his keynote address, the governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, stressed on the importance of education and economic empowerment of the youths in order to reduce crime rate and insecurity.

Shekarau, who gave example of how he used the Imams and preachers in Kano to reduce crime rate, restated the important role of the Islamic scholars in the society as an agent of positive change.

Earlier, the chairman of the occasion, Ret. Supreme Court Justice, Bashir Wali,

advised the Imams to wake up to their responsibilities by educating the community on the fundamentals of Islam as against questionable activities.

In his welcome address, the chairman organising committee who is also the Chief Imam of Wuse Community Central Mosque, Sheikh Tajudeen Adigun, said the aim of the two-day seminar was on the familiarization of the Imams, establishment of peace and tranquillity in Nigeria, increasing efforts at educating the Ummah and reminding one another about the correct teachings of the Holy prophet Muhammad.

At the end of the two-day seminar, witnessed by large turnout of Imams and preachers in FCT and its environs, the participants acknowledged the mounting benefits of the seminar as it aroused their consciousness in terms of security, saying their sermons in the next few weeks will reflect on the issue.

They therefore called for condemnation of anybody, organization or government associated with the "cartoons of Denmark", and called on the Nigerian government to cut off diplomatic relations with the Danish and Norwegian governments immediately, and directed all Muslims to boycott all Danish and Norwegian products.

They also pointed out that the self-restraint of the Muslims community must never be insulted, appreciating the reactions of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jam'at Nasir Islam (JNI) as well as well-meaning persons who condemned the Danish cartoons.

Census: NPC parleys with pastoralists

By Benjamin Awa

The chairman of the National Population Commission (NPC), Chief Samilla Danko Makama has stated that the commission attaches great importance to the accurate and comprehensive counting of nomads in the country in the forthcoming census.

He made the statement at an interactive session with the representative of nomadic Associations yesterday, in Abuja.

He said that the commission is making special effort to ensuring the full participation of nomads in the census, adding that preparations is in top gear to reach nomads where ever they may be during the census.

"These efforts can not

however achieve desired results without the support and intervention of the leadership and rank and file of nomadic base civil society organisation," Makama said.

In her address, the executive secretary of the National Commission for Nomadic Education, Dr. Nafisatu Mohammed, said that they were in the commission to give support to the forthcoming census and to find ways of cooperation.

She described the census as a national event which most not be left to the NPC Alone and that is why nomadic base civil organisation is partnering with the commission

Also speaking, the representative of Miyetti Allah, Professor Ibrahim Mokoshe, called on the commission to include pastoral leaders in advocacy and familiarisation campaign to nomadic settlement.

He added that for the exercise to be successful, field workers must be trained to respect the culture and customs of the nomads.

Over seven pastoral non governmental organisations, took part in the interactive session which include, Miyetti Allah, Confederation of Pastoral Association, Mobjal Fulde Cattle Breeders, Pastoral Resolve Group, Fulde Development Association of Nigeria and Al-Hayya Cattle Breeders Association.

News

Nigerians told to resist 3rd term agenda

Nigerians have been called upon to vehemently resist the move for third term.

The call was made by Engineer Nura Khalil, Katsina, ANPP gubernatorial candidate in the 2003 election in a statement made available to journalists recently.

He said the call was necessary in order to give credibility to our nascent democracy.

Engineer Nura in the statement appealed to religious leaders to pray for peace and stability of the nation so that Nigerians can enjoy dividends of democracy.

The former gubernatorial candidate urges senate and members of the House of Representatives to ensure that it is not reflected in the constitution.

In another development, Engineer Nura Khalil has cautioned the Katsina State governor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, over the proposed plan to rehabilitate Katsina airport with four billion naira.

According to him, the money should be channelled towards the development of education, health and

maintenance of structures in the state, adding that Katsina airport belongs to the federal government.

No harm in cooked chickens - C'tee

The Technical Committee on the Prevention and Control of Avian Flu in Plateau State has dispelled allegation that chicken meat and eggs kill, even as it disclosed that so far no report of human infection has been recorded in the state. The chairman of the committee, Dr. Lenke Chinke, said this in a statement in Jos.

"Professionals in the industry have confirmed that there is no harm of any sort in the consumption of cooked poultry products and eggs from farms that have not been confirmed to have the disease," he asserted.

He appealed to members of the public to help the committee in disabusing the minds of the public over the erroneous impression.

Dr. Chinke said that birds from farms located in Jos and Bukuru areas of the state where the infection were reported have been buried, while the farms have been

fumigated with disinfectants to avoid the spread of the virus.

He also pointed out that the federal government directive on the restriction of movement of poultry products



Turakin Kano, Alhaji Nasir Ado Bayero being presented with a gift by members of Hoto/Tarauni community when he went there on census sensitisation tour recently.

Drivers across the nation have been urged to desist from alcohol and reckless driving.

The chairman of the board of trustees of the Drivers Welfare Club of Nigeria (DWCN), Chief Eugene N. Ojukwu, who made the call at a one-day sensitisation rally held in Abuja, said based on the long standing experience

Drivers cautioned on reckless driving

of the association in the transport sector, it condemned the selling of alcohol in motor parks as it causes reckless driving resulting to accident on the high way.

Chief Ojukwu, who said that the accident claims more lives than HIV/AIDS diseases, stressed the need for drivers to be trained and retrained before the authority concerned give them a driving licence.

The chairman while making case for the welfare of the drivers said it appears that drivers welfare is not well

taken care of, especially when a driver dies as a result of accident.

According to him, the association which is after the welfare of the drivers will look at the areas of life insurance policy, training and retraining of drivers and bereaved, and handicaps among drivers.

The chairman therefore urged the union executives in the transport system to see the association as a partner that wants to reform driving profession.

FG appoints new director for National Library

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the appointment of Dr. Linus N. Ikpaahindi as the director and chief executive officer of library.

A statement signed by the head of public relations unit of the Library, Abubakar Bello Abdullahi, said the appointment is for a term of five years.

Until his appointment as the substantive chief executive officer of the parastatal, Dr. Ikpaahindi had been on acting capacity since October, 2004.

Born on November 15, 1952, at Korinya in Benue State, Dr. Ikpaahindi started his working career in 1978 as Librarian II at the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom in Plateau State.

He was a deputy director at the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization between 1992 and 2002. In 2002, he transferred his service to the National Library of Nigeria as director in the department of Readers and Users' Services.

NATIONAL UNION OF TEXTILE GARMENT & TAILORING WORKERS OF NIGERIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT:
B6/8 Kubi Street,
Off Nuamdi Azikiwe Way,
P.O. Box 905, Kaduna
Tel: 062-232438, Fax: 062-231577
E-mail: nutgtwn905@yahoo.com



SUB SECRETARIAT
Textile Labour House,
10 ACME Road,
Ogba-Lagos
Tel: 01-4923762
Fax: 01-4923763

All correspondences should be addressed to the General Secretary

STATE OF THE NATION

THE PRESIDENT MUST ADDRESS THE NATION

NO TO KILLINGS

The senseless carnage which started in Maiduguri and spread to Bauchi, Onitsha and some other parts of the country ostensibly on account of religious reasons has once again reopened the seemingly closed bloody chapters of Nigeria's history. The latest avoidable carnage and mayhem reportedly left in its trail countless number of lost lives, whole properties worth millions of Naira were destroyed. The point cannot be overemphasized that Nigeria's economic and social recovery will remain a mirage unless something urgent is done to halt the vicious cycle of wastage of human and material resources via violence and counter violence. At the best of 'Peace' times, many poor people die of avoidable motor accidents, diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS and sheer poverty. Additional deaths caused by murderous gangs hiding under the guise of religions to kill "strangers" are additional deaths too many.

KADUNA EXAMPLE

The Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, must be commended for his prompt response which has so far prevented the spread of the carnage to Kaduna State. It shows a government that has learnt from the lessons of the recent tragic past. The prompt radio and television address to the State by His Excellency followed by constant security alert check, demonstrated sign of good governance. Kaduna State government is assured of the support and solidarity of our union members in the maintenance of peace and development in the State. Other state governors and indeed the federal government must follow Governor Makarfi example. Kaduna example shows that when government is on duty, criminals masquerading under various reasons cannot have their ways!

It is against this background that we call on the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, to urgently address the nation and assure the citizens of safety of their lives and properties. Citizens must also be assured of the control measures being taken by government to stop this senseless carnage. After

Almighty God, the only protector we have is our government since 1999, it is a scandal that Nigeria has lost lives and properties that is only imaginable in a country in a civil war. Nigeria's efforts in maintaining peace in Ivory Coast, Darfur and Liberia are globally acknowledged. We should not give the impression that our competence in conflict prevention and conflict control starts from abroad while we are exposed to periodic bloodbath at home.

Poor-on-poor mayhem for whatever reason certainly cannot promote development, domestic and foreign investment and poverty eradication. We advice that anybody who takes life on account of anything should be taken as criminal and should face the full wrath of the law.

We are encouraged by the steps taken by the Bauchi State Governor, Alhaji Adamu Muazu, who apologized to the people for not acting fast to prevent the spread of the mayhem to Bauchi. We also acknowledged the efforts of Governor Ngige of Anambra State who personally visited scenes of violence and consoled survivors. However, what the citizens need is not apology or pity, but protection of lives and properties by their government. The instant transformation of peace loving citizens adding value to Nigeria into destitutes at police and army barracks represents the dark-side of governance. 1999 Constitution with all its imperfections holds that the primary duty of government is protection of lives and properties as well as public welfare. Therefore government at all levels must live up to expectations of those that elected them!

Long live Federal Republic of Nigeria!

SIGNED:
ISSAAREMU
Ag. GENERAL SECRETARY

News

Assembly probes specialist hospital over arbitrary charges

The Bauchi State House of Assembly has begun probe into the sudden increase in the fees charged by the Bauchi State Specialist Hospital, the only referral hospital in the state.

The probe is coming amidst allegation of N107.1m contract scam rocking the state's Ministry of Health. The contract was the supply of hospital equipment awarded to Messrs Medicaid Ltd in August 2004, but the company was said to have failed to deliver the equipment.

The House adopted the motion brought under matter of "urgent public importance" by Alhaji Jibrin Tafida Lere that the people of Bauchi State are denied rights to good healthcare delivery as the specialist hospital management has increased charges on services rendered with more than hundred percent.

Alhaji Lere, Chairman, House Committee on Health, told the House that he received petitions and cries of arbitrary increase in the services of the Bauchi Specialist Hospital, stating that the condition has forced many to abandon the hospital, which he said was established to cater for the health needs of the people.

According to him, a patient seeking medical attention at the specialist hospital is now paying thrice what he/she usually paid, adding that the condition became worse as the hospital lacked enough medical doctors and

From Tashikalmah Hallah,
Bauchi

nurses.

Alhaji Lere further explained that a pregnant woman in labour has to pay N5000.00 "This is without any complication," he said, adding "if it needs operation, then the patient has to pay N15,000.00, and the same thing goes for other services".

The chairman also stated that the prevailing economy had forced many not to go to the hospital because they could not get the money to pay for the services.

The House unanimously adopted the motion and directed its Committee on Health to investigate and submit its report to the House in two weeks' time.

However, *Daily Trust* learnt that the decision to increase the charges was the desire by the hospital management to autonomous from the ministry and it has the blessings of the governor.

Meanwhile, tongues are wagging in Bauchi over a contract to supply hospital equipment to the specialist hospital signed in August 2004, but has not been delivered to the hospital even when N75,019,791.80 was paid to the contractor between August 17 and 23 as mobilization fee.

Daily Trust investigation revealed that the contract was signed by Professor Iliyasu Mohammed, the state's commissioner for health on behalf of the state government.

In the agreement, Messrs Medicaid Ltd was to "supply/install medical equipment at the Specialist Hospital, Bauchi", but *Daily Trust* reports that the contractor has not supplied any equipment to the hospital, as a senior medical personal told our correspondent that "no equipment was supplied to the hospital since 1998."

FCT to get city orchestra

By Nasir Imam, Abuja
Property Editor

Abuja, the federal capital city, will soon have its own city orchestra to boost social activities in the FCT.

FCT Minister Mal. Nasir el-Rufai made the revelation when the former secretary, Social Development Secretariat, Ms. Bolanle Onagoruwa, led members of the award winning Capital Voices of Abuja to present the 2nd placed award they won in Warsaw, Poland where they took part in an international choir festival.

While commending the group for making the country proud, the minister assured them of continued support of the FCT administration to enable them to excel to greater heights.

Ms. Bolanle Onagoruwa had in her remarks told the minister that over twenty-four members of the Capital Voices of Abuja were made up of government

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar left Nigeria yesterday for Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, to represent President Olusegun Obasanjo at an international donor conference holding today.

According to a statement signed by Stephen Nelson, Chief Information Officer to the vice president, the conference which involves participation by the international communities and donor agen-

Donor Conference: Atiku represents Obasanjo in Burundi

cies as well as all the economic blocks in Africa is designed to seek ways to raise funds to assist Burundi achieve rapid reconstruction, rehabilitation and development. The tiny east African country recently emerged from a bloody civil war that raged for thirteen years, and in which millions of Burundians lost their lives.

It said that Burundi is a landlocked country with an area of 27,834 sq.km.

The population, it said, is six and a half million, made up of mostly Tutsi and Hutu stocks. The country is bordered to the west by the Democratic Republic of Congo; to the north by Rwanda and to the east and south by Tanzania.

The country is also one of the poorest countries in the world. According to estimates, 60% of the population live in extreme poverty. She was among the thirty African

states designated by the fourth Lome Convention as the least developed countries and therefore designated for special treatment under the convention's scheme,' it added.

It said that as one of Burundi's most reliable friends in Africa and key player in bringing peace and succour to the country after its 'devastating civil war,' Nigeria's presence at the conference was aimed at assisting Burundi to achieve stability, development and good governance.

The statement said that the vice president was accompanied on the trip by the minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Tanko Abubakar, and the Minister of State for Finance, Mrs. Esther Nenadi Usman, and some of his aides. It added that the vice president is expected back in the country today.

ALWAYS
On *OUR* minds...



Late
Senator Haruna Abubakar
Former Deputy Senate President.

It is exactly 365 Days ago that the cold hands of death snatched you away from us. You will however continue to live in our hearts and also in humanity through legacies of your Love, Kindness, Generosity, Harmony, Hard work, Thoroughness and Outspokenness.

We pray that Almighty Allah will continue to grant your gentle soul eternal rest in His Bosom.

Fondly Remembered By:
Kola Abajide and ASS Ibiabo Positive

Advertorial

ANPP CRISIS IN SOKOTO STATE: THE TRUE STORY

Behind every rumour, it is said, there is an element of truth. For quite sometime political observers had suspected a slow but steady decline and erosion of genuine loyalty amongst the members of the Sokoto State Chapter of ANPP. Through various actions and or inactions and sometimes public utterances of some party members, one would be left in no doubt that something sinister was afoot. Indeed, somewhere, somehow someone who had an interest different from that of the party was up to some kind of mischief and was undoubtedly working in concert with forces from within and outside the party to achieve self centred desire at all cost.

This assumption or insinuation on the existence of a 'mole' in the ruling ANPP was quick to gain grounds, as unfolding events began to give credence to it. Furthermore, the mystery behind the 'mole' and his co-travelers was unraveled as the days go by. However, as the law of crises management dictates and as courtesy demands, care and caution needed to be applied. An incontrovertible proof must be established, the drained members needed to be given free hearing of their grouse as dictated by the rule of law, reconciliation of differences, compromise and consensus, acceptance of guilt, apologies, re-union and charting a way forward must all be fundamental as such.

The responsible and responsive leadership of the ANPP in Sokoto State under the able, indefatigable, veteran politician and elder statesman, Engineer Tori Aliyu, convinced beyond reasonable doubt that the unity of the party was under threat, and conscious of the severe consequences the division of the party will cause and befall the good people of Sokoto State, who are by every standard the prime beneficiaries of democracy in Nigeria, swung into action as required by their positions with a resolve to put a final halt on the senseless drift that was beginning to tear the party apart.

Bearing in mind that behind every action is a deliberate intention, hidden or known, the ANPP leadership knew that the factionalization of the party, which is the single most potent danger, did not emerge in a vacuum. Neither was it a spontaneous action, rather a product of an intention.

Thus, the question now is whose intention is it to divide the party? And for what motive? For the records, the factions in question are two, namely: The Jarma Group and the Magatakarda Group. The former is the State Treasurer of the ruling ANPP, founding member, unquestionably the backbone of the party and a top confidant of His Excellency, the Governor. While the latter is the Deputy Governor of the State since 1999.

Desire and intention, if at all are not one and the same, then definitely they are closely intertwined. Perhaps, the only difference is that intention when pronounced/proclaimed is an advanced stage of desire. Also, it is easier to conceal desire than intention. With the year 2007 around the corner, therefore, it is only natural for bonafide, competent and qualified party members who have the desire of holding political offices, to begin signaling their intention for such. In politics, the emergence of party members as contenders for party tickets at various levels comes in two ways. Either by public opinion [of party members] or by self declaration [through lobbying and persuasion].

However, all the aforementioned methods of emergence of party flag bearers are subject to the conditions of [1] the election in question is the first to be contested by the party and [2] it is an election to ensure the continued hold on the Government by the ruling party but with clear 'their apparent to succeed the outgoing leader'.

Ideally, and all things being equal, the ANPP in Sokoto State, with all its intimidating credentials of monumental successes and achievements in all facets of societal development, should have a sure banker return ticket to the Government House come 2007 and the question of who succeeds the Great Garkuwan Sokoto should not have either raised eye brows or caused any sleepless nights, needless to talk of dividing the party at the eleventh hour. Politics is a game of numbers and is guided by the philosophy of 'give and take'. To some however, it is a do or die affair, that is, either me or none.

With a very good educational background, experience in the public service and tremendous goodwill, humility and affability to people, ALIYU MAGATAKARDA WAMAKKO, if not for his own undoing, would have certainly picked on the ANPP gubernatorial ticket by the year 2007 on a platter of gold as he would have merited an automatic ticket having served as Deputy Governor for two consecutive terms.

Jarman Sokoto, Dr. Ummanur Kwabo A.A. on the other hand, who in today's Sokoto politics personifies the ANPP by virtue of his political experience, invaluable contributions to the party financially, morally, physically and above all his unrivalled God's gifted ability of managing men and matters [administrative acumen] successfully no matter how difficult or hopeless a situation appears to be, would have still used his powers as the Godfather of the ANPP in Sokoto State to ensure the success of a Magatakarda ticket.

The question, therefore, is why then the factionalization and who engineered it?

GENESIS: The truth, it is said, can never be subdued, for no matter how hard you try, it will always insist on surfacing, just like a piece of calabash when pressed into water. Moreover, one can fool some people sometimes, but truly 'cannot fool all the people all the times'.

Though, the State ANPP was aware and in receipt of written, verbal as well as audio recorded testimonies and evidences in proof of the infamous and anti party roles played by Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, the Deputy Governor of Sokoto State, mindful of the rule of law which stipulates supremacy of the regular dictates of law; equality before the law and fundamental human liberties [including right to fair hearing], an eight man committee was set up and inaugurated on the 20th of December, 2005 under the chairmanship of Alhaji Abdullahi Maigwandu Al'Umma to investigate, verify and advise the Executives of the State Chapter of ANPP on what punitive measures to be taken.

The committee, at its first sitting on the 24th of December, 2005, at the ANPP State Secretariat, trimmed down to four the numerous charges labeled against the Deputy Governor. The four charges are as follows:

1. CONSPIRACY AND SABOTAGE.

- The Deputy Governor was charged for making attempts to doing rival political parties, unholy romance with, and support to opponents of the party and the Government.
- Sponsoring praise singers to condemn and ridicule the Government.
- Conspicuous absence at party meetings
- Refusing to follow the Governor's convoy when he is traveling on official assignments and his perpetual failure to receive the Governor at the airport upon his return.
- Breaching of protocol during the last State visit of His Excellency, the President on 20th to 23rd November, 2005, at both the airport reception and also failure to accompany the august visitor at all the places he visited.

2. DISRESPECT AND HUMILIATION OF LEADERS

Insulting and humiliating the person and office of the Executive Governor publicly and in the presence of party members and all the 23 Local Government Chairmen at an Executive meeting of the ANPP held on 4/08/2004 convened to address the problems of the party. In his unguarded utterance, the Deputy Governor said, "I wish to assure you that His Excellency, the Governor [Bafarawa] is an unjust leader".

3. FACTIONALIZING THE PARTY

Between the years 2003 to 2005 the Deputy Governor instigated and orchestrated the division of the party via the setting up of a self centred wing christened as "SAI SARKIN YAMMA" and the establishment of a foundation with the sole objective of preparing ill-will and disaffection as well as hatred against Governor Bafarawa. The peak of such shameful endeavour was the public protest against the Government and the ANPP leadership by his loyalists on the 4th of March, 2004. To the chagrin of all, when he was asked to rebuke the action of his supporters, the Deputy Governor retorted that "they were all matured party members and their actions were merely an expression of their discontent since they were being pushed to the wall". What an irony!

4. THREAT TO THE LIVES OF PARTY LEADERSHIP.

It was alleged that in June 2005, the Deputy Governor was said to have employed the services of spiritualists to destroy the lives of two most prominent figures in the leadership of the ANPP in the State.

All the aforementioned charges were written and served to the Deputy Governor in the spirit of respect for the dictates of rule of law and fair play and in order that he may prepare his defense as all charges are punishable under the various and relevant sections of the ANPP constitution. In other words, the Deputy Governor was invited by the committee to defend himself of all charges.

Though the Deputy Governor did not turn up on the date scheduled by the committee, that is, on the 26/12/2005, he was said to have sent an official letter headed paper referenced DGO/038/VOL.I in which he claimed late receipt of the committee invitation and also that the invitation letter sent to him was ambiguous as to the date he was required to appear before the committee.

In the same letter, the Deputy Governor pleaded for more time to prepare his defense while refuting three out of the four charges labeled against him. The committee was magnanimous enough to oblige and give him thirty [30] unconditional days to get prepared. A letter to this effect was written and sent to the Deputy Governor informing him that the date for the next sitting to be 2nd February, 2006 by 12.00 noon at the ANPP State Secretariat.

The committee, in its true desire for reconciliation, on the 31/01/2006 sent a reminder to the Deputy Governor that the grace of thirty days he requested and granted will expire on 02/02/2006, the appointed date for him to appear before the committee and clear himself of all charges hanging off him. The committee also informed the Deputy Governor, in the letter, that his absence will not deter it from sitting on the appointed date and time.

Following the refusal of the Deputy Governor to either appear or send reasons/excuses for his absence, the committee sat on the appointed date and again did not hesitate to write the Deputy Governor again that formal hearing of complaints will begin on 04/02/2006.

In all, four witnesses appeared and testified against the Deputy Governor on the various atrocities committed against the party. Ironically, two of the four witnesses were all ANPP executives of Wamakko Local Government- the Deputy Governor's immediate constituency. These are Mamman Wakili [Financial Secretary of ANPP, Wamakko LGA] and Alhaji Bako Mai Shinkafa Dundaye [Vice Chairman ANPP, Wamakko LGA].

Mamman Wakili testified that the Deputy Governor told him that since the ANPP was not going to make him the flag bearer come 2007, and moreover the party was at the verge of collapsing, he will be decamping to NDP. Wakili also confirmed that there is division of the ANPP in Wamakko Local Government along Magatakarda and Jarma lines and that belonging to the Magatakarda camp is the only guarantee to enjoy any benefit as a party member.

The second witness, Bako Mai Shinkafa, revealed to the committee that the Deputy Governor has been fanning the ambers of hatred among members against the leadership and that the Wamakko LGA ANPP executives were completely sidelined in the affairs of the Local Government because of their refusal to act the Deputy Governor's script. In addition, the Deputy Governor was said to have compelled the Local Government Chairman to allocate Hajji seat annually, which is later sold and the monies shared amongst Magatakarda's loyalists.

The third and fourth witnesses who testified before the committee, Alhaji Muhtari Abdulrahman [Chairman, Sokoto State Youth Council] and one Tijjani Bello Lange, respectively confirmed the intrusion of Magatakarda's front men in the reception of His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto upon his return from a medical check-up outside the country. Forcing their ways into the convoy of the returning Sultan, the Magatakarda front men were shouting and chanting slogans which portrayed Governor Bafarawa as an enemy of the Sultan while Magatakarda his greatest loyalist.

Another evidence tendered before the committee was an audio recorded tape in which the Deputy Governor and Abubakar Gero Tsamiya were implicated as having gone to some spiritualists requesting for the killing of Governor Bafarawa and the destruction of Jarman Sokoto.

The committee also consulted and relied upon the following reports as additional evidences to the charges and testimonies [sworn].

- Minutes of the State Executive meeting of 04/08/2004
- Police [FIR] on the breach of public peace by some ANPP youth on 04/03/2004
- Programme of events on the presidential visit of 20th to 22nd November, 2005.

Consequent upon all these uncontested evidences and facts in addition to the blatant refusal of the accused Deputy Governor to appear before the committee, despite being served sufficient notice, the committee found him to be guilty of all charges.

Thus, in accordance with the provision of the constitution of the ANPP as reviewed [2000] section 24.6, the following recommendations were given by the committee:

- On the first count charge of CONSPIRACY AND SABOTAGE, Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko was dismissed from the party.
- On the second charge of DISRESPECT AND HUMILIATION OF PARTY LEADERS, Magatakarda's actions are condemnable and unworthy of his position as a Deputy Governor.
- On the third count charge of CAUSING DIVISION IN THE PARTY, Magatakarda is banned from holding any position in the party or in the name of the party as he has proved to be unreliable.
- On the fourth charge of THREATENING THE LIVES OF PARTY LEADERS he stands condemned and should be discarded as the plague he is.

WHAT A TRAGEDY?

The evidences against Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, the embattled Deputy Governor of Sokoto State are quite overwhelming. Much as the verdict passed on him by the eight-man committee and endorsed by the State ANPP Executives cannot be faulted by any right thinking person.

What is baffling however is that how could someone of Magatakarda's Educational background and exposure descent so low as to commit such undeniable and inexplicable acts? What actually got into him?

Perhaps, in an attempt to employ the Machiavellian theory of 'the end justifies the means' Magatakarda did not read far into the book entitled: 'The Prince' where Machiavelli advised against the use of mercenaries.

While the knowledge of the fact that popular opinion in the ANPP was not on his side might have led him to do what he did, by begging the sympathy of neighbouring States leaders [who are in any case not at ease with the monumental achievements of Governor Bafarawa] and whom he found as willing to do anything that will jeopardize Garkuwa. He thought he could change the cause of events by hook or by crook.

But what Magatakarda and his co-conspirators should realize is that the consequences of swimming against the tidal waves is and will always be a disastrous one. By your own undoing, you have caused your political ship to capsize in the middle of the high sea and with no help insight. In fact, you have dug your own political grave and signed the closure, forever, of your political career.

Remember, the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in terms of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in terms of challenges and controversies.

Written by:

Muhammad Bello Abdullahi
Minanata Area, Sokoto

News

Akwa Ibom holds Economic Summit

The Akwa Ibom state government will on March 2 and 3 this year, hold its Economic and Investment Summit.

The state's Commissioner for Economic Development made this known to newsmen in Uyo, saying that the summit which is aimed at providing answers to the strategies for the development and transformation of the state, will afford Governor Obong Victor Attah an opportunity to present his report card of accomplishments since 1999.

The summit which will hold at Ibom Hall, Dr. Ukpong said, will also sensitise the participants and provide economic blue print for the forthcoming government in 2007.

The commissioner, who is

From Edet Ekanem,
Correspondent Uyo

also the state's summit coordinator, expressed optimism that after the summit, Akwa Ibom people will not only know the true ownership of the Akwa Ibom projects, but will afford the state the opportunity for mass investment and employment, adding that the summit is organised in a manner that will permit participants to "talk, see and commit resources towards the realisation of the Akwa Ibom project.

He said the summit has already enjoyed the goodwill of several organisations that have expressed commitment to partner with the government to organise the summit through sponsorship or endorsement

of some items of the summit.

These organisations according to the commissioner, include V-Mobile, Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, Business Day Newspaper, First City Monument Bank, Oceanic Bank, Omega Bank (Spring Bank) Noble House, NNDC, Champion Breweries and a host of others.

The commissioner who described the theme of the summit, "Akwa Ibom Project: The Emerging Land of Opportunities, as timely, said four practical papers that will be presented will provide inputs that will ensure the emergence of Akwa Ibom state as a regional and global economic base.

According to the commissioner, President Olusegun Obasanjo will be among these who will grace the occasion.

The Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), is to launch a signature campaign throughout Nigeria against the third term agenda and put in place strategies to frustrate the third term moves.

Presidents of CLO, Mr. Titus Mann, in a statement made available to Daily Trust in Jos, said the campaign was to "convincingly demonstrate the vehement opposition of Nigerians to this evil plot."

Though he did not give the exact date the campaign will be launched, the CLO president said it would be in the next few days.

He added that the result of the exercise would be placed before both the National

CLO launches signature campaign on 3rd term

From Rakya A. Mohammed,
Correspondent Jos

Assembly and the state Houses of Assembly.

Mr. Mann noted with joy that "although the ill-planned, hasty restructured and rigged hearings were designed to give the third term plot a semblance of popular acceptance," numerous state delegations who bothered to make presentations at the hearing, opposed the third term bid.

He emphasised that despite the massive rejection of third term agenda, it was

imperative that democratic forces quickly consolidate on the demonstrated unity of Nigerians against the third term amendment by immediately embarking on an intensive nationwide campaign against it.

The CLO president instructed all the organisation's zonal and state structures to immediately consult with other Non-Governmental Organisations, community and other civil society organisations and groups within their areas to harmonise activities and strategies to frustrate the third term agenda.

The all-new 2006 Sonata



It's All Yours



HYUNDAI

Always There For You

Special Displays at: SILVERBIRD GALLERIA

AVAILABLE IN: Executive Elegance Elite

HYUNDAI MOTORS NIGERIA LTD

NOW ON DISPLAY

AT THE
FOUNTAIN AREA
Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja

HOTLINES: 08057767474, 01-8520012, 01-8520006, 01-8520009

The HYUNDAI
ADVANTAGE
3Years Warranty

- Victoria Island**
- 276A, AJOSE ADEOGUN STREET
01-8520009, 01-8520012,
01-8520774, 01-8520775
Fax: 01-4618034
 - PLOT 1174A, ADEOLA ODEKU STREET
01-8520009, 01-8520777, 63-2701877
 - AKIN ADEOLA/189 KOFI ABAYOMI STREET
01-8520007, 01-8520012,
01-8520444, 08054799999
 - Fax: 01-4618070

- Olagbada:**
- PLOT 1 BLOCK B GBAGADA IND. EST. LAGOS
08054599999, 01-8520204, 01-8522940,
01-8522667-2, 08057767456

- Abuja:**
- 0805 4099999
0803 4099999
0803 4077777

- Port-Harcourt:**
- 0805 4299999
0803 4299999
0803 4277777

- Kano:**
- 0803 3264552,
064 640872,
0805 4399999

- Kaduna:**
- 062 247810
0803 7040138

SALES ■ FINANCE ■ SERVICE ■ SPARES ■ BODY SHOP

E-mail: hyundaisales@hyundai-nigeria.com www.hyundai-motor.com
hyundaiservice@hyundai-nigeria.com



News

Igbos seek own village in Bauchi

From Tashikalmah Hallah, Correspondent (Bauchi)

The Igbo community in Bauchi has asked the state government to allocate to its members a piece of land to be known as Igbo village.

This will ease the constant loss of lives and properties during crisis, Mr. Edwin Nwabia, president general, Igbo community in Bauchi, has said.

But Senator Abubakar Maikafi has faulted the demand, saying "it's retrogressive" and it will not augur well for the quest for national integration, even as Alhaji Adamu Muazu, the Governor has said, local government Chairmen and traditional

rulers risk being liable for any crisis in their domain.

Mr. Nwabia in an interview with *Daily Trust* Monday explained that the constant loss of lives and properties during crisis by the Igbos in the state has made them a second class citizens in their country and It has violated the tenets of the constitution which guaranteed each citizens live any where within the federation.

According to him, the recent crisis has made some of his members to relocate to other states where they think they would be safe during

crisis, adding that the allocation of separate piece of land within the state would douse tension among the Igbo community.

"Some of my people are no longer confident to stay here. Although the Governor has assured us of our safety, and that he would protect us, however, if we are to continue to stay here, government should map out a place for the Igbos. Let him just give us a piece of land; let him not build anything on it, but provide access road, water and electricity and we would developed the place and live separately from our aggressors," he added.

Justifying the demand, Mr. Nwabia explained that the

government of Kano State has allocated a piece of land to the Igbos in the state, and the level of casualties and loss of lives during crisis has been minimal, and added, "the one we demand here would not be an exception".

The president general lamented that the Igbo community were the major losers in the crisis, but thanked the governor for his assistance, saying that the governor has given them money to resettle those who lost their houses during the crisis.

However, Senator Abubakar Maikafi, a senator representing Bauchi central,

faulted the demand, saying it's "retrogressive" and does not fit into the quest for national integration.

Senator Maikafi told *Daily Trust* that "I really sympathise with them, because truly they have lost enough in this unfortunate crisis. But that does not mean we should segregate, because this is retrogressive and does not fit into national integration. We want to remain as brothers and sisters. This is irrespective of one's belief or tribe, this what Nigeria wants now".

Senator Maikafi explained that the Bauchi, State government has taken adequate me-

asures to address all security lapses and to compensate those who lost their properties during the riot, adding that "Bauchi has remained a haven for all Nigerians and it shall remain so".

Similarly, the governor has said that local government chairmen and traditional rulers risk losing their seats if they allow religious crisis to erupt in their domain.

According to the governor, the government has been losing much in payment of compensation and resettling displaced people adding that the government, should be thinking of providing more infrastructure to the people.



First Securities Discount House Limited and African Alliance Insurance Company Limited,
two companies with hands on experience in Investment Management and Pensions Administration,
have come together to form **Pensions Alliance Limited (PAL).**

Open a retirement savings account with PAL today and ensure that your dreams for retirement come to life.



Pensions Alliance Limited 
...your Pal for life

Abuja: Plot 890, Cadastral Zone, AO Central Business District (Behind Leventis Stores). Tel: 09- 6700535.

Head Office: Bull Plaza (7th Floor) 38/39 Marina, Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: 234-1-2667110, 234-1-2667710, 234-1-2667177,
234-1-2667553. Fax: 234-1-2662002
www.pensionsalliance.com E-mail: info@pensionsalliance.com

Port Harcourt: 2nd Floor, Lead Bank Building, 5 Trans-Amadi Road.
Tel: 084-463308, Fax: 084-463174.

FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTRE, GOMBE, GOMBE STATE

STAFF VACANCIES

Applications are hereby invited from qualified and interested candidates for the following positions:≤

1. CONSULTANTS

{ONE each in Histopathology, Nephrology and General Surgery}

- Minimum qualification requirements:- MBBS, in addition to professional qualification of the relevant Postgraduate Medical College or its equivalent registrable with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria.
- Salary:- HAPSS 15

2. MEDICAL OFFICERS/RESIDENTS - 06

- Candidates should possess MBBS or its equivalent, registrable with the Medical and Dental Council in addition to having completed the NYSC programme.
- Salary:- HAPSS 12

3. MEDICAL OFFICER (DENTAL) - 01

- Candidate should possess BDS or its equivalent, registrable with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigerian addition to having completed the NYSC programme.
- Salary:- HAPSS 12

4. STAFF NURSES/MIDWIVES - 20

- Candidates should possess the NRN and /or NRM or equivalent qualification and who has been duly registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council of Nigeria.
- Salary:- HATISS 6

5. RADIOGRAPHERS - 02

- Candidates for this post should possess B.sc Radiography or its equivalent registrable with the Radiographers Registration Board of Nigeria in addition to having completed the NYSC Programme
- Salary:- HATISS 8

6. MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS [In Haematology]- 02

- Candidates should possess BMLS or its equivalent registrable with the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria in addition to having completed the NYSC programme

7. PHARMACISTS - 02

- Candidates should possess B. Pharm registrable with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria in addition to having completed NYSC programme.
- Salary:- HATISS 9

8. COMPUTER PROGRAMME ANALYST - 01

- Candidate should possess B.sc/HND in Computer or its equivalent, in addition to having completed NYSC programme and 5years of experience in computer programming.
- Ability to design/develop software in visual programming environment.
- Knowledge of hardware repairs / maintenance.
- Ability to implement and maintain VSAT/VOIP Installation
- Salary:- HATISS 8

CONDITION OF SERVICE:- As obtained in other Federal Tertiary Health Institutions in Nigeria.

METHOD OF APPLICATION:- Ten. copies each of type written applications, Curriculum Vitae and relevant credentials addressed to:≤

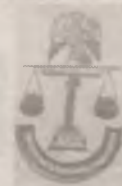
**THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR,
FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTRE,
P.M.B. 0037, GOMBE, GOMBE STATE.**

Candidates should ask three of their referees to submit their report directly to the address above.

CLOSING DATE:- *FOUR* weeks from the date of this advertisement. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

NOTE: Those that applied already need not apply again.

**SIGNED:
MANAGEMENT**



SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Central Business District
Tower 421, Constitution Avenue, Abuja

PUBLIC NOTICE

RE: MINIMUM CAPITAL ADEQUACY- SEC DISOWNS LIST

Our attention has been drawn to a publication in a weekly news magazine, entitled: "SEC Axe Dangles" published on the 20th of February, 2006.

The article stated that the Director-General, Musa Al-Faki, was "set to kick out market operators who failed to meet the stipulated capital base" required for operating in the Nigerian capital market, while also listing the names of "successful" stock broking firms.

It is important to set the record straight. Although, the management is addressing the issue of capital adequacy and has in the process released a summary of the level of compliance with the minimum paid-up capital requirement by market operators, the Commission wishes to reiterate that, at no time has it released the names of "successful stock broking firms" to the public.

The list published by the magazine is therefore not authentic, especially as a number of market operators who have not met the capital adequacy are listed.

The Commission is not unaware that some unscrupulous persons, who might want to depress the positive intention of this exercise, would want to create systemic panic among the investing public by attempting to confuse the process.

While restating our commitment to pursue the on-going financial sector reforms systematically and logically, the management of the Securities and Exchange Commission is presently reviewing documents filed by the market operators with a view to ensuring that operators are adequately capitalized, to function in the capacity for which they were registered.

The general public should therefore be assured that adequate oversight measures have been put in place to ensure investor's protection.

An authentic list of compliance shall be made public in due course.

**Signed:
Management
Announcer**

News

PHOTO NEWS



Cartoon riots: Some Muslim women take refuge near police station in Asaba...recently.



Some children of northern origin take refuge in a police station in Asaba.



Militants wearing black masks, military fatigues and carrying Kalashnikov assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers patrol the creeks of the Niger Delta. Armed militants holding nine foreign oil workers hostage in Nigeria showed one of them to reporters for the first time Friday, a 68-year-old American who said he and his colleagues were being treated well.



A man wheels cartons past a burnt worship centre at Onitsha.



A female woman and her daughter look on where they take refuge in Asaba.

News



Fire incident in mechanic workshop and spare parts section at Oriapata, Kaduna ...recently

Pic: Shehu K. Goro



Some of the participants at the Lagos Zonal Interactive sessions of the Presidential Committee on the Consolidation of Emoluments in the public sector ...recently

Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu

PDP vs Triumph newspapers: Court adjourns to 5th April

The Kano State High Court presided over by Justice Audu Aboki has fixed April 5th this year for continuation of hearing in a N300m libel suit filed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against the Kano State owned print medium, the *Triumph* newspapers.

It would be recalled that the PDP last week sued the newspaper, its managing director and others over a publication which portrayed that the PDP card carries a symbol of cross which the party described as defamatory to its growing popularity in the country.

Speaking to pressmen after

From Aliyu S. Machika
Correspondent (Kano)

the adjournment, a PDP chieftain, Alhaji Sule Lamido, stated that such a publication which portrays PDP as a Christian party is serious, unfaithful, mischief and capable of arousing religious crisis in the state, saying, "I think Kano has had enough of such crisis."

He added that the party has earlier demanded the newspaper, its managing director and others to reject the story and to apologize for what they did but they refused, "upon which we felt seriously concerned and took the case

to court praying that the court will do justice over the whole scenario."

Alhaji Lamido also said the impression given by such publication was that we the PDP members are not Muslims, adding "that such statement is very dangerous both to our personality, the party and the continued peaceful coexistence of Nigeria as a one political entity."

According to him, the mischief done by the paper is dangerous as to turn upside down the PDP's card just to tell readers that the card carried a symbol of cross on it, saying that insinuation is totally lies and misleading as it was only

done in order to maneuver the design on the card to look like a symbol of cross.

The chieftain further queried the publication, saying it is an implication for us and very dangerous, especially looking at Nigeria and all the political oppositions, emotions, and the religious intrigues. He said it was not fair and very irresponsible for somebody or even an organisation to make such a statement or publication.

He therefore prayed that the court would do everything possible to deal with the situation in order to stop further occurrence of the publication.

Govt wants broadcasting to go digital

The Minister of Information, Frank N. Nweke Jnr. has said that the federal government is committed to making sure that broadcasting system in the country embraces the digitalisation.

Speaking at a two-day seminar organised yesterday by the National Broadcasting Commission in Abuja, the minister said the digital system in the mass media is important to Nigeria if the country must succeed along the line of democracy and governance.

Speaking on the topic "Preparing for the digital future in broadcasting," the minister said virtually media industry in other countries had been transformed along this line.

He enumerated countries like America, Europe, Canada, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia etc and many others, adding that Nigeria cannot be left out.

By Shuaib Yahya.

Speaking on the significance of the transformation, the regional sale director, Harris Corporation, Mr. Victor D.H Reardon, said that the digital transmission gave room for the transmission on handset, computer, television, radio, satellite, internet.

He said other countries embarked on the system because it provided a wide-range opportunity for quick dissemination of information to different regions of the society.

Head of Technology, National Broadcasting Commission, Yomi Bolrinwa said digital broadcasting was a long, complex and expensive process because it will affect about 1000 transmitters at 200 sites which will eventually cause everybody to buy new TV sets for receiving the digital transmission programmes.

Northern leaders tasked on education

From Mohammed Abubakar, in Gombe

The former governor of the defunct North-Western State, Alhaji Usman Faruk, implored state governors of Northern Nigeria to focus on the establishment of schools of higher learning with a view to bridging the educational gap between the region and other states in the Southern part of the country.

Speaking to newsmen in Gombe on Monday, Alhaji Usman Faruk, who is also a retired commissioner of police, said it was the responsibility of the elite in the North to ensure that education is given priority as it is the only way to succeed in life.

Commending Governor Muhammad Danjuma Goje for establishing Gombe State University, the pioneer chairman of the movement for the Creation of Gombe State said establishing the university was one of the 18 points expected to be achieved after the creation of states.

He suggested that all political office-holders and other elite in the society must build an educational institution in their locality as a way of ensuring that education is made easily accessible to everybody.

"I call on states that didn't have their universities to do so immediately because this is the only way we can catch up with our counterparts in the South. The establishment of Gombe State University is a welcome development that should be commended by all," said the former governor.

He said he knew how difficult it is to operate when there is no sufficient manpower because, "when I was governor in what is now Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Niger, Kebbi and some parts of Abuja, we had only five indigenous graduates. For any governor now to establish a state university, it shows how much he loves the progress of his people."

He described as ignorant critics of the project, saying, it is never a misplaced priority for any state to have its university, as no investment on education is a waste.

SOLAR ENERGY SOLUTIONS

1. Solar Streetlights, Traffic, Security & Billboard Lights
2. Solar Boreholes, Water Pumps & Water systems
3. Solar Vaccine/Blood Storage Refrigerators for hospitals
4. Solar Domestic DC Refrigerators
5. Solar Electric Home systems/Solar Generators
6. Solar Telecommunication Power systems
7. Solar Rural Electrification systems
8. Solar Powered Swimming Pools systems

0803-308-4016

LHP ENGINEERING LTD.

News



Rivers State Deputy Governor, Sir Gabriel Toby (in cap) with his aides inspecting level of work on the N11.8 billion Ogoni-Andoni-Opobo Unity road ...recently.

25 African countries may face water scarcity

By Joe Oroye

— Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday in Abuja hinted that 25 African countries may experience water scarcity in the next 30 years.

He stated this while declaring open the international conference on "Water Security and Hydrological Extremes Towards Sustainable Development in Africa."

According to President Obasanjo, the quality of available water is declining and the management of the water resources is weak due to several factors that include weak institutional base, antiquated financial resources, lack of user involvement and inefficient regulatory frameworks.

The defects and adverse effects of all the mentioned basic factors resulted in the major water resource management gaps in Africa, he noted.

The gaps, the president said, includes limited storage, degraded watershed, inefficient utilisation and deteriorating water quality.

The continent, he stated, has responded as vigorously as possible to these challenges as the Africa Water Vision represents the region's response to its water crises, while the financial resources required for achieving the targets of the vision and the Millennium Development Goals are considerable.

The African Water Task Force created to help implement the vision, therefore recommended the establishment of the African Water

Facility (AWF) to the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) which recently set up the African Water Facility with the objective of mobilising needed resources to finance established activities in the water sector, he said.

The president revealed that the African Development Bank has therefore been entrusted to host the facility and take charge of its administration.

President Obasanjo therefore urged UNESCO to work harder on the compilation and development of a database of African experts in hydrology and water resources for UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme.

This he added, would provide access to water scientists and professionals in Africa.

Also, President Obasanjo urged UNESCO not to leave Africa out of the initiative on establishing water-related centres worldwide as part of the implementation of a global water education and capacity building agenda.

He then drew the attention of UNESCO to the urgent need to facilitate the emergence of a water institute in sub-Saharan Africa that could be up-graded into a UNESCO water centre to become the training hub for the African region. Nigeria, he stated, is ready to offer facilities for such an institute in collaboration and partnership with UNESCO, he said.

AIICO move to meet NAICOM's N5bn capital base requirement

AIICO Insurance Plc's moves to meet the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), N5 billion capital base minimum requirement for insurance firms in the composite business, opens Wednesday, March 1st.

According to the chairman of AIICO, Chief Oladele Fajemirokun, on that date, its offer for subscription of 2.2 billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each and rights issue of 1.4 ordinary shares of 50 kobo each at N2 per share will kick off.

The chairman who aired this during the company's completion board meeting said the offer which opens on Wednesday March 1, will close on April 7, 2006.

As he informed, the joint issuing Houses for the offer include Profound Securities Limited, Magnartis Finance Investment Limited and Sterling Bank Plc.

The company spelt out that proceeds from the offer was to meet NAICOM mandate as well as for business expansion, information technology upgrade and working capital.

Speaking at the event, former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Dr. Joseph Sanusi, endorsed the

From Bright Ewulu, Lagos

offer and stated that given AIICO's stay in the insurance sector that investors are bound to reap good dividends.

However, he stressed that his confidence in the offer stemmed from the confidence

he has on members of its board and management and expressed the hope that that confidence is not misplaced.

The Managing Director, Continental Re-Insurance, Chief A. O. Adejomo, in his intervention, praised AIICO for coming to the capital market before other insur-

ance firms, saying that the move is bound to be successful.

Also, he opined that with a huge capital base, insurance companies in the country will in future, make better returns as they will have needed capacity to boost profit.

No end in LG tenure in Kano

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Kano

Local government councils in Kano state continue with the present chairmen for as long as the present administration of Malam Ibrahim Shekarau dictates, a *Daily Trust* investigation has revealed.

The law that could limit the tenure of the present local government councils is yet to be enacted into law by the present administration in the state.

Competent sources in the state's local government ministry hinted *Daily Trust* that the date pushing for such a law by the present administration is not unconnected with the second term agenda of Malam Ibrahim Shekarau who has vowed at a function soon after his election that he was not going to seek for a second term.

"The present chairmen

have been instructed to prepare the grounds for his re-election. Each chairman has been assured a second term too when they finally allow a law to be passed ending the present local government tenure," the source added.

When contacted, the chairman of Kano Independent Electoral Commission (KANSIEC), Alhaji Durba would not comment on when the tenure of the present local government chairmen will end.

But Government House sources hinted correspondents that a law is in the offing to stipulate the duration of the present local government council in Kano state, but not did not say when.



Kaduna State Commissioner of Science and Technology, Mr. Mato Dary Dogara, right discussing with Hon. Mohammed Ali, Deputy Chairman, House Committee on National Planning and Economic Development, at the sensitisation workshop on Statistic Act and Statistical Master Plan, held in Kaduna ...recently. Pix: Shehu K. Goro.

NEWS

Our disasters are man-made - NEMA boss

The director-general of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Alhaji S.S. Makarfi, has described most of the disasters in the country as man-made.

Alhaji Makarfi, who was speaking to newsmen yesterday in Abuja, said the crises in Onitsha, Maiduguri and Bauchi were controllable and unnecessary.

He said everybody was a stakeholder in disaster management, pointing to the role of the states, local

From Shuaibu Yahya

governments, the police and the individual.

Makarfi said although relief materials were underway to the troubled spots, he, however, added that "prevention is better than cure."

According to him, President Olusegun Obasanjo has directed that NEMA be given an aircraft for easy access to some of the centres.

He said the agency would distribute ten trailer load of relief materials to

Bauchi, twelve to Onitsha, twelve to Asaba and twelve to Maiduguri.

Makarfi said Nigerians should be educated on the prevention and control of disaster in the country.

On the religious crisis in some parts of the country, the NEMA boss said "regardless of our differences, we should put it in mind that we are one and Nigeria is one."

He added that the task of moving the country forward was not that of government alone, but a collective responsibility.

Kaduna residents cry out over parking of petrol tankers

Residents of Malali area in Kaduna north local government area, have raised alarm over the danger of parking petrol tankers with highly inflammable products in adjoining streets in the area.

An SOS letter to the chairman of the local government area signed by Wing-Commander US Suleiman and copied to the district head drew the attention of the authorities to the dangers posed to lives and property by such unsafe act.

The letter reads in part: "May I draw your attention and that of all stakeholders resident in Badarawa about the unmitigated danger in our

From Sani Babadoko,
Regional Editor, Kaduna

midst.

"It has become irresistibly necessary to put across to you the feelings of most people about the behaviour of trailer drivers in our residential area.

"The trailer drivers have formed the habit of parking their vehicles laced with PMS (petrol and other petroleum products, that in the event of any fire outbreak from these vehicles would pose a great danger to our lives and property.

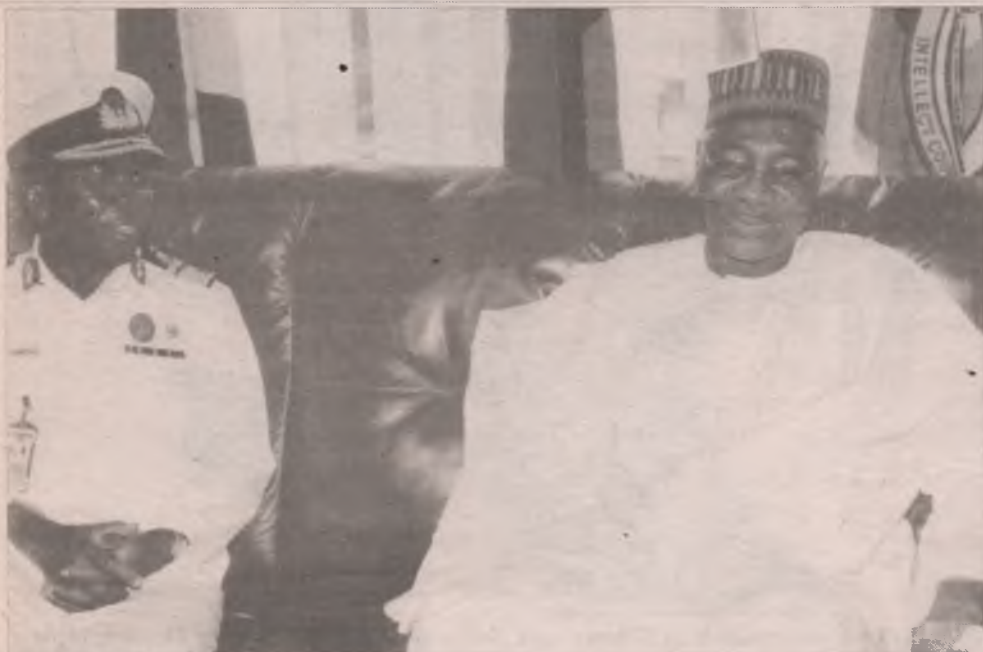
"This is a prerequisite for anarchy. The particular areas I am referring to is Wurno road, starting from the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) bus stop.

"Consequently, I am

appealing to the authorities to do all in their powers, especially to take necessary steps to avert any mayhem which may arise from this negligent attitude".

Barely thirty days ago, the state government directed tanker drivers to stop parking within the Kaduna township to avert any mishap in the event of fire outbreak.

Around the vicinity of the area at Malali are the National Population Commission, office Halal Fountain Hotel, Kaduna International School and the Badarawa Healthcare Centre and the Kaduna State Media Corporation, (radio studios).



The Nigerian Ambassador Alhaji Musa Ibrahim recently visited the National War College. Here, he is being received by the commandant of the college, Rear Admiral Anthony Isa in his office.

COMMITTEE OF FCT IMAMS

CONTACT ADDRESS: WUSE JUMA'A MOSQUE, OPP. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ZONE 3, P.O. BOX 7468, WUSE, ABUJA.
Tel: 0804-3139395, 0803-3119264, 0803-6787238 0803-3115506
E-mail: fctlmams@yahoo.com

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF FCT IMAMS AT THE CONFERENCE HALL OF THE NATIONAL MOSQUE, ABUJA 27th - 28th MUHARRAM 1427(AH) 25th - 26th FEBRUARY 2006.

The second conference of the Committee of FCT Imams (CFI) took place on 27th - 28th Muharram 1427 AH (25th - 26th February, 2006) at the Conference Hall of the National Mosque, Central Area, Abuja with over two hundred and fifty Imams and scholars in attendance.

2. Facilitated by an NGO, Islamic Peace and Development Initiative (IPDI), the workshop was also attended by Scholars and Imams from Niger, Kano, Plateau, Kaduna and Nasarawa States. Among dignitaries that attended the conference were:

- i. The Executive Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau;
- ii. The Director General of the State Security Service, Alhaji L. K. Are (Represented);
- iii. FCT Police Commissioner, Mr. Lawrence Alobi *fwc*
- iv. Justice Bashir A. Wali (rtd)
- v. Professor Sani Zahradeen;
- vi. Sheikh Ibrahim Umar Kabo
- vii. Dr. Mohammed Bashir Ibrahim
- viii. Justice Sidi Bage
- ix. Alhaji Husaini Ahmad Mahuta
- x. Alhaji Kabir Yusuf Yaradua

3. The theme of the workshop was **Education and Security for the Nigerian Ummah**. Seven well articulated papers were presented expounding this theme by respectable personalities. They include Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau, the Executive Governor of Kano State, the Director General of the State Security Service (SSS), the FCT Police Commissioner, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, Sheikh Tukur Muhammad Adam (Kaduna), Sheikh Ibrahim Umar Kabo (Kano), Sheikh Tajuddeen Muhammad Bello (Abuja), Sheikh Muhammad Khamis (Jos).

4. At the end of the Conference, participants:

- i. Welcomed the determination of the FCT Committee of Imams and exhorted Imams from all parts of Nigeria to emulate this important contribution to Islam;
- ii. Condemned anybody, organization or government associated with the "cartoons of Denmark" and reiterated an earlier call for the Nigerian Government to cut off diplomatic relations with the Danish and Norwegian governments with immediate effect;
- iii. Directed Muslims to boycott all Danish and Norwegian products;
- iv. Noted with satisfaction the contributions of the Committee in averting religious and inter-tribal crises so far within the FCT and pledged to collaborate with all authorities, organizations and persons in promoting this important ideal of Islam;
- v. Pointed out however, that the self-restraint of the Muslim Ummah must never again be insulted. In this regard, the Committee appreciated the reaction of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) as well as all well meaning persons who condemned the Danish cartoons. The Committee looks forward to any vertical and horizontal dialogue for the maintenance of the peace;
- vi. Appreciated the choice of "**Education and Security for the Nigerian Ummah**" as the theme of the Conference, noting that the provision of both education and security were the primary functions of government and the yardstick with which its performance is measured;
- vii. Condemned the manner hajj 2005 was carried out and demanded that government investigate and punishes those responsible for the calamity that befell Nigerian Muslims during the exercise;
- viii. Welcomed the proposed creation of the Hajj Commission and called on those responsible to hasten the process so as to avoid the type of disastrous fallouts of previous misadventures in the hajj exercise;
- ix. Called on government to reconsider the criteria for selecting teachers at all levels to include morality as a major index;

5. The Conference expressed appreciation to the **ISLAMIC PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE** who facilitated this momentous gathering and pleads with other bodies that have similar objectives to emulate this deed.

6. The Committee of FCT Imams (CFI) expressed appreciations to all those who attended the Conference from all parts of Nigeria. The Committee wishes to thank especially the following:

- i. His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau;
- ii. The State Security Service;
- iii. The FCT Commissioner of Police;
- iv. Retired Justice Bashir A. Wali (Chairman, Board of Trustees, IPDI)
- v. All members of the organizing Committee.

Signed:

Sheikh Tajuddeen M. Bello
Chairman

Is'haq Y. Zango
Secretary

News

Riots caused by third term agenda, says Buhari

The All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) presidential candidate, retired Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, has attributed the recent sectarian disturbances in the country to the "government's mad rush to third term whether the country likes it, or not."

In a press statement in Kaduna yesterday on the unfortunate disturbances, Buhari said.

"While it is true that places of worship have been attacked, we must not lose sight of the issues at the root of these disturbances.

"The nation is under siege by an incompetent, corrupt and insincere leadership. Its actions or inactions in the last seven years have put the majority of our citizens into abject poverty.

"The massive unemployment leaves many youths

From Sani Babadoko
Regional Editor Kaduna

with no option than crime and thuggery to vent their frustration. It is these idle hands that more often than not take over peaceful and legitimate processions.

"It should not be forgotten that they are left-over of thugs promoted by politicians.

Furthermore, many of them worked side by side with security agents in the last elections."

General Buhari, who was out of the country when the disturbances started last week, commiserated with families of those who lost their loved ones on both sides of the sectarian divides, adding that the immediate cause of the disturbances was the "heightened level of desperation on the part of the leadership, particularly in the way the constitutional

amendment is being handled."

"In their lust for power, they are prepared to put their selfish interests before the wider interests and well-

being of the country.

"If they cannot get their way, let there be no Nigeria. This is how callous and irresponsible they are," the former military head of state declared. He said the introduction of ethnic and religious coloration is aimed at diverting public attention from the real issues.

"While the people are killing each other and these crises are given a sectarian basis, the leadership is surreptitiously trying to change the constitution for their selfish reasons.

The issue at stake in Nigeria today is government's intent to perpetuate itself in spite of

the opposition of the people of this country."

Buhari appealed to Nigerians to remain calm, peaceful and law abiding. "They should exercise restraint, even as they are provoked in the way they oppose this unwanted constitutional change," he added.



President Obasanjo (left) discussing with Hon. Mao Oluwabunwa chairman House Committee on Inter-Intra party relations and the finance minister Mrs Okonjo-Iweala during their courtesy visit to the State House Abuja...recently. Pix: Joe Oroye

Cartoon: Muslims should accept apology - Ahmadiyya group

Against the backdrop of escalating violence that has occurred in some parts of the country over the offensive publication by a Danish newspaper on the person of holy Prophet Muhammad (PBOH), the spiritual leader of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hazrat Masoor Ahmad, has urged Muslims to be calm and accept the apology of the Danish government.

The spiritual leader described as inestimable the honour and esteem with which Muslims hold Prophet Muhammad (PBOH) and described the offensive publication as "a very delicate matter for his holiness to be a subject of ridicule."

The Ahmadiyya spiritual leader, in a statement signed by the body's publicity secretary, Quasim Akinreti, implored all Muslims to project the true mission of the Holy Prophet and called for calmness and tolerance which it said was in keeping with the holy prophet's exemplary spirit of forgiveness as demonstrated to his enemies and persecutors after the

By Abdulwahab Isa

conquest of Mecca.

The statement admonished Muslims to enlighten the world who are still ignorant of the beauty of the teachings of the prophet and the excellence of his conduct, that his mission is to unite all mankind in the worship of one God and in mutual love as well as respect without racial or class discrimination.

The leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslims worldwide took exception to behaviour of some Western media and Christian dominated countries that attempted to ridicule the personality of the prophet.

According to him, Islam teaches that no holy personality of any religion should be ridiculed as this will severely offend the sensitivity of the followers which could be an invitation to chaos.

He described as unfortunate, the media that were supposed to inform, educate and create understanding and harmony among different races and religions, to deliberately provoke the religious sensitivities of Muslims.

Muslims tasked on philanthropic services

Muslims have been called upon to further commit themselves to the welfare of mankind.

In an eight-point resolution of the members of the Mujahidunat Fil Islam Society of Nigeria (MUFIS), Piwoyi village branch of the FCT council at the end of its constitution awareness workshop held at Piwoyi Central Mosque, the Islamic organization pointed out that good neighborliness and commitments to community improvement have special reward before God Almighty.

To demonstrate their conviction, the members did not only enshrine this in their by-law but embarked on road repair work in the village.

Imam of the Islamic body, Ustaz Suleiman Akorede, and the special guest of honour at the occasion, Brother Abdulfatia Adediran of the NTA Abuja, encouraged Muslims to seek improvement of their organization so long as it is in line with the sunnah.

Other resolutions that the society came out with include: the need for Muslims to shun corruption,

From Abdulgafar Gbobaniyi,
Property Desk

misappropriation and arbitrary spending of the organization's funds. They reasoned that lack of transparency and accountability at such macro-level still manifests if not curtailed when such individual becomes a national leader.

The society also identifies itself with the ongoing government reforms, such as the anti-corruption crusade and the up coming national population headcount and called on Muslims to come out on masse be counted.

The society also called on Muslim parents to ensure a well integrated Islamic and

Western education programme in the course of training their children. It argued that with the sound moral teaching of Islam and decent means of livelihood that the western education can offer, premarital sex and unfaithfulness in marriage as key factors in the spread of HIV/AIDS would be considerably reduced.

Zamfara beefs up security

The Zamfara State Police Command has taken all the necessary security measures to ensure the maintenance of peace and order in the state.

It also mapped out strategies that will assist it in enhancing closer relationship between the public and the police in the discharge of its duties.

Speaking to Daily Trust in Gusau, the state capital, the command's Public Relation Officer ASP Lawal Abdullahi, explained that a number of police units, including the mobile police, had been stationed in various locations across the state. According to him,

From Salisu Zakari Maradun,
Correspondent Gusau

coupled with the present unrest in some parts of the country that claimed many lives, the command found it necessary to beef up security and other possible measures to ensure that peace is not broken in the state.

He also disclosed that the police in the state, whose responsibilities among others, is to protect lives and property of the people, and being the custodians of law and order, would leave no stone unturned toward ensuring the success of the programme.

The PPRO further stated that Zamfara State, which is

known for peace, will continue to remain so, pointing out that no place on earth is habitable if there is no peace. "Peace and stability are some of the ingredients of progress and development anywhere in the world. Therefore, the police in the state are 100% ready to ensure the maintenance of peace and order," he assured.

ASP Lawal Abdullahi commented further that anybody found in a state of tension would be liable for the wrath of the law because don't need peace that a need is peace. It is the duty of the police to maintain law and order.

SPORTS

Ojokolo insists on indoor for Melbourne warm up

Nigerian female sprinter, Endurance Ojokolo has declared that she would hit Moscow, Russia for the World Indoor Championship before heading for Melbourne for the Commonwealth Games.

In a chat with nigeriasports.com Ojokolo said the idea of joining the train to compete at the World Indoor Athletics Championship derives from her desire to ensure that Nigeria uses its slots in the series in order not to drop in its rating.

She added that the competition offers her a personal opportunity to tune up in a more competitive setting to enable her open up for the Commonwealth Games.

According to her, though the national athletics trial, Mobil Track and Field Championship, was worthwhile in getting the athletes into the mood for the Commonwealth Games, taking up the tracks in another major event would be useful ahead of the challenge of confronting the best from various other countries as would be the case in Melbourne.

The World Indoor Athletics Championship holds in Moscow, Russia, from the 10th through the 12th of March and the athlete has assured that she will immediately head for Australia thereafter.

Ojokolo will feature for Nigeria in the women 100 metres and the 4 by 100 relay.



Nigerian female sprinter, Endurance Ojokolo, left, has insisted on the World Indoor Championship as her own warm up for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

NBBF shifts Premier League commencement date

The commencement date of the 2005/2006 Nigeria Premier League, tagged 'The Vmobile League' suffers a little setback as the Nigeria Basketball Federation, NBBF rose from a crucial board meeting last Thursday in Abuja to move the

opening game forward by one week citing uneasy calm in some part of the country.

The media launch earlier billed to hold in Lagos on February 27 was also postponed to March 9 while the opening game of the much-awaited Vmobile Premier League will now hold on March 11.

According to the Chairman of the Media/Publicity sub-committee of the Nigeria basketball ruling body, Tijjani Umar that the postponement became necessary since players, officials and other stakeholders are expected to gather in a secured atmo-

sphere, which the present situation in some part of the country could not afford.

Umar also averred that the much talked about league committee have been dropped for a league advisory committee to be headed by the league director, Muktar Khaleh otherwise known as 'Malone', the advisory committee according to Umar will consist of eight members, one each from the Atlantic and Savannah conference of the league, another member representing the NBBF aside the league director, a representative

of the sponsor, a representative of the marketer and two conference coordinators.

The board also approved the sharing formula of 40% to clubs, 20% to the marketer, 20% for the administration of the league and the remaining 20% to the NBBF, which he described as the best the federation could offer the clubs at the moment, but pointed out that the federation will continue to do its best to carry the clubs along in all its activities as it concern the league in the country.

The sharing formula had once pitched the federation

against club-owners mostly from the Atlantic conference with most of them threatening to withdraw from the premier league if the NBBF failed to improve on how much goes to the clubs.

Umar while bearing his mind on the position of the NBBF says the federation will not allow any individual or group of persons to hold the federation to ransom but said the NBBF will do as much as it can to provide a level playing ground for all stakeholders to air their views which will be taken into consideration by the basketball highest ruling body in Nigeria.

...Ministry dangles olive branch

In a bid to smoothened the already strained relationship between the Nigeria Basketball Federation, NBBF and the Nigeria Ministry of Sports and Social Development which reaches its peak last December, the former dispatched its respected Director of Sports Development, Dr. Amos Adamu to attend the board meeting of the federation which took place last Thursday in Abuja with a promise to compensate the Gyang Buba-led board.

It will be recalled that the Sports Ministry under the leadership of Dr. Saidu Sambawa had starved the NBBF of fund before and during the hosting of the 19th Fiba Africa Championship for Women that Nigeria hosted and won last December despite getting approval months before

the coming of Sambawa to the sports ministry.

The NBBF had rose to the challenge the occasion offered then to take it hosting right to the corporate world where the federation president and his members were able to source for fund for the successful organization of the championship to the amazement of the sports minister.

The director of sports in the ministry nigeriasports.com gathered had dangled an Olive branch before members of the Nigeria basketball ruling body that the ministry was proud of their achievement last December and will do everything within its power to compensate the federation for doing the nation proud.

Dr. Adamu also promised the board that they will be fully

involved in ensuring that Nigeria did not only participate in the basketball event of the 25th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia but come back with medals in the men and women categories.

The Nigeria men team is in group-A alongside host Australia, India and Scotland to battle for one of the two semi-final tickets, which will guaranty them a place in the medal zone while the women team is in group-B and has New Zealand, Malaysia and Malta to contend with for a semi-final ticket.

The coach Sani Ahmed tutored men team will open its Melbourne campaign against India on March 17, the team which will parade much of home-based players with Customs basketball club off-guard Abdulrahman

Mohammed and Ebum Comets basketball club off-guard, Baba Kadri Jibril as some of its star-payers will confront host Australia on March 19 and play its last group-A game against Scotland.

Their women counterpart which will parade the nucleus of the team that did the nation proud in Abuja last December will open their campaign against Malaysia on March 17, attempt to brighten its chances when the Mfon Udoka led ladies take on Malta on March 19 and play their biggest group game against Oceania giant New Zealand on March 20. Scot Nnaji a Deputy Superintendent of Customs heads the coaching crew of the women team with assistance from the duo of Adewumi Aderemi and Shola Ogunade.



Nigeria's basketballer Hussaini Gumel, above, will wait until next week for the beginning of the new season.

Sports

The two amigos

As the knockout stages of the Champions League burst into action in spectacular style last week with fantastic nights of football in Madrid and London, two teenagers who grew up together in Spain caught the eye. Amy Lawrence charts the rise and rise of Fabregas and Messi...

In the business of grooming modern footballers, it must be an advantage to position an academy several distractions away from the heart of a chic, sun-kissed city. Barcelona's youth department lies off the beaten track, tucked away in the rural outskirts. Their base is called La Masia, which means 'the farmhouse'. It is clearly a fertile spot for breeding.

Two boys who grew up together at La Masia commanded the Champions League stage on two sensational nights last week. They are aged 18 and they were brave enough to move to a new country to further their football careers before the hint of a teenage growth spurt. They have grasped their chance with eye-catching wit, character and maturity. And a few days ago they left a football stadium far more prominent players than when they arrived.

Although Francesc Fabregas waltzed out of the Bernabeu with praise ringing in his ears and Lionel Messi escaped Stamford Bridge with a minder watching his back, the consequences were the same: welcome to the seriously big time.

Cesc and Leo, whose friendship dates back to PlayStation sessions at the farmhouse, reached that moment when a budding career leaps into the deep end. They have gone beyond the compulsion to measure them by their youthfulness. They are that good already. That they proved it at the two richest clubs in Europe is particularly satisfying. These are players who cost their employers little more than the bills for scouting and development and the time they put into the pastoral care that has enabled them to blossom.

It was comical to see Real Madrid take one close look at Fabregas before hurrying to fuel a bandwagon with speculation that he is a transfer target for president Florentino Perez. The next night it was fun imagining how Roman Abramovich might have assessed Messi's worth. But prising either prodigy from his club would be a tall order. Fabregas is contracted to Arsenal until 2011 and acts as if he cannot believe his luck. Messi's present deal takes him up to 2014 and contains a buyout clause as staggeringly prohibitive as Ronaldinho's - more than £100m. The vultures may as well swoop off.

This is the fifth arrangement struck between Barcelona and Messi, so conscious are they of protecting their jewel. Five years ago, so the story goes, it was in the restaurant of a tennis club that Barcelona secured the signature of a tiny yet hugely beguiling Argentine boy on the back of a napkin. Charly Rexach, Barca's sporting director at the time, had sensed that the youngster's representative was having second thoughts. After all, Messi was only 13, and to uproot and cross the Atlantic was a life-changing decision. Rexach asked a waiter for something on which to scribble out a makeshift contract. As he recalls: 'I wrote something like, "As sporting director of the club, I guarantee that the club will assume all responsibility for the Messi family if they come to live in Barcelona and the kid joins the club..."'

If Barcelona had shown half as much determination with one of his peers, they would have two of the most talented teenagers in world football. Fabregas is the one that got away.

Cesc and Leo complemented each other well. 'We won everything together in our age group and we used to love

playing one-tuos on the pitch. We had a great understanding,' recalls Fabregas. But local lads are sometimes overlooked compared to imports and while Barca attended to Messi, they took their time in offering Fabregas professional terms. Arsenal - who had admired the Catalan midfielder for some time - were ready with a big

offer for Madrid, while Fabregas was doing it for Arsenal,' commented AS.

'While the galacticos made complete fools of themselves, the whole of European football is in awe of Cesc,' wrote Sport, a Catalan paper that enjoyed sticking an extra needle in their rival's backside.

Local pride in Fabregas's

for Wednesday's friendly against Ivory Coast is reward for his excellence at the Bernabeu. Playing at Real was an essential rite of passage for this determined and intelligent young man. 'I really wanted to show people that I could play here,' he said. 'I hope I'll be able to go to the World Cup. And the Champions League final.'

digs in London. A self-sufficient young man, he is ready for independence and is soon to move into his first home.

Protecting Messi has always been an issue. His Barcelona team-mates complained that he left Stamford Bridge covered in bruises. When he was at La Masia, his fellow players - including Manchester United's

'His behaviour was always 10 out of 10 in these hard times,' said the coach of Barcelona's Junior B team, Tito Vilanova.

At first, speaking only Argentine slang - and not much of that - Messi struggled to mix. He would sit silently in the dressing room, change and leave. 'He made a big impression on me, but he was very shy and that complicated his integration,' said Fabregas. 'We thought he was dumb. Until, being kids and thanks to PlayStation, we discovered he could talk.'

Fast-forward a few years and Messi is welcomed to the table of the Nou Camp's Brazilian clan, who banter that he is the only Argentine they will put up with. Ronaldinho calls him 'my little brother'. Sylvinho looks after him like a second father and Deco takes him out shopping or to the hairdresser (perhaps as an elaborate joke, to judge from the boy's unruly mop). Messi has become an integral part of the Barca first-team unit and looks entirely at home, completing an attacking trident with two of the best players in the world in Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o.

Messi was the talk of Argentina before he was a fixture for Barcelona. Since he was voted best player and finished top scorer at the under-20 World Cup in 2005 (feats that Fabregas achieved at the under-17 version in 2003), his homeland has been in thrall. 'Messi has awakened in us the same dreams that Maradona gave us when he started,' enthused Argentina FA president Julio Grondana.

After Messi's heroics for the under-20s, when he scored twice in the final, a poll concluded that almost 90 per cent of Argentines wanted him in the senior team as quickly as possible. His dynamic bursts and creativity bring something new to the party. Once back in Barcelona, somebody handed him a phone.

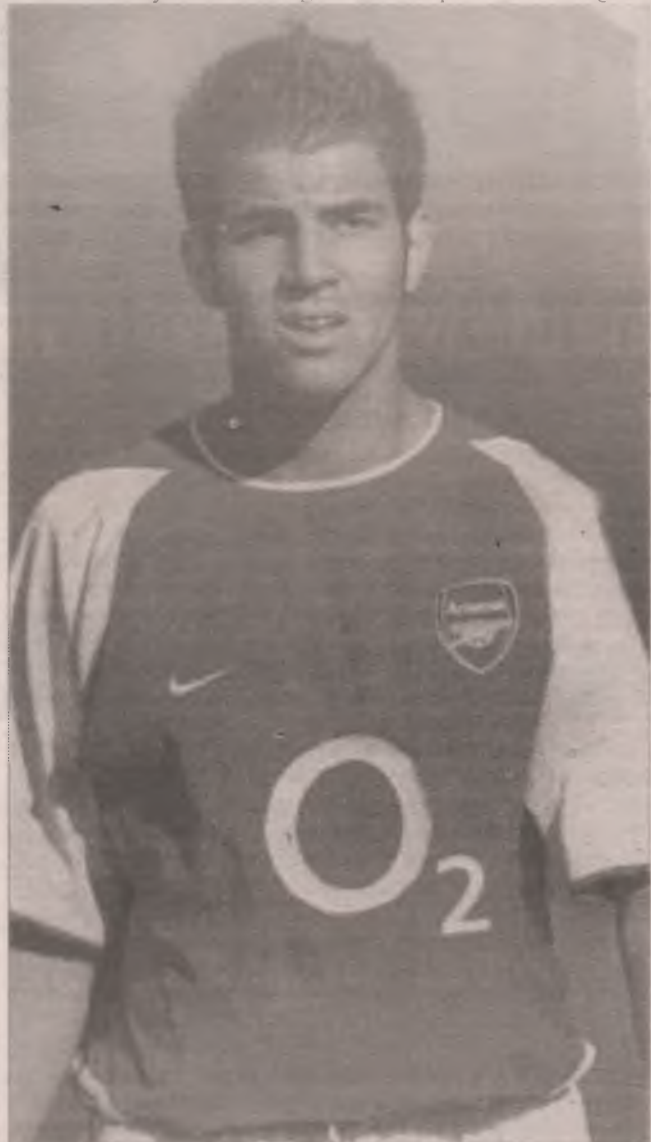
'They said that it was Diego Maradona on the other end,' Messi said. 'I thought they were joking with me, but I still took the phone and then someone at the other end said, "Hello, Leo, this is little Diego." I couldn't speak. I didn't know what to say. I was in shock. Him calling me? As I held the mobile I looked in the mirror on the wall and I could see that my eyes were full of tears, so it was hard to speak even when I regained my composure a little bit. What a fantastic moment.'

Maradona invited him on to his television show, La Noche del Diez, and gave him a Davina-esque introduction. 'Everybody who loves Argentine football should be proud of him. He will inherit my place in Argentine football and his name is MESSI!' He and another young gun, Carlos Tevez, then played head tennis against Maradona and fellow golden oldie Enzo Francescoli. And won.

Life has been moving fast enough for Messi that a few cross words from Jose Mourinho will not disturb him. 'I want to stay at Barcelona for the next 10 years and become an idol of the fans,' he said. 'This is the greatest club in Europe. It's time we won a lot more trophies.'

So, what is the defining image of Messi's performance at Stamford Bridge? Is it the barge he shouldered from a reckless Asier Del Horno? Is it the rolling around, for which he was vilified by eyes that risibly saw no wrong in Del Horno's own audition for the theatre? Or is it the electric footwork, the mesmerising technique to tame the ball at pace and that gorgeous chip that clipped Petr Cech's crossbar?

There's only one answer, surely.



Fabregas

commitment. Their belief in his talent and the feeling that he would be promoted more quickly at Highbury, swung it.

Coming from a family of Nou Camp season-ticket holders, Fabregas did not find it easy to bid farewell to his friends at La Masia. But his bold choice was vindicated at the Bernabeu last week. In the grandest occasion of his career so far, the youngest player on the pitch conducted the game with the perception of an old master.

As he trotted off when he was substituted in the dying seconds, a spontaneous ovation cascaded around the Bernabeu's four sides. What an accolade. In his first match as a professional footballer in his homeland he had earned the instant respect of his compatriots. The next day's newspapers were effusive.

'Credit to the scouts who spirited Cesc away to English football. It ended up being humiliating to watch Gravesen struggling to control the midfield

development is one thing, but it is a sore point for Barcelona that he left to make the grade. The story exposes how difficult it is to balance developing youngsters with signing experienced players. Fabregas has already played almost 100 games for Arsenal and it is doubtful that he would have spent much time in a Barcelona first team with Xavi, Deco, Mark van Bommel, Andres Iniesta, Thiago Motta and Gabri ahead of him in the midfield pecking order. He appreciates the equality he enjoyed at Highbury from day one, saying: 'I never trained with the first team at Barcelona, but I've spoken to Messi. He says if you do something wrong, everyone says, "He's young, it's OK." It's not like that here. Here you're treated like all the other players.'

His accelerated experience at Arsenal makes Fabregas a contender for a place in Spain's World Cup squad. His selection



Messi

Much of this season has been demoralising for him. Although he is exonerated from much of the criticism aimed at Arsenal - he has been one of their most consistent performers - he has had to take a string of defeats on the chin. It was impressive, therefore, to see how he kept his composure after the Bernabeu scalp. 'The tie is not over by any means,' he said. 'Real lost 6-1 against Zaragoza in the Spanish Cup and were able to score four in the second leg. There is a big battle ahead at Highbury.'

Asked if Arsenal's 1-0 advantage was as much of a breeze as it looked, Fabregas chuckled. 'Do you think it was easy?' he said. 'I tell you it wasn't while I was running out there. We worked like never before. We are a really young side, but after this performance we are so proud of ourselves.'

Afterwards, Fabregas had time for a short reunion with his family before flying back to his

Gerard Pique, as well as Fabregas - used to pick up yellow cards for defending him from the treatment dished out by opponents.

When Messi arrived in Spain he was 4ft 6in, and the fact that his feet did not reach the ground when he sat on the bench has become the stuff of legend, earning him the nickname 'The Flea'. His size was the result of a hormone deficiency that was extremely expensive to treat in Argentina during the economic crisis. His boyhood club, Newell's Old Boys, would not pay for the daily injections, but Barcelona would.

The move from Argentina had positive and negative effects on Messi's footballing progress. The back-up, in terms of medical support and coaching facilities, was a plus. But on the downside, he was prevented from playing in tournaments reserved for Spanish boys and endured long periods when he was eligible only for friendlies.

Sports

Togo players in bid to keep Keshi

A delegation of Togo-ese internationals is flying to the capital Lome from Europe in a bid to restore former national coach Stephen Keshi to his post.

The Togolese Football Federation (TFF) dismissed the Nigerian manager in mid-February and replaced him with Germany's Otto Pfister.

Yet many within the Hawks squad are not happy with the change and its timing in particular, with the World Cup just 14 weeks away.

The Europe-based trio of defenders Dare Nibombe, Massamesso Tchangai and goalkeeper Kossi Agassa will arrive in the Togolese capital on Sunday night and hope to speak to TFF officials on Monday.

"Most of us haven't accepted the new coach and would like Keshi to be in charge," Togo international Eric Akoto told BBC Sport.

"When we heard about Pfister's appointment, we all started calling each other to decide what to do. We wanted about ten players to travel but some of us didn't have time to go.

"It's not the right time to change coach as he has so little time to see and know the players. What can a new coach do in three months?"

"If they are going to make a

change, they should do it after the World Cup."

The Hawks achieved a maiden World Cup qualification last October, but the players' joy has now been replaced by concern.

Several blame Togo's poor showing at the 2006 Nations Cup on a lack of adequate preparation given to the team by the TFF before the competition in Egypt.

Inadequate planning has also left the Togolese without a fixture this week in what is the last of Fifa's international dates for friendlies before the end of the European season.

"It is unbelievable that we are not playing," Akoto explained.

"The federation has to listen. It made a big mistake in Egypt, when we didn't have good enough training before the tournament, and it's now going to make another one for the World Cup.

"It's very shameful for all the players. All our clubs are asking us why everybody is playing a friendly this week apart from Togo?"

"Morale is not very good right now, and is at about 30-40% for the players."

With many of Europe's leading leagues ending on the weekend of 13-14 May, Pfister will have less than two weeks

to work with the Togolese players before naming his World Cup squad on the deadline of 26 May.

As yet, the TFF has not named any friendly internationals in the run-up to the World Cup, which kicks off on 9 June.

"If we can't play friendlies,

the World Cup is going to be difficult for us because most Togo players are not playing regularly at their clubs," added Akoto.

"Pfister doesn't know the players but Keshi does and he has done well for Togo.

"He won the best coach in

Africa because he took us to the World Cup and we need to know why he was sacked."

Earlier this month, the TFF announced it had dismissed Keshi because of differences between the Nigerian and key players in the team.

The manager fell out with star striker Emmanuel Adebayor during the tournament although the pair have since reconciled.

Togo will play South Korea, Switzerland and 1998 champions France in Group G at the World Cup, which runs between 9 June and 9 July.



Togo international Eric Akoto, left, and Massamesso Tchangai want Stephen Keshi reinstated as chief coach of the Togolese national team.

Racists taunt: Spanish minister backs Eto'o

Spain's sports minister has said the government will back sterner measures against racist chanting at football grounds.

"We have to end these shameful acts," Jaime Lissave-

tzky was quoted as saying in the Spanish media on Monday.

The minister's statement follows the monkey chants directed at Barcelona's Cameroonian striker Samuel Eto'o by a section of Real Zaragoza

supporters on Saturday.

Eto'o came close to walking off the pitch before he was restrained by his team-mates.

"We have to be as clear and tough as possible. I understand completely why Eto'o did what he did in the game against Zaragoza."

Meanwhile, a leading Spanish anti-racist organisation has called on professional footballers to delay the start of next weekend's league matches, as part of a plea for tougher action against racism in Spanish football.

"We have asked the Spanish Association of Professional Footballers (AFE) to delay the kick-offs of next weekend's league matches by five minutes.

"This would be a gesture of solidarity towards their colleague Eto'o and as a way of demanding

more effective action to eliminate racism from Spanish Football," the Spanish Coalition Against Racism (Cecra) said in a statement.

Cecra, an umbrella group that was asked to speak at Uefa's recent anti-racist conference in Barcelona, insisted that football authorities and the Spanish government had to take tougher action if they were to deal with the problem.

"It is no longer enough to parade banners and show films ahead of matches in our

stadiums.

"These abuses constitute a serious risk to professionals who are being humiliated on the pitch.

"This serious problem, which is not just confined to radical fans, is now beyond the control of the clubs."

Erring clubs have been sanctioned with fines of over US\$700 by the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), which has been criticised as failing to reflect the seriousness of the offence.

But the government-run

Anti-Violence Commission has recommended fines of up to \$7,000 for individuals identified as being involved in such incidents.

Angel Maria Villar, the RFEF president, closed a Uefa anti-racist conference in Barcelona this month by saying that the problem should not be given too much attention.

"We shouldn't make a mountain out of a molehill," he said in his speech.

"Things that take place on the pitch should be left there."



Samuel Eto'o has been abused at a number of Spanish grounds.

Zoro slams racist fans

Ivorian Marc Zoro has expressed his disgust over the racial abuse suffered by Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o during Saturday's Spanish first division

match at Real Zaragoza.

"It's incredible what happened at Zaragoza," said defender Zoro, who suffered similar abuse while playing for Messina against Inter Milan in an Italian league match in November.

Like Eto'o, Zoro also tried to get the game abandoned.

"Some people haven't got the message that we are all the same. My friend Eto'o has my total support."

Eto'o, who was in action for Barcelona, tried to leave the field 14 minutes before the end of Saturday's match, due to the continual monkey noises that

greeted his every touch of the ball.

The reigning African Footballer of the Year was persuaded to play on by his team-mates, helping them to a 2-0 victory.

Zoro said he would be calling Eto'o to comfort him, just as Eto'o telephoned him after the incident in Italy.

Eto'o has also been abused at a number of other Spanish first division grounds and the problem is far from isolated.

"[The treatment of Samuel] was a shame. Samuel is a human being and he felt bad on the pitch," said Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard.

NFL board meets today

The board of the Nigeria Football League, NFL or Nigeria Professional Football League, NPFL as it had been renamed, will be meeting in Abuja to discuss urgent issues affecting the running of professional league football in the country.

One of the top matters on the agenda of the NFL's meeting is a proposal for the extension of the board's tenure till after the forthcoming league season.

The crisis in the Nigeria

Football Association, NFA, has stalled elections into the new board of the NFL and with the NFA crisis yet to be resolved, the Chief Oyuki Obaseki-led board of the NFL want to continue in office.

The proposal for an extension of the board's tenure and other proposals, like the division of the Premier League to two sections, will be presented to the NFL Congress which will sit in Abuja on Wednesday for ratification.

Sports

Eguavoen is snobbish, says Babangida

Olympiakos of Greece's petit striker, Haruna Babangida has described Super Eagles' coach, in Eguavoen as 'snobbish for ignoring him when he stormed Nigeria's pre-tournament Nations Cup camp at Faro, Portugal ready to prove himself.

Babangida was not among the crowd that Eguavoen took to Portugal preparation for the Nations Cup in Portugal, but the former Flying Player was there for the love of his country and received a shocking cold shoulder from the coach.

"It is a big shame really. I am not a cheap player who is playing in Europe like a day or something. I know the fact that the coach's decision to pick players rests on him, but he did not even show the courtesy to tell me I was dropped.

"What surprises me more is that he is in the national team of Nigeria. It is just that I have more respect than he has. It happened in the camp. Although, when I got there he came to my way to Nigeria briefly for something. But when he came, we did not interact, shake hands or even talk to each other. He simply ignored

me as if he was annoyed with me or something. I never knew him before then; so I don't know why he appeared in the camp with me. We didn't get to know that I was picked from somebody else. It was most demeaning, especially because I have never had a thing like that in my life.

"Despite the 'disgrace', Babangida said he still has the love of his country at heart and will be willing to play for her anytime he is called to do so. "Nigeria is my country. The fact that the coach didn't respect me does not mean I should turn my back on my country. Of course, I will play for her."

Babangida turned down the opportunity to play for Spain some time ago and not even

the shabby treatment by a Nigerian official could make him regret that missed

chance. He remained resolute in his eagerness to play for her fatherland.

"No, I don't regret it. It was a well thought out decision and I remain committed to it. I

know I will play for Nigeria because it is my country," he added.



Inter Milan's Nigerian striker Obafemi Martins challenges compatriot Christian Obodo of Udinese during their Italian league match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, Italy on Sunday

Supporters club to sue travel agent

Members of the Nigeria Football Supporters Club said at the weekend that they would be going to court over the treatment meted to them by Safety Travels Aviation Services and Bellview Airline concerning their trip to the African Nations Cup finals in Egypt.

President-General of the body, Dr Rafiu Oladipo said that the travel agency owned by Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi, one of those aspiring to be the next governor of Lagos State, really shortchanged them and there would be no room for dialogue. "They were unfair to us and were economical with the truth. I have never dealt with such an insincere group of people".

The supporters began returning to Nigeria in batches on Saturday morning, after President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered they be airlifted from the north African country more than two weeks after the end of the Nations Cup finals. They had traveled there to support the Nigeria team, which finished third at the championship.

The supporters departed Lagos on Monday, January 23 aboard a chartered Bellview Airline aircraft but the airline refused to send an aircraft to pick them for the return journey, claiming that the supporters had paid only for the forward trip.

"How could we have paid for the forward trip alone? The airline and the agency are being dishonest, and we will meet in court. They caused us a lot of embarrassment and mental fatigue, having to stay there for two weeks after the competition. I say we will meet in court", insisted Oladipo.

"We paid \$80,000 to them before the journey and another balance of \$50,000 later, and we understood that was for the return journey. Why would we pay so much for just one way, if we had been properly briefed? Someone is playing games".

The supporters arrived Port Said, Egypt's fourth largest city, just after kick-off of the Super Eagles' first match against Ghana, which Nigeria won 1-0. Only 35 people arrived in Lagos on Saturday, with the remaining 135 persons were expected to arrive Nigeria on Sunday, February 26, 2006.

Commonwealth Games: Ministry tough on Melbourne-bound Nigerians

Following the national embarrassment emanating from the Nigerian Supporters Club members' inability to come back home as scheduled soon after the last Nations Cup soccer tournament in Egypt, the Sports Ministry has decided to come hard on all Nigerians intending to travel to Australia for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

The Ministry will now request that, anyone intending to travel to far-away Australia for the Games, should as a matter of condition, procure and present documents showing that, all bills including lodging and boarding reservations and their return tickets.

"This is to make sure that, no Nigerian or Nigerians are left stranded in that country after the Games," top ministry official said.

As a result of this, most intending travellers through the Ministry, are now finding things "very difficult".

It would be recalled that, no fewer than 170 Nigerian members of the Supporters Club, who flew to Egypt to beef-up support

for the bronze-winning Super Eagles, are still at press time, stranded in the north African country.

...Nigeria depart March 8

The Nigerian contingent to the 18th edition of the Commonwealth Games taking place in Melbourne, Australia are to depart the country on March 8th, seven days before the Games commence.

The Nigerian contingent, which will participate in Basketball, Athletics, Special

Sports, Shooting and Boxing are presently at various camps in the country.

It was gathered from the Nigeria Olympic Committee, NOC, that the decision to leave early is to enable the athletes acclimatize before the Games commence.

"We are currently processing visas for the athletes and

very soon that will be concluded and the team will be in Australia." NOC officials disclosed.

"We want our athletes to be in Australia at least one week before the Games to ensure they get used to the weather," one of the officials added.

The NOC official also revealed that the morale of the

various athletes have been boosted and they are all poised to do well in Melbourne.

"The reports we are getting from various camps show that the athletes' morale is high and they are all set to perform well and win medals for Nigeria in Melbourne," the official concluded.

Daily Trust Hotlines

- Are you a victim of armed robbery attack?
- Have you been involved in an accident or been a witness to it happening to others?
- Do you have a touching personal experience you want to share?
- Call us on these numbers let the world read your story.

NEWS ROOM: 08039686854 and 08056418945
 ADVERT: 08033202211 and 08033209894
 KANO: 08037862687, MAIDUGARI: 08023622820
 SOKOTO: 08037030939

DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

EDITORIAL

Nigeria: The way forward

By Ben Igiebor

The crisis in the Niger Delta

In quick succession, armed militants of the Niger Delta have overawed the security and intelligence apparatus of the Nigerian state. First, four expatriate oil workers were kidnapped, held hostage for two weeks and then released. Just as Nigerians were beginning to hope that the first and the last had been heard of hostage-taking in Nigeria, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which claimed responsibility for the initial act, struck again: this time, nine expatriate oil workers were kidnapped and are still being held hostage.

The effects of this new and very grave dimension to the Niger Delta problems are being felt within and outside Nigeria. The price of crude oil in the already volatile international oil market went up by a dollar. Within the country, electricity supply, epileptic even at the best of times, has dipped. Shell BP has declared *force majeure* and has also sealed down its operation in the Niger Delta: just as 100 expatriate oil workers have left Nigeria.

As we continue to seek enduring solutions to the crises in the Niger Delta, it is the view of *Daily Trust* that the exercise will be enriched if more than passing attention is paid to some of the issues itemised below.

The first issue will be clarified by an answer to this question: Do local government authorities exist and function in the states that make up the Niger Delta? Are the monthly federal allocations meant for the local governments made available to the relevant elected officers? If the answers to these questions are in the affirmative, then we are entitled to conclude that the elected representatives of the Niger Delta people at the local government level need to do more than they're doing now for the improvement of their people.

The second is to draw attention to the performance of the governors of the Niger Delta states. In view of the vastly-increased revenue that has been accruing to the oil-producing states since 2001, can it be said that there is a state in the Niger Delta that has done outstandingly well for its people? In terms of judicious use of resources, in terms of manpower development, in terms of provision of relevant life-enhancing amenities, are the governors by their evident preference for the frivolous not implicated in the well-advertised travails of the people of the Niger Delta?

The third point is on the process of selecting the officers who head the various intervention agencies so far created by the federal government. We note that from OMPADEC to NDDC, successive governments instead of appointing as heads of these agencies credible and committed people, impose their agents, cronies, failed contenders for elective offices and such others who loiter in the corridors of power. It's no surprise that meaningful work is not done while the monies meant for such works are misappropriated.

The insensitivity of the staff of the multi-national oil companies to the feelings of their host communities is another point. Imagine situations where in a vast ocean of depressing poverty, blinding darkness and total absence of the amenities of modern existence, an island of sophisticated modernity exists in the shape of the enclosed homes of the expatriates and senior Nigerian staff of the multi-national oil companies. It is our view that such enclaves, which are reminiscent of apartheid South Africa, can never foster healthy relationship and should be dismantled as soon as possible.

The fifth point is to question the rationale for the continuing location in Lagos of the administrative headquarters of virtually all the companies drilling for oil in the Niger Delta. The implication of this arrangement is as clear as it is unfair: While the people of the Niger Delta are denied direct and immediate benefits of oil exploration and its related activities, they are forced to live with oil explorations' numerous negative aftermaths.

The last point is on the need for an immediate and far-reaching reorganisation of the Nigerian security system. The Nigerian security establishment should be held responsible for the ease with which arms proliferate both the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria. The claim has been made that a lot of those arms were procured to facilitate the return to power in 2003 of some governors in the South-South and South-East. Whatever the sources of the arms may be, the point is that the worries of the Niger Delta people could still be highlighted and redressed without recourse to arms. But recourse to arms is now an option, because those who are paid to sniff out arms merchants, secure our borders and protect our lives have been failing in their duties.

It is sad that Nigeria's perennial problem, the North/South dichotomy, is again rearing its ugly head and threatening to tear the nation apart. Whether Nigerians like it or not, this is a never-ending problem which no amount of goodwill can eradicate. It is an unfortunate legacy of our colonial past, which if not properly handled, can result in civil disorder and/or break-up of the country. We have the option of letting this situation continue or not; it would be in everybody's interest if it does not continue, but how do we go about it?

themselves in two states, etc; but luckily, all these can be surmounted. I cite as an example to support the above proposal the division of state the U.S. where the boundaries are mainly straight lines running north/south or east/west across pockets or groupings of Irish, French, Dutch, English, African, Asian and Arab settlers living and working in harmony for advancement of their states. The net result is one prosperous nation of states, made up of units of people from the above nations. The lesson h-



is that if separate states had, as it were, be created along ethnic lines for the settlers, the U.S. would not have benefited as it has for the fusion of the best of these people. Nigeria should copy this. Under a new arrangement, Lagos will join Abuja as a Federal Capital Territory, considering the investments over the decades by all groups of Nigerians in the city; in essence, there will be FCTs in both halves of the country. The eight states can be named Western, West Central, Mid Western, Middle Belt, Mid-Eastern, East Central, Eastern and North-Eastern. Such re-division will, among other things, put an end to:

- a) the North/South 'palava' as the Kaman in the North will find himself in the same state as the Ijaw man
- b) the agitations of certain indigent people for political freedom
- c) the current application of terms for poorly thought-out groupings such as South-South, South/South, South/West, South/East, etc, which to me, is one big joke as it does not address well the issue of a logical way to choose leaders
- d) the growing demand for resource control by some states; resource should be shared equally among the eight or 10 states to ensure that there is even development all over the country in future. It would not be sensible to have in the same country stinking rich states lying side-by-side with depressingly-poor ones. That is not to say that the areas that suffer environmental degradation from oil exploration should not get special assistance.

In our long history since independence in 1960, we have been faced with the debacle of choosing a leader at every turn (following an election or military take-over) that is acceptable to the majority Hausa, Yoruba or Ibo tribes. Nothing could be more wrong than that a citizen of a country, by virtue of what part of the country he/she comes from, can never aspire to the Presidency even though such a person possesses the leadership skills and qualities to make the nation move forward. It is equally wrong that another citizen of the same country, by virtue of which tribe he belongs to, and though without leadership skills and qualities, can decide to run for the position and achieve. There is something inherently wrong with such a system as currently operates in Nigeria; and if the country is to move forward at all, then this anomaly and others outlined below need to be corrected. That is, if the majority of Nigerians agree that the greatest good of the greatest number of Nigerians lies in the country staying together as one entity. If this is the case, then for the sake of the unity of the country, let us remove this clog in the wheel of our progress and march forward. How can this be achieved?

Let us look at Nigeria as it is presently constituted. There are now 36 states in the country, carved out more or less along ethnic or tribal boundaries, being a progression from the earlier demarcation of the country into three regions corresponding to the three major tribes. This colonial legacy is the root of the North/South dichotomy and does not augur well for the health of the nation; neither does it make for unity and togetherness. Naturally, if the Ibibio man is to live at peace and in unity with the Tiv and Fulani, then there must be a sense of togetherness among them. The only way this is possible for them to live together in a grouping, which calls for the re-division of Nigeria such that Southern, Middle Belt and Northern Nigerians can, as it were, to live together in the same 'state.' For purposes of clarity and avoidance of proliferation, I propose a re-division of the country into eight or 10 states, with boundaries running in North/South fashion. A map of what the country will look like under this proposal is attached. At the next election due in 2007 and the politicians already arguing over whether the next president should come from the North or South, this is a good time for Nigerians to consider this proposal in the hope that the problem can be tackled and its ghost, which has haunted the country for decades, can be put to rest. Without doubt, there will be difficulties along the way such as boundary adjustments, local government restructuring, traditional chiefs sphere of influence, the idea of the people of one tribe suddenly finding

The above brings us to the burning issue of the leadership/governance of the nation. Who gets appointed president, vice president, governor, etc? I propose a simple scheme in which (see map) for one ruling period by or for party, Middle Belt will produce the president and North-Eastern the vice; in the next ruling period, Mid-Eastern will produce the president and Western the vice, and so on until all the states have had their chance to produce either a president or vice. In the next four ruling periods, the roles will be reversed with the states which initially produced the president then producing the vice and the one which produced the vice then the president. At state level, where the governor is from the South in any ruling period, the deputy will come from the North and vice versa in the second ruling period.

Operating the country on the basis of eight or 10 states, the benefits to the nation will be:

- a) up to 500% savings in the operational cost of running 37 administrations
 - b) More money freed to go into roads/bridges/railway/water supply/hospital/infrastructure
 - c) Greater ease for states paying civil servants salaries and pensions
 - d) End of agitations for new states/resource control
 - e) Hopefully, better religious and ethnic tolerance
 - f) Greater integration and less distrust between Southerners and Northerners
 - g) A more serious approach to nation-building
- All Nigerians are aware of the difficulties our so-called states have had in paying workers' salaries and running their administrations and other institutions; in fact, without the revenue allocation from the centre, which is wholly dependent on oil revenues, most of the states would not function in the real sense of the word. How will these states be run in 15, 30 or 50 years if the oil wells dry up? What would happen to the 36-state structure? Crumble, one supposes. To avoid this, would it not be more beneficial to prune our administration costs so that our future budgets can accommodate the states structure, oil or no oil? Let us consider events of the last 45 years as tottering steps in nation-building and face our problems squarely, can out necessary restructuring and approach the issue of making Nigeria functional seriously.

Igiebor can be reached at (igiebor@yahoo.com).