

Damascus on edge as bombing, mortar attacks kills 53

In what is seen as the deadliest attack in Damascus for more than nine months, a powerful car bomb exploded yesterday close to ruling party offices in the Syrian capital, killing over 53 people and causing widespread destruction.

Agency claimed that the bombing, which rocked the city centre and sent thick smoke scudding across the skyline, was followed soon after by a mortar attack on a nearby military headquarters. The attacks came two days after two mortar shells exploded near the Tishreen presidential palace in the capital, increasingly targeted in the past year by suicide bombings, some claimed by the jihadist Al-Nusra Front.

But the main opposition group in Syria, the National Coalition, denounced as "terrorists" those behind the deadly car bombing, regardless of who carried it out, *Agence France Presse* (AFP) reported.

The coalition, in a statement posted on Facebook, stressed that "any acts targeting civilians with murder or human rights violations are criminal acts that must be condemned, regardless of the perpetrator or the justification".

Meanwhile, about 18 people were killed and 52 wounded yesterday when bombs ripped through crowded areas of the Indian city of Hyderabad in what the prime minister called a "dastardly act".

The bombs targeted a mainly Hindu district in a suburb of the city, a hub of India's information-technology industry which has a large Muslim population, and came with the nation on alert after the recent hanging of a Kashmiri separatist.

"We have 18 people dead," a police officer who declined to be named told AFP.

Another senior police officer at the scene of one of the explosions, Amit Garg, put the number of wounded at 52.

Police said many of the injured were in critical condition in hospital.

"This is a dastardly act and the guilty will not go unpunished," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said of the attacks, the deadliest to hit India since 13 people died in a 2011 bombing outside the

18 die in India's Hyderabad blast

High Court in the capital New Delhi.

But Singh also appealed for "calm" in the aftermath of the Hyderabad blasts.

City police said there had been three explosions, but Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde said he could only confirm two.

"The two bombs were placed on two different bicycles and the distance between them was about 100 to 150 metres (yards)," Shinde told reporters in New Delhi.

He said Indian authorities had received "intelligence inputs in the (recent) days about the possibility of attacks and this information was shared with other states".

Police said the blasts went off in quick succession.

But the Syrian attacks came

as the opposition umbrella group was meeting in Cairo to discuss proposals to hold conditional talks with President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Images of charred bodies lying next to mangled vehicles were broadcast by Al-Ekhabariya state television, which said children were among those wounded as the blast occurred near a school in the central district of Mazraa.

Sirens rang out, and machine-gun fire was also heard, as firemen rushed to the scene to douse the flames.

A police official told AFP the car bomb exploded at the 16 November Square near the Al-Man mosque, where the ruling Baath party's head offices are located.

State television said the blast,

which left a large crater in a road, killed 53 people and wounded dozens, making it the bloodiest in the capital since twin suicide bombings left 55 people dead on May 10, 2012.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights put the toll at 42 dead, including nine troops, and dozens wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the official SANA news agency blamed the attack on "terrorists" – the regime's term for rebels who have been fighting to oust Assad for nearly two years.

"It is terrorism... Is that what you call Islam?" one of the wounded told Syrian television.

"Is that the freedom you want? Is that the (rebel) Free Syrian Army?" said another man, speaking at the site of the attack.



Damaged cars at the scene of a powerful car bomb explosion near the headquarters of Syria's ruling Baath party in the centre of Damascus... yesterday. PHOTO: AFP



Indian police and investigators at the site of a bomb blast at Dilshuk Nagar in Hyderabad... yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Three Islamists found guilty of plotting biggest hit in UK

ACOURT has found three British Muslim men guilty of planning a string of bombings that prosecutors said could have been deadlier than the July 7, 2005, attacks on London's transport network.

The suspects – Irfan Naseer, 31, Irfan Khalid, 27, and Ashik Ali, 27 – were convicted of being "central figures" in an Islamist extremist plot to set off eight rucksack bombs and possibly other timed devices in crowded areas.

The judge, Richard Henriques, said that Naseer, Khalid and Ali would face life in prison when they would be sentenced in April or May, according to report by *Agence France Presse* (AFP).

The three men, all from Birmingham, central England, had denied charges of engaging

in conduct in preparation of terrorist acts during their trial at Woolwich Crown Court in London.

Despite a series of bungles by the conspirators, police said that it was the most significant terror plan uncovered in Britain since the 2006 plot to blow up transatlantic airliners using bombs in drinks bottles.

Two of the men – Naseer and Khalid – travelled to Pakistan for terror training while Naseer also helped others to travel to the country for the same purpose, the court heard.

The group was heavily influenced by the teachings of American-born Al-Qaeda preacher, Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed by a drone strike in Yemen in September 2011, police said.

Naseer was found guilty of

five charges, Khalid four, and Ali three, all between December 25, 2010 and September 19, 2011.

Six other Birmingham men aged between 21 and 26 pleaded guilty to terror offences at an earlier date.

The judge told Naseer: "You were seeking to recruit a team of somewhere between six and eight suicide bombers to carry out a spectacular bombing campaign, one which would create an anniversary along the lines of 7/7 or 9/11."

In Britain's deadliest ever suicide bombing, three Islamist attackers blew themselves up on London's subway system and another on a bus on July 7, 2005, killing 52 people.

Al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington left nearly 3,000

people dead.

Karen Jones, the prosecutor in the case of Naseer, Khalid and Ali, said that while their "precise targets remained unclear" there could have been "catastrophic" damage and loss of life from the plot.

"The evidence we put to the court showed the defendants discussing with awe and admiration the attacks of 9/11 and 7/7. These terrorists wanted to do something bigger, speaking of how 7/7 had gone a bit wrong," Jones said after the verdicts.

"Having travelled to Pakistan for expert training and preparation, Naseer and Khalid returned to the UK where they discussed attacks involving up to eight rucksacks."

"Had they not been stopped, the consequences would have been catastrophic."

Supporters praise Mugabe at 89

SUPPORTERS of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe heaped praise on him as he turned 89 yesterday with one newspaper stating that he was "ripening" like good old wine.

The state-controlled Herald newspaper dedicated a 16-page supplement filled with congratulatory messages from state corporations, private firms and individuals, for Africa's oldest leader.

"Celebrating his 89th birthday today, President Mugabe is still going strong and is mentally and physically as fit as ever ripening with each passing day like good old wine," said an editorial in *The Herald*.

The police praised Mugabe for his "unparalleled, princi-

pled and intuitive leadership. "We take judicious counsel from his illustrious words," the police said in a statement.

Mugabe, in power since independence from Britain in 1980, is one of Africa's longest ruling leaders. He has accepted nomination by his ZANU-PF party to run in the presidential race this year.

His health has been the subject of much speculation, especially since WikiLeaks released a 2008 diplomatic cable saving central bank chief Gideon Gono had told then U.S. ambassador James McGee that Mugabe had prostate cancer, and had been advised by doctors he had less than five years to live.

Malian, foreign troops battle insurgents in Gao

AS Malian and foreign forces struggled to secure the country's volatile north against Islamist rebels, clashes again erupted yesterday in the city of Gao and an apparent car bomb struck near a camp housing French troops.

This came as Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on Mali's government to track down and prosecute soldiers accused of committing atrocities including torture and summary executions in the war against Islamic extremists.

Malian authorities should "urgently investigate and prosecute soldiers responsible for torture, summary executions, and enforced disappearances of suspected

Islamist rebels and alleged collaborators," the New York-based organisation said in a statement.

HRW said its investigations had found that since mid-January, when the French-led offensive against armed Islamists in Mali's desert began, Malian troops had carried out abuses against members of the Tuareg, Arab and Fula communities.

"The Malian government needs to act now to put a stop to these abuses by their soldiers and appropriately punish those responsible," HRW added. "Mali's international partners should bolster accountability efforts and civilian protection in the north to help prevent further abuses."

Kenya lauds Chinese investment in tourism industry

KENYA has lauded Chinese investment in the hotel industry, stating that it would increase bed occupancy especially at this time when the country is experiencing a revamp in the tourism industry, *Xinhua* wrote yesterday.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Ruth Solitei said Wednesday in Nairobi during the launch of the 2013 Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF) that some Chinese-owned hotels situated in Nairobi have increased occupancy and conferring levels in the hospitality industry.

Solitei welcomed more investors in the tourism sector with a promise of growth and return for investments, which

she said shows the recent tourism performance which recorded growth in the last four years.

"The potential is even higher as the sector is internationally projected to be a leading future international service industry where Africa ranks 4th in the market share with approximated growth rate of over five percent."

Tourism is Kenya's most important industry, after agriculture. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), it is responsible for 14 per cent of GDP and 12 per cent of total employment.

It is also a sector that WTTC predicts will continue to grow at 3.7 per cent per year for the next decade.

African-American History: February 22, 1979

Frank E. Peterson Jr. becomes first Black General in the Marine Corps

RETIRED Marine Corps Lieutenant General Frank Emmanuel Petersen, Jr. was born in Topeka, Kansas, the second of four children to Frank Petersen, Sr., a radio repairman, and Edythe Southard Petersen.

He grew up in South Topeka, 10 miles away from the Topeka Army Airfield where he watched the aircraft take off and land as a child. He attended Monroe Elementary School, went on to join the honours programme of Boswell Junior High School, and graduated from Topeka High School in 1949.

After graduation, Petersen wanted to join the military, but agreeing with his parents' wishes he attended

Washburn University. After a year, he left college and applied to enlist in the U.S. Navy. He did so well in the examination, that those recruiting made him to take the test again. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in June 1950 where he trained to be an electronics technician.



Petersen

Politics

Padding of budget for 2015 is false, says Enoch

As the Presidency and the National Assembly disagree over the details of the 2013 Budget as passed on December 19, 2012 and sent to the President on January 15, 2013, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Appropriation Committee, John Enoch, defends allegations of padding the budget. He spoke with **AZIMAZI MOMOH JIMOH** in Abuja. Excerpts:

WHAT is happening to the 2013 Budget Bill with delay in assenting to it?

The National Assembly has passed the Budget and sent it to the Executive. It is yet to be signed. I have had to answer questions even from some of my colleagues who want to know if the budget has been returned to the National Assembly. It has not been returned. The channel for returning a Bill is formal. If there are communications from the President, the Speaker will read them in the chamber and he has not read anyone that said that Mr. President has returned the Budget Bill.

It sounds ironical that despite the early presentation and preparation of the Budget Bill, it is delayed. Is this a return to the days of budget delay and improper implementation?

I am bothered by that reality. It bothers all of us. I am so bothered that I have not been regular in the chamber. Although the 1999 Constitution indicates that after 30 days without assent the National Assembly can pass the bill into law without the assent of Mr. President, the same constitution does not define what happens in the course of the 30 days. A lot of contacts have been made, discussions are on going and they are positive. It was agreed that 2013 will be a different year and that we will start implementing the budget early in the year.

There are suggestions that the President is hesitating to sign the budget because the overhead cost has been so massively padded. Is that the situation?

Padding is not a civil language, particularly, in a presidential democracy. Parliaments can be defined in terms of how much power they have over the budget. There are parliaments that are budget making parliaments and I think that, in our constitution, we are virtually a budget-making parliament. It means that the President's proposal can be regarded as

dead on arrival. But that is if you stretch it to the extreme, I am not sure that is where we are. By the practice of our democracy, you cannot start from extremes. And that is not the way we have gone even in the worst of years.

When the budget proposal is presented, the Appropriation Committee distributes each committee's budget because all the committees become sub-committees to the appropriation committee. When the Bill or proposal is laid before the National Assembly, it becomes a public document. The Appropriation Bill is very critical and all Nigerians must take part. Therefore, what eventually is churned out is not expected to be the same. There are things that would change. We had discussions with standing committee chairmen and they explained why they did what they did.

If in the last three to five years, some projects have been abandoned, and in their wisdom, our standing committees take some monies from other areas of the budget Bill and try to make sure that they save this particular projects from their abandoned status, I do not think anyone will call this 'padding' of budget. Rather, what has happened is that work has been done on the Bill by different sub-committees; the product of that has been brought back to the appropriation committee, the committee has been able to make a bill out of it, which has been passed by the National Assembly. I do not think that what has been done is unconstitutional.

Did the National Assembly insert un-implementable constituency projects into the Budget Bill?

The issue of the budget being overburdened with un-implementable constituency projects is a matter that has always been there. What the House lacks is the will to do what it should do. This has to do with the lingering argument on who has the powers over the budget. Is it the Executive or National Assembly? Until this is resolved, this budget row will linger.

I am certain that everything contained in the 2013 Budget has not been in any previous budget. If the agencies of government are serious about implementing the budget, they cannot say that in 2013, they have not developed standard templates that they can quickly roll out and use to implement these projects.

What about allegations that lawmakers



Enoh

increased their quarterly allowances to the extent that they hiked budget figures arbitrarily?

There is too much talk about raising the size of budgets. We deserve some praises in terms of our approach to the budget. Prior to the Seventh Assembly, the aggregate expenditure between what proposals the President came with and what eventually got out of the National Assembly was in the region of N200 billion. From 2012, the rate in size of budgets has hovered around N50 billion.

That the increases are driven by having to raise lawmakers' allowances does not make sense. The National Assembly is one institution that is first charged. The money that is for the National Assembly is captured under statutory transfers just like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Whereas the figures for the NDDC will normally change, because it will have benefit of any increase of benchmark, the amount for the National Assembly is as proposed by the Executive. Since 2011, the National Assembly provision has remained at N150 billion. This is in spite of the fact that there are other things

that have changed.

How do you see insinuations that the budgets of some MDAs are hiked to enable them co-sponsor lawmaker's election campaigns especially those in the leadership of the National Assembly?

I have said often that as we keep sustaining our democracy, we will continue to improve. The allegation about the leadership directing anyone to pad is not true. What we tried to do in the 2013 budget would have made it impossible. I have said that standing committees become sub-committees of appropriation committee during budget. When the budget is presented, we give it to them to go through. The appropriation committee does not have the powers to change what they return. Unless anyone is saying that the leadership directs those committees to pad. I do not have any power to pad the budget that has been submitted to me by the standing committees.

Whatever becomes the budget is whatever the standing committees have done. The leadership we have today is not the kind of leadership that would want to do so. And for me specifically, I do not have such powers to pad any committee's budget because some members or some people in the leadership are already thinking about 2015.

What is your current negotiation with the President over the appropriation bill?

There is room to talk. I have not gone into the substantive issue of what we are talking about. We are still talking. And it does not compromise what we have said that we did a good job or not. Don't forget we are one government. I do not think anyone is advocating a situation where, at a moment like this, we will refuse to talk at all. I am not sure that is what you are saying.

Don't you think that the Supreme Court should settle the question of who interprets the constitutional provision on who has the power of appropriation?

The fact is that the National Assembly does not have any reason to go to court to seek interpretation. We have no doubt as to what our powers are. The executive doubts those powers. The issues are clear. The constitution says that if the President does not give assent, then the document can become law will not require the assent of the President anymore. It means that the final power rests with the National Assembly.

APGA must go back to the vision of founding fathers'

Chief Austin Ndigwe a pioneer member of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) spoke to **CHUKS COLLINS** in Awka. Although he laments the present crisis in the party, he said that it is man made and thus not insurmountable. Excerpts:

WHY do you think the crisis in APGA has remained intractable?

The current crisis is just part of the leadership issue. However, this time there is a strong feeling in some quarters that Anambra State Governor Peter Obi is behind the crisis because he wants to install his successor, which some members are opposed to. The former National Chairman of APGA, Chief Victor Umeh had asked the governor to conduct council election in the state but the governor had not been disposed to that. APGA in Anambra needed to hold council elections and Obi never thought it necessary to do so. The failure of the party to conduct the elections is undemocratic and anti-people. Beyond that, there are other issues, which came up in the court. We need to move the party forward. APGA has suffered enough.

Do you think that founding members of APGA have done enough to save the party from its problems?

The founding members have done

their best. But the truth is that most of the founding members have become frustrated with the protracted leadership tussle. Some body like the founding national chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie left to form another party. Most of us, I won't mention names, are working behind the scenes to save the party.

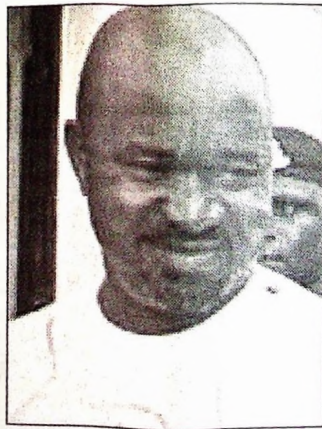
When did things start falling apart?

It is difficult to say when particularly but as a matter of fact, things started falling apart when some people came from other parties and infused their ideology into APGA without understanding our vision and mission in the nation's polity for the Igbo. Chekwes brought Obi into APGA but after two terms as governor he now sees himself differently. He has forgotten yesterday and its history and the role of every other person is irrelevant.

Today, we can trace some of the factors to the failure of people in APGA to respect party constitution and structure.

Did the expulsion of Chekwes part of the remote causes of the crisis in APGA?

Chekwes started having problems with the late Dim Oduwegwu-Ojukwu when he objected to having Dim as chairman of the Board of Trustees (BoT). He argued that such arrangement would rob the party of its national appearance and



Ndigwe

spread in the distribution of key offices. Chekwes favoured a northerner or south westerner for the position of BoT chairman. That was when some forces in APGA started plotting his ouster. When they eventually succeeded, they put Umeh, which was later ratified. Today, the same forces are rooting for the sack of Umeh. Since the ouster of Chekwes, the leadership tussle has not ended and the sack of Umeh by the courts has only vindicated Chekwes.

Where is APGA on the ongoing merger talks?

There is nothing wrong with APGA joining the merger talks. We are still talking with other interested parties. We are involved in it for the general interest of the Igbo (South East). That was how Alliance for Democracy (AD) achieved the wonders of what they have today as the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). Any discerning politician knows the South East cannot achieve its presidential ambition with only two states. We need to meet and negotiate power with other parties. What is the relationship between Imo State Governor Rochas Okorocha and Obi?

Because of the crisis in APGA and their personal interests, it is easy for anyone to conclude that they are not getting along well. It might not be called warm or robust but they are both APGA governors. Rochas has interest in the Presidency, while Obi is interested to run as a running mate to whoever. So this is a ground for conflict.

Do you have faith in the plans to reposition the party for the challenges ahead?

After the Enugu High Court judgment some people rushed to Abuja to hold a meeting and they claimed they were meeting to reform, restructure and repackage the party. Who are they doing it for? Is it by the same National Executive Committee (NEC) that was sacked

by the court irrespective of Umeh's pending appeal? Their actions betrayed their intentions. They quickly rushed to Abuja to organize a meeting where they appointed Chief Maxi Okwu, someone sacked from the party alongside Chekwes by a Supreme Court verdict, as an interim national chairman. Menakaya was appointed the chairman BoT. It is most unfortunate.

Their posture is vicious and they appear to be bent on destroying the party. Their aim is clear and very obvious. Okwu is not a member of our party. He is the national chairman of Citizens Progressives Party (CPP). So even if he joined today, he cannot become the chairman overnight. That is illegal.

What would you advise Umeh to do now?

He has appealed and his appeal might succeed. The court will give him judgment and redress the illegality being foisted on all of us. I am also in court to stop them, as Okwu has made moves to conduct the convention of the party. He is not an APGA member. With the latest moves, it has become very obvious that the governor is the architect of the crises in APGA. It is unfortunate that some elected members of APGA attended the illegal meeting where they discussed the move. It is sad that these things are happening less than a year after the demise of our leader, Oduwegwu-Ojukwu.



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Under the Distinguished Chairmanship of
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GUEST LECTURER:

Professor Peter Akinsola Okebukola,
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DATE: Thursday, 28th February, 2013

TIME: 2.00 p.m.

VENUE: University Auditorium

CHIEF HOST

Professor Rahamon A. Bello, FAEng
Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos

HOST

Professor Funke Lawal
Director, Distance Learning Institute
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'I was promised \$4,000 on safe arrival'

How NDLEA saved Nigerian students from death in Malaysia

By Odita Sunday

NARCOTIC officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) might have saved a Nigerian student studying in Malaysia from premature death.

The 31-year-old student, who is now a suspect in NDLEA's net, Dike Chibuzor Vitalis, possessed 1.430 kilograms of white crystalline powder that tested positive for methamphetamine. He was on his way to Malaysia, a country where drug trafficking attracts death penalty.

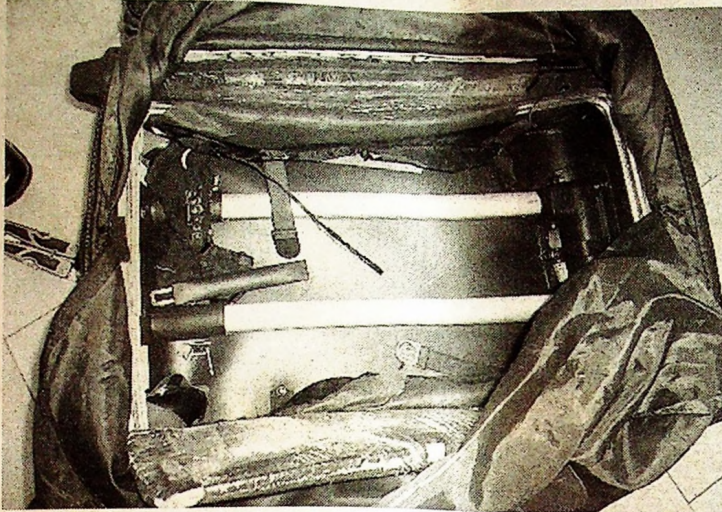
He was intercepted by vigilant narcotic officers at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos during the screening of passengers on an Asian-owned airline, following the discovery of the drugs in his luggage.

But for the arrest by NDLEA men, Vitalis could have joined other Nigerians on death row in Malaysian prisons.

The suspect, who hails from Orlu, Imo State said that he was promised \$4,000 if the drugs were successfully delivered in Malaysia.

He said: "I was asked to take an empty bag to Malaysia for a fee of \$4,000 dollars. When I got to the airport, the drug was discovered. That was how I got involved".

Speaking on the arrest, the NDLEA Airport commander, Mr. Hamza Umar, ex-



The confiscated drug

plained that the drug was concealed inside the bag.

"The drug was packed in a way that we had to cut the sides of the bag open with a knife to discover the drugs. It would only take a professional to detect the drugs," Hamza said.

In a related development, NDLEA officers at the Lagos Airport discovered wraps of cocaine inside packs of baby powder meant for export to Gabon.

The discovery was made inside a luggage containing artificial hair, popularly called 'weave-on', perfumes and artificial nails. It was to be sent as unaccompanied luggage to Gabon.

The suspect, Iwegbuna Ebele, in his statement to NDLEA detectives said that he was asked to send the goods to Gabon.

"I was given N130,000 by my childhood friend to buy female hair attach-

ment, artificial nails and perfumes. My friend later called me that somebody would give me children's powder to add to what I bought. So the person called me and gave me the powder, which I added to the goods. It was in the process of searching that the cocaine was discovered. I am a technician and I specialize in the repairs of air conditioning units," he stated.

The suspect, who hails from Akwu-Ukwu village in Orifite, Anambra State, attended Orifite Boys' Secondary School, Anambra State before he came to Lagos in search of greener pastures.

The NDLEA Chairman, Mr. Ahmadu Giade, who described the involvement of the suspects in drug trafficking as sad, urged members of the public to draw lessons from the arrests.

"I want members of the public to learn from the experiences of the suspects. It is sad that at a time the country is making efforts to save her citizens who are on death row abroad, a young man at 31, Dike Chibuzor Vitalis is deliberately signing his death warrant," Giade said.

NDLEA spokesman, Mitchell Ofoyeju, said the suspects would be charged to court as soon as narcotic officers were able to get to the roots of the matter.

Ladipo traders close shops, clean market to avert clampdown

By Onyedika Agbede

THE leadership of Ladipo Market in Mushin, Lagos State, under the auspices of Ladipo Auto Central Executive Committee (LACEC), yesterday ordered a total closure of the market for a comprehensive cleaning of its environs.

The exercise was in response to a recent warning by the state government that it would shut down the market if the traders did not take proper steps to clean it and make the environment habit-

itable.

Addressing journalists at the end of the exercise, the President of LASEC, Ikechukwu Michael Animalu pleaded with the state government not to shut down the market, as the traders would continually strive to comply with the state's environmental laws.

"Three days ago, the state Commissioner for Environment came here with his entourage and we later heard in the news that they were threatening to close the market if proper care was not

taken. That is why we shut the market today to conduct our general environmental sanitation. All shops are locked and there will be no trading today. You saw our men inside the cabal tidying it up; you also saw them dismantling all the roadside shops in the market. So, we are pleading with the state government to reconsider its threat to shut down the market," Animalu said.

Animalu also appealed to government agencies that were assigned duties in the market and members of the public to cooperate with the market leadership in its efforts to rid the place off filth and make it better organised.

"Some people are causing serious problems for us. Some people their vehicles park indiscriminately. Let them park where they are supposed to park and do their purchase. They always do double parking and this causes traffic gridlock. So, we are pleading with the government agency that is in charge of parking in the market to do the right thing and

not put us into problem. On our part, we have asked all the petty traders along the roads to go and look for shops inside the market or forget about trading. In fact, we collected their tables and burnt them today. Let them go, we don't need them because we don't want this market to be closed. We are ready to cooperate with the state government and implement its rules and regulations in the market because we are quite aware that the government does not joke with environmental issues."

Angry youths stone monarch, beat chiefs over death of young people

From Muyiwa Adesoye, Ado Ekiti

THE youths of Emure Ekiti yesterday protested what they called incessant deaths of young people in the community. The angry youths, who made several bonfires in community and disrupted the market, stoned the traditional ruler the Elemure of Emure, Oba Emmanuel Adebawale Adebayo, a retired Commissioner of Police while trying to pacify them.

The youths had alleged that the palace was unconcerned about the way some youths met their untimely death in the recent times. According to the protesters, no fewer than 12 youths had died this year alone, in rather strange circumstances.

While the monarch was trying to pacify them that the community would organise an interdenominational religious prayer session to curb the trend, the monarch was pelted with sachets of water and other dangerous objects while some of the chiefs received the beating of their lives.

Chiefs of the community were said to have removed their beads and found escape routes from the palace when the situation became uncontrollable. A prince of the community told newsmen: "I had to find my way out of the town through bush paths to nearby Ise-Ekiti community before I got a vehicle that ferried me to Ado Ekiti."

The protesting youth were said to have listed several accidents that had taken the lives of young people of the town through motorcycle and sundry accidents, claiming that in the last two weeks, about 12 youths, who are indigenes of the community had died via road accidents.

They said: "Two undergraduates, who are indi-



Oba Adebayo

genes of Emure-Ekiti died in a motorcycle accident in Ado Ekiti on Valentine's Day; three persons also died in an accident on Ikere-Ise-Emure road on Wednesday when the vehicles they were travelling in had a head-on collision, adding that "the three occupants of a Mazda

salon car that collided with a Toyota Dyna truck died on the spot."

Policemen that were initially drafted to the community were said to have been unable to contain the situation as the youths were said to have dared the policemen to shoot at them. It was gathered that the policemen "had to appeal to the youths to take things easy and allow peace to reign."

The policemen were said to have come in two patrol vans.

Speaking on the protest, caretaker chairman of Emure Local Government Area, Mr. Adewale Febisola, said the protesters did not visit the council secretariat, but confirmed that they went to the palace and the market.

Febisola said: "I have met with them and told them to mellow down as the traditional council has assured that they will find a solution to the problem through prayer." He urged the youths of the community and the entire council area to embrace peace, saying: "Only through peaceful means can we reach a lasting solution to the problem."

Confirming the development, the Public Relations Officer of the Ekiti State police command, Mr. Victor Babayemi, said the incident "has been brought under control," adding that "the police has restored normalcy in the town by preventing the escalation of the crisis."

Babayemi urged the people of the town to go about their normal businesses, saying that the police were ready to ensure peace and normalcy in the town.

Briefs

Motalaitu C&S lays foundation Feb. 24

THE foundation-laying ceremony of Motalaitu Church Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Worldwide (Kingdom Parish) will hold on Sunday, February 24, 2013 at Magbagbeola Layout, opposite, Ilesha garage, Osogbo, Osun State at 7.30 a.m.

It will be done under the guidance of Founder, Primate and Spiritual Head, Archbishop Motalaitu Akinadewo while Evang. Abraham Aladeseye; Prophet Samson Opadotun and Apostle Adelani Adejumo are billed to attend. It will be co-ordinated by the Superintendent, Supt. Israel Akinadewo.

Book launch

THE Zealots Global Ministries Int'l and the Covenant Partners will tomorrow launch a book, *The Confederation-Helvitical*, written by Apostle Zingi Michael Amaebite, his Golden jubilee 39 years in ministry, at Nigerian Army Ordinance Corps Officers Mess, Murtala Muhammed Way, Yaba, Lagos at noon.

Special guests of honour are Commander Ebi Beredogo (rtd.), Chief S. D. Dambo Madam R. E. I. Amaebite and others.

Book launcher is Mr. Emmanuel Enemuoh, Chairman, Rev. Bisi Orebayo while Rev. Roseline Oduyemi is the reviewer.

Akeni for burial tomorrow

MRS. Margaret Onowigose Akeni (nee Ofou), who died at the age of 64, on November 15, 2012, will be buried tomorrow after a funeral service at Ofagbe, behind Ofagbe Technical College, Delta State. Reception follows at Ibaba Primary School, Ofagbe, Delta State.

She was survived by her aged mother, Mrs. Christiana Orou, brothers and sisters, among whom is Felix Ofou, a journalist with Delta State Government, Asaba.



Akeni

Agbonlahor for burial

FUNERAL rites for Pa Daniel Agbidodia Agbonlahor, aged 76, hold today with a commendation service at his residence, 22, Agbado Street, off Akpakpava Road, Benin City, Edo State at 4pm followed by interment at 6pm; Social dance holds on Saturday while Thanksgiving service is on Sunday at St. Joseph Catholic Church on First East Circular Road, Benin City at 10.30a.m. He is survived by a wife, children, children and sons-in-laws among them are Mrs. Ruth Ekpen - Obaseki and Elvis Ekpen Agbonifo - Obaseki.



Agbonlahor



Professor of Architecture, University of Lagos, Professor Niyi Okedele (left), President, Society of Landscape Architects of Nigeria, Dr Adejumo (second left), Dr Adeoti Adeyemo (second right) and Mr. Abiola Gold during the Eko Green Dream Initiative Campaign Launch organized by Sustainable Green Lagos Forum and Lagos State Ministry of Environment ... on Wednesday.



Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola SAN (right) being conducted round by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Central Business Districts, Mrs. Derin Disu (right) during the inspection visit by the Governor to Balogun Market in Lagos Island in fulfillment of his promise of the previous day... on Tuesday

Briefs

The Mentor for launch

The Mentor Magazine will be launched on Sunday, February 24, at 104 Degree event Centre, Billing Way, Ikeja.

According to the publisher, Mr. Olujimi Sean, "The Mentor is a registered bi-monthly publication concerned with projecting true achievements of individuals in all fields of human endeavour and packaged to reflect stories wherever they are to be found as long as there is a trend of influence."

NIM holds lecture Feb. 28

The Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) will hold its inaugural Nigeria: Arise and Shine annual lecture on Thursday, February 28, 2013 at the Auditorium of Management House, Victoria Island, Lagos at 11.00 am.

A statement signed by the President and Chairman of Council of the Institute, Dr. Michael Olawale-Cole, says the lecture, which has "Appraisal of Vision 20:2020: Perspective of Power generation and National Development" as theme, will have the Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Rahmon Adisa Bello, as the Guest Speaker.

UACN commissions new estate at GRA, Ikeja

UACN Property Development Company Plc (UPDC), will tomorrow commission its premium residential estate in GRA, Ikeja.

Situated in one of the best locations in Lagos, the newly completed project is an addition to the company's growing portfolio of property in Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt. The residential housing estate with 18 Town Houses is located on Ladoke Akintola Street, GRA, Ikeja.

The Managing Director of UPDC Plc, Hakeem Ogunniran, said the project began in September 2011.

Leslie Pritchard for burial

Mr. Leslie Pritchard Sisanyemofe Pritchard is dead.

He was 49 years old. Funeral service holds tomorrow at 11.00 a.m. at Atan Cemetery (Ebony Vaults) followed immediately after by interment.

In a tribute, the Pritchard family wrote: "We ask you Lord to please grant eternal rest to Leslie and the strength of your grace to all who remain."



Pritchard

NAPTIP re-arraigns two over indulgence in girl prostitution

By Joseph Onyekwere

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) on Thursday re-arraigned two men before a Federal High Court Lagos, for allegedly indulging young girls in prostitution.

The duo, Gideon Odigie (50) and Adokie Ikare (43), were arraigned before Justice Mohammed Idris, on a seven-count charge bordering on illegal trafficking of young girls.

The accused were first arraigned before Justice Steven Adah of the Federal High Court, Ikeja, but were re-arraigned before Justice Idris, due to the elevation of Justice Adah to the Court of Appeal.

The accused, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The prosecutor, Mrs. Kehinde Falade told the court that officers of NAPTIP arrested the accused persons on September 15, 2011.

She alleged that the accused were arrested for keeping a brothel known as "Hotel Rosey" in the Bariga area of Lagos, just for the purpose of offering young girls for prostitution.

According to NAPTIP, the brothel is located at No. 30, Adaranijo Street, Shomolu, Bariga, Lagos.

After their re-arraignment, Justice Idris was informed of a letter written by one of those who had earlier stood surety for the first accused, Gideon Odigie requesting that he should be discharged as a surety in the matter.

In view of the development, Justice Idris ordered the first accused to remain in prison custody, pending his provision of another credible surety.

But counsel to the second accused, Ambrose Nwabueze, urged the court to allow the accused to continue with the earlier bail granted by the former trial judge, Adah.

According to the prayer of the defence counsel, Justice Idris allowed the second accused to continue with the earlier bail as granted by the initial trial judge. He adjourned the case to March 15 for trial.

Some of the girls who were indulged in the act of prostitution by the accused are Jennifer Obi (25), Esoke Mikeal, alias Patricia Victor (25), and Odion Imina, alias Tracy (23).

According to Falade, the alleged offence contravenes the provisions of Section 15 (a) of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law, Enforcement and Administration Act of 2003 (as amended).



Odofin of Orile Itori, Chief Mufutau Adisa Salami (left) Onitori of Orile Itori Oba Adebisi Adebayo and Chairman Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria, Dr. Lolu Ojo at the Courtesy Call on the Paramount Ruler of Orile Itori by the Association the Subscribers of Pharmacy Estate Located in Eguru Village in Ogun State... on Tuesday

PHOTO: FEMI ADEBESIN-KUTI



Former Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku (left), his wife, Bunmi and Chairman, Leverage Multi-Global Concepts Ltd, Mr Innocent Uchibuolu at Anyaoku's 80th birthday held at Marlborough House, London...

Soroptimist Int'l President, Pat Black, visits UNILAG Braille Centre

By Eno Bassey

The Federation President of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland, Mrs. Pat Black, has commended the establishment of a Braille Centre for the visually-impaired at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka.

During her visit to the centre on Tuesday, Mrs. Black also praised the leadership quality shown by Soroptimist International of Eko by introducing the facility and hoped that the gesture would soon be extended to other Nigerian universities following the lead set by the University of Lagos.

The centre was established in January 2010 by Soroptimist International of Eko and is said to be "the first facility for the visually-impaired in a Nigerian university."

According to a statement: "The centre, which is sited on

the main campus of the University of Lagos, uses the latest computerized software to assist blind and visually-challenged students with their studies and research, thereby bridging the gap between them and their sighted counterparts.

"The renovation of the site and purchase of the specialized equipment is being financed by the Chief Ayo Rosiji's family and the centre is managed by the Soroptimists of Eko Club while Mrs. Jean Obi, of Nigerwives Braille Centre is the honorary Technical Adviser.

"Soroptimist International is a worldwide organization comprising of professional and executive business women, who contribute time and financial support to community-based projects. It is the world's largest

service organization for women, with over 3,000 clubs in 124 countries."

The university was represented during Mrs. Black's visit by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. Babajide Alo and librarian, Dr. Okanlawon Adediji.



The Deputy Vice Chancellor, UNILAG, Adediji (left) and Black during the visit



Lawrence Sangowawa (left), Kehinde Oduneye, Jill Godwin, Bukola Bisi, Lamide Fadipe, Tokunbo Okupe, President, Soroptimist International Club of Eko, Cordelia Barka, Black, Norma Jackson-Steele, Theresa Odogwu, Bjorg Lawal-Solarin and Doyin Akin-Bankole during the visit

Editorial

Killing of polio vaccinators, Korean doctors

THE gruesome killing of nine immunization workers at separate locations in Kano, and the cold-blooded murder of three Korean medical doctors in Potiskum, Yobe State, are yet again unconscionable acts that portray the nation as barbaric and lawless. They also reflect the security deficit and incompetence on the part of relevant authorities to protect voluntary health workers, who have elected to help the country.

According to witnesses, gunmen in tricycles arrived at Hotozo Quarters in Haye, Kano, opened fire on health workers who were carrying out a routine inoculation of children in the ongoing anti-polio campaign, and killed seven. Thirty minutes later, gunmen on motorcycles launched an attack on the Shargawle Comprehensive Health Centre at Ungwar Uku on the outskirts of Kano city, killing two.

Barely 48 hours after these gruesome acts, three North Korean nationals, one woman and two men, all medical doctors working for the state Ministry of Health in the Potiskum General Hospital, were, on Sunday morning, killed by suspected militants.

Amidst incessant promises of improved internal security, these sad and unfortunate incidents have been one too many, for this is not the first time foreign nationals have been killed by suspected terrorists. Before this, there had been reports of Indians killed in Maiduguri, Chinese construction workers abducted and killed, among similar reports in the North. What makes this latest spate of killings peculiar and more worrisome is that the gunmen singled out health workers, be they foreigners or indigenes.

Though it is true that any compulsive killer would conjure any reason and seek out excuses for his deadly acts, it is also noteworthy that some perceived animosity, arising from a backlash of the deadly drug experiment carried out by a pharmaceutical company years ago, exists in some communities in the North. Certain members of the aggrieved communities might also not be unaware of some western governments' suspected experimentation of lethal drugs as bioweapons on Pakistanis two years ago, as well as other guinea-pigging episodes carried out by western powers in collusion with pharmaceutical companies.

It might, therefore, be that years of built-up distrust, fanned by fiery clerics and local fundamentalists have made the gunmen and their ilk view the ongoing anti-polio exercise as a depopulation strategy. This kind of distrust imposes a responsibility on both government and drug companies.

Though rather belatedly, the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, in response to these ignoble acts, has ordered all Commissioners of Police and zonal Assistant Inspectors-General, especially of the northern states, to devise special strategies for all health workers involved in immunization and other special medical assignments in the country. This is commendable. However, to forestall future occurrences, the police and security organisations should deploy their intelligence units to act proactively by providing adequate security for voluntary workers, especially foreigners engaged in humanitarian services.

Beyond this, those who are at the forefront of information gathering and dissemination as well as influencing the lives of the people, especially clerics and even journalists, should cultivate a high sense of responsibility and ethical conduct in the discharge of their duties. They should be conscious of the moral demands of their callings, to be primarily loyal to the people and obligated to truth. Therefore, it behoves them to eschew all tendencies towards disinformation and misinformation.

Beyond promises of improved security, the government must demonstrate sincerity of purpose and political will to address the problems of internal security in the country. Owing to the gravity of the killing of foreign nationals and its implication for diplomatic relations, the government should match threat with action by finding the killers and bringing them to trial soonest.

LETTERS

The deliberate omissions of el-Rufai

SIR: The fundamental error with the Nigerian public service is that an average public servant sees himself as a messiah whenever the opportunity comes his way. He first of all rubbishes those before him in the service of the nation, labelling them as corrupt, inefficient and insincere in their approach to national duty.

This mindset dominated the work ethics of the former Director-General of the

Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mallam Nasir el-Rufai while he rendered his "accidental public service" to the nation.

Throughout el-Rufai's book in which he effectively tried to exalt himself before the public eye, there is no mention of Pentascope, the contract managers he brought from one of the Scandinavian countries to take over the management of the huge national telecommu-

nications giants - NITEL and M-TEL between 2001 and 2003.

Should we continue to believe el-Rufai as he postures as one of the finest patriots? It is a huge joke and a big lie to accept that el-Rufai has concluded his record of service as the director-general of BPE and minister of FCT in a book called "Accidental Public Servant" when the "deals" of Pentascope are missing in it! • *Ugochukwu Jim-Nwoko Abuja*

Another view on witchcraft in football

SIR: I rarely react to newspaper articles because most of them are mere display of journalistic brilliance and language mastery. However, that piece by Gowon Akpodonor in *The Guardian* of Thursday, February 7, cannot pass without a comment. The article poses a question: What role does witchcraft play in football (victory)?

Witchcraft as I know it exists everywhere in the world and many diabolical things as weakening the opponent, causing confusion, and doubling object vision, and generally casting spell on the other person or group to have unfair advantage over them. It is therefore a reality, not a myth. The mere fact that witchcraft is spiritual does not rub it off as non-existent. All I know is that witches steal and destroy. If my reader is a Christian I refer you to the

Book of Numbers 23, and if you are not a believer go and interview your village head about the subject.

Let me also stress that witches are also predators because the stronger destroys the weaker, and the spirit of God destroys them all. It is not for show that players gather together to pray that all witchcraft designed against them are cleaned up before, during and after the match.

When I was very young and robbery was not as sophisticated, every business house and street employed Middle Belt indigenes as security guards because they were deemed to possess the powers to cause a fleeing thief to fall and keep falling until the thief is apprehended. What is more, if a striker going for goal is caused to stumble, can he score? Consider also if a goalkeeper is caused to

see three balls coming towards the goal (visual hallucinations) at the same time, which of them will he go for?

Frankly, I understand the kernel of your argument that all things being equal the best team should win, and this should be the direct result of better training facility, better treatment and nutrition, motivation and continuous talent hunt etc, but it is not as straightforward as this. There is juju in Africa, America, Greek, China, to mention a few and there is God of the universe to whom all these principalities have no option than to bow!

Finally, everything comes to nothing in accordance with equilibrium principle not being static. When juju equals juju, competence will prevail, but with God, there is no need for juju at all.

• *Akintoluwa Adeniyi Ikorodu, Lagos*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

DOCTOR, I FELL AND BROKE MY LEG WHILE STRUGGLING TO GET MY NAME INTO THE REGISTER FOR PENSIONERS.

OH, I'M SORRY, SIR. HOWEVER, YOU HAVE TO DEPOSIT SOME MONEY FOR TREATMENT.

MY SON, I HAVE NO MONEY AT THE MOMENT. I'LL PAY WHEN I RECEIVE MY NEXT PENSION.

I REGRET TO TELL YOU IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, SIR.

I ALSO REGRET NOT EMBEZZLING GOVERNMENT FUNDS, WHEN I WAS A CIVIL SERVANT FOR 35 YEARS.

!!

OBE ESS

Business

AutoWheels P44

Auto makers and the future game plan



BusinessTravel P46

New safety device berths for the airlines

Govt may adopt part-passage strategy for PIB

By Roseline Okere

The much delayed Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), may, after all, not be passed as a single document, but in parts, going by feelers from the Presidency. A source close to the Presidency told The Guardian in confidence yesterday, that discussions have been intensified on the possibility of passing some parts of the bill, that have been harmonised with the positions of the International Oil Companies (IOCs).

According to the source, the government has been receiving pressures from different quarters on the need for the quick passage of the bill, which was being delayed due to some issues that have to do with fiscal policies, host community funds, power of the minister, among others.

"Government is actually contemplating passing the bill very soon, but it hopes to do it in parts. This has become necessary in order to move from one stage to the other. The government is aware that non-passage of the bill has put billions of investment on hold. So, it may be forced to pass the bill in parts", the source said.

IOCs, on Wednesday said that the continued delay in passing the PIB into law has been creating uncertainties in the country's oil and gas sector. The uncertainties were said to be delaying the take-off of fresh projects worth several billion of dollars that would grow industry's capacity and reserves.

The Country Chair of Shell Companies in Nigeria, Mutiu Sunmonu, said its

upstream exploration and production arm, Shell Petroleum Development Company, (SPDC), has put on hold investment decisions on two key offshore oil and gas projects that

would have cost about \$30 billion till when the new petroleum law is approved.

The Managing Director of ExxonMobil Companies Nigeria, Mark, and his Total E&P Nigeria Limited coun-

terpart, Guy Maurice, also expressed similar fears, saying the relevant authorities should speed up action towards getting the proposed law ready, to help the oil and gas industry's

growth.

The chief executives were speaking on the challenges to growing Nigeria's oil and gas industry capacity at the just concluded Nigeria Oil & Gas, NOG 2013

Exhibition and Conference in Abuja.

The Group Executive Director, Exploration and Production, Nigerian National Petroleum

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Managing Director, Economic and Marketing Analysis, Citi Group, David Cowan (left); Transactions Service Head Africa, Citibank, Ade Ayeyemi; Senior Euro Finance Tutor, Peter Green; and Senior Partner, Kenna Partners; Fabian Ajogwu, at the opening ceremony of Euro Finance's fourth Conference on "Treasury, Risk and Cash Management in West Africa" in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO: FEMI ADEBESIN-KUTI

SON, CAC, NEPC, OGFZA get new boards

From Itunu Ajayi, Abuja

THE Federal Government, yesterday, inaugurated the boards of four parastatals under the Ministry of Trade and Investment. They are the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) and the Oil and Gas Free Zone Authority (OGFZA).

The CAC's 10-member board is led by Funsho Lawal as Chairman, while the Registrar-General of the commission would serve as

a member.

The NEPC has eleven-member on its board to be chaired by Mrs. Grace Clark and David Adulugba, the Executive Director of the council would be a member.

OGFZA's 14-member board is led by Chris Asoluka, with representative of the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture, representative of the national orientation agency (NOA), representative of the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources, representative of the Federal Ministry of Justice, Managing Director of the

Nigerian Ports Authority, Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Customs Service, representative of the Corporate Affairs Commission and Victor Alabo, Managing Director of the Onne Oil and Gas Free Zone, Port Harcourt as members.

SON has a 10-member board with Abubakar Mustapha as Chairman, with representative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, representative of the Federal Ministry of Health, Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry

of Trade & Investment, representative of the Federal Ministry of Transport, representative of the Federal Ministry of Works and Joseph Odumodu, Director-General (SON) as members.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony in Abuja, the Minister of Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga, said members of the new boards now have men and women of integrity, knowledge and experience in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy.

The minister, who was represented by the Minister of State for Trade and Investment, Samuel Ortom

noted that the ministry and all its parastatals share a common mandate anchored on: creating the enabling environment to stimulate domestic investment and attract foreign direct investment into all sectors of the economy and making Nigeria the most preferred investment destination; facilitating trade in goods and services and maximizing the benefits of international trade through functional bilateral and

multi-lateral trade relations with other countries.

The ministry is also responsible for boosting industrial development and enabling Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as the engine of economic growth.

He said: "Boards of Parastatals are responsible for setting out broad economic, financial, operational administrative guidelines and targets for their various agencies. They are concerned with policy issues, monitoring of institutional projects and pro-

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Bayelsa's light rail, airport to commence operations next year

From **Nasir Oyedele**, Yenagoa

THE Bayelsa State government has pledged to complete the construction of the cargo airport in the state by the end of 2014, while the first plane will land at the airport the same year.

It has also concluded arrangements to commence the building of light rail that would traverse the entire

state to Onitsha in Anambra State.

The state's Commissioner for Works, Lawrence Eriakpo, who disclosed these when the National Good Governance tour team visited the site of the airport recently in Yenagoa, said that the target of the state government is to take the rail from Kayama -Brass- Age, due to the LNG at Brass and deep-sea

port at Age.

He said: The light rail will run through the whole state. We have already gotten an approval from the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and the Federal Ministry of Transport for the Deep Seaport at Age".

He explained that the state government is embarking on massive infrastructural development, especially the

airport project, due to its quest to boost tourism and investment, stressing that "nobody will take our tourism and investment drive seriously if we don't have an airport".

Information Minister, Labaran Maku, observed that Bayelsa, being an oil and gas destination, the airport is strategic for the future development of the state and the

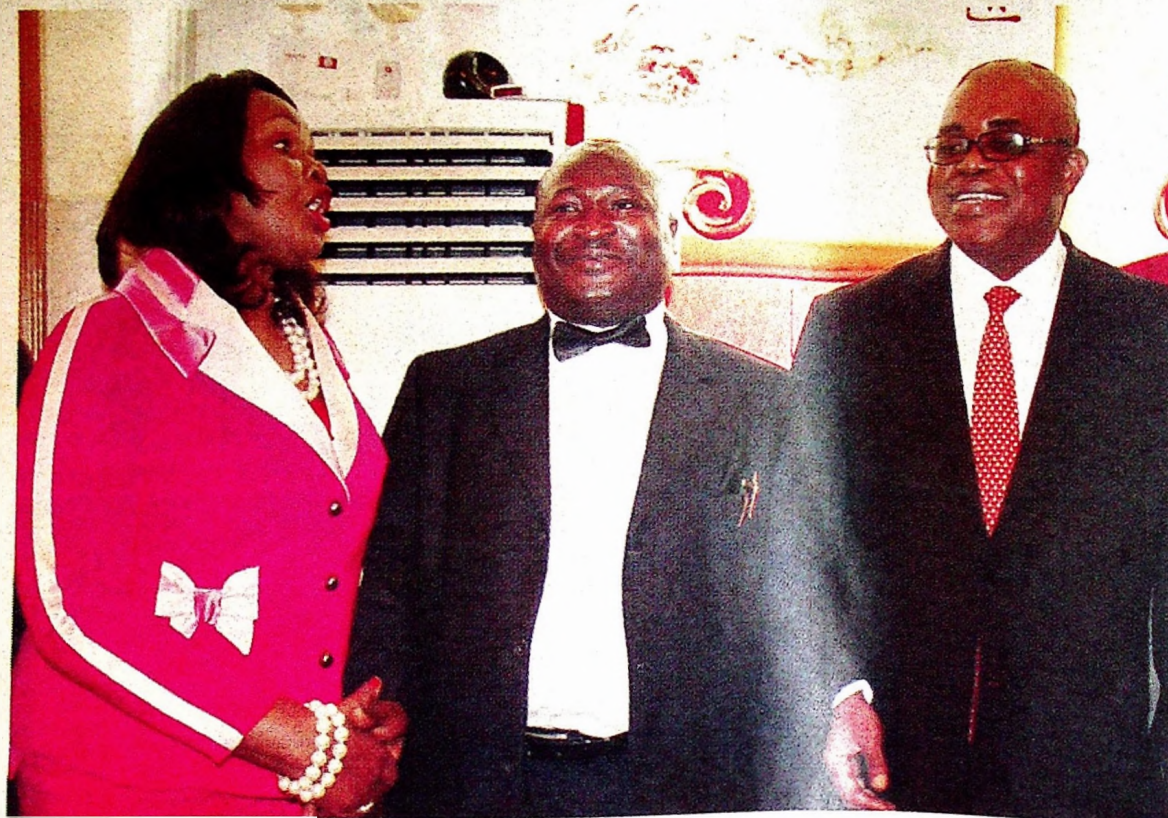
oil industry.

He noted that the airport is very viable considering the rich resources of Bayelsa State, adding that the Gulf of Guinea is the next destination for oil supply to the rest of World and Nigeria must take advantage of those strategic region of the world for future oil supply.

Maku said that the Federal Government has approved the construction of deep sea port in Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom

and Lagos state and is discussing with investors for their take off.

He said: If we have three deep sea ports which would be one of its kind in this part of the world, it will make Nigeria the ultimate destination for commerce and trade in the future as well give the country a millage. As Nigeria advances as the leading power in this continent, we must look at future facilities for the economy to rest on".



Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Emzor Pharmaceutical Limited, Mrs. Stella Okoli (left); President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, Oluwade Akintayo and Chairman, Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group Association of Nigeria, Bunmi Olaopa, during the CEOs Forum in Lagos, on Wednesday. PHOTO: OSENI YUSUF

Part-passage of PIB underway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Corporation, (NNPC), Abiye Membere, identified high cost of conducting oil and gas business, long contract cycle and lack of oil exploration and production by IOCs as the challenges besetting the industry's growth potential.

To create the enabling environment, Membere said the NNPC board has set nine months as the maximum timeline to complete tenders for complex projects, while a maximum of six months has been fixed for simpler ones, to eliminate rising cost associated with longer tender processes.

He said before the end of the second quarter of this year, all issues contributing to longer tender processes would be resolved, to drastically cut down on the cost and pricing of projects, adding that cost reduction initiatives captured in the proposed PIB would help drive industry production capacity and reserve.

Sunmonu explained that the challenge is not in the potential to grow capacity to produce four million barrels of oil per day and 40 billion barrels reserves, but mobilising the resources to bring it into reality.

According to him, the key challenge is in making the best out of the resources available by optimising production and making the operational environment more stable for the players.

The Shell boss, who acknowledged the difficulty in achieving this goal, said the challenge becomes more complicated when the country is losing an

average of 150,000 barrels of crude every day to crude theft alone, saying this demands urgent action by stakeholders to remove the uncertainty that is affecting fresh investments.

"If contractors are not sure of a stable investment environment, regular payments, value-adding partnerships and a different project funding approach, it would be difficult to attract fresh investments," he said.

For the ExxonMobil boss, all what the industry is clamouring for is a PIB that would provide for globally competitive returns on investment to all stakeholders as well as a law that would create an investment climate that enables the government to cooperate with industry players without disrupting agreements on funding for oil and gas operations.

According to the Managing Director of Total, the IOCs are demanding a balanced, competitive PIB that would guarantee a stable operational environment, ensure security, fair fiscal regime; and that would help investors decide on investment on projects and remove funding constraints.

SON, others get new boards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

grammes and ensuring that the parastatal's mandates are realised."

"You are therefore enjoined to adhere strictly to the provisions of the enabling Acts of your agencies as well as financial regulations and guidelines on administrative procedures. While congratulating you on your well deserved appointment, may I emphasise that your appointment is on part-time basis only. As such, you are not expected to interfere or participate in the day-to-day running of your respective agencies."

He added, "I must stress at this juncture, that no Chairman or board member is entitled to an official vehicle on permanent basis. Same goes for office or residential accommodation. In addition, you are enjoined to comply with the provisions of extant circulars governing your tenure/appointment, especially circular No. SWC/S/04/S.310/105, dated 10th June, 2010 issued by the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission, which specified your allowances and frequency of meetings."

BUA to commission \$500 million Edo cement plant next year

THE \$500 million Edo Cement Company's plant located at Okpella in Edo State will be ready for commissioning early next year.

This was made known by the Chairman of BUA Group, Alhaji Abdulsamad Rabiu, at the signing of the \$35million contract agreement between BUA Group and Siemens to build a new gas turbine power plant for the cement factory owned by the group.

The contract which was signed with Siemens at

BUA's London office was for Siemens to supply 3 SGT 500 turbines manufactured by Siemens Industrial Turbo Machinery AB in Finspang, Sweden with a total capacity of about 45MW to supply power to the ultra modern \$500 million Edo cement plant currently under construction which is expected to be completed early 2014.

Rabiu expressed satisfaction with construction giant, Julius Berger's pace of work at the cement company. "I am particularly very

impressed so far by the civil construction work done by Julius Berger. 70 per cent of the cement plant equipment have been shipped and are currently on site and the pace of work by Julius Berger is very comprehensive and impressive. By early 2014, the cement factory will be ready for use."

Rabiu revealed that the capacity of the plant under construction is three million metric tonnes per year and will significantly contribute to product availabil-

ity to Nigerian consumers.

According to BUA Group, the SGT-500 turbines are unique for the African market because they offer flexibility in optimising investment returns, extremely low maintenance costs, high reliability and limited number of personnel required for their operation and maintenance.

BUA Group acquired Edo Cement in 2010 and has since then been transforming the factory to world class standard.

Cross River legislators pass N152.4b appropriate bill

From **Anletie Akpan**, Calabar

THE Cross River State House of Assembly has passed the 2013 appropriation bill by a unanimous decision of the members, after about four months of deliberation.

According to a report of the House Committee on Appropriation, the House approved a new budget size of N152.4 billion.

A breakdown shows that N 44.77 billion was provided for the recurrent expenditure, while the capital expenditure is to gulp the sum of N 107.5 billion.

Presenting the report, the Chairman of the Committee, Rt. Hon. Jacob Otu Enyia said the timing of the presentation of the budget proposal to the House of Assembly by the

Governor, Senator Liyel Imoke was in total compliance with section 8 (1) of the Cross River State Public Finance Management Law No. 12 of 2012.

Enyia said it was evident that the Governor has not

only been exemplary but has lived above board noting that the seeming delay in the presentation of the report was necessitated by the Committee's pursuit of achieving a realistic budget that is implementable,

particularly in the face of the recent loss of oil wells and deprivation of environmental degradation funds.

Imoke had on October 30, 2012 proposed budget size of N151.38 billion before

the Assembly for consideration.

He said: "70 per cent of this shall service capital expenditure requirements while 30 per cent would be set aside for recurrent needs".

Oshiomhole signs tax bill to law, warns defaulters

GOVERNOR Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State has signed the Tax Administration Bill into law with a firm commitment to prudently deploy the resources of the state for the good of the people.

Speaking shortly after signing the law yesterday, in Benin City, Oshiomhole said taxes collected will be put to good use for the people to get value for their money.

He said: "I have just signed the law to make provision for the administration and for the collection of revenue due to Edo State."

"With this law, Edo State Revenue Board now has a formal legal basis for existence and every effort will be made to comply with the spirit and letter of this law and this is consistent to our commitment to reform various institutions of state and bring about long last-

ing positive changes in revenue collection.

"This law will help us to eliminate wastages in the system, improve efficiency and enhance revenue collection. It is my hope that the level of compliance on tax related matters will increase and we will not need to resort to court or use other self help means to collect taxes due to government."

"It remains only for me to

reassure the good people of Edo State that taxes collected will be put to good use. As tax payers you have all become stakeholders.

"He who pays tax has a right to question and to engage government on how his or her taxes are used. You have a right to influence the priorities of government. You have a right to insist that government delivers on its promises."

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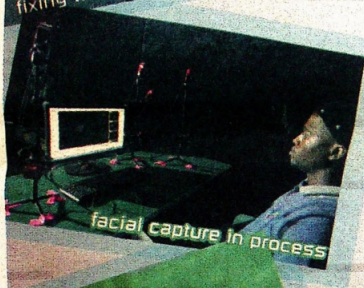
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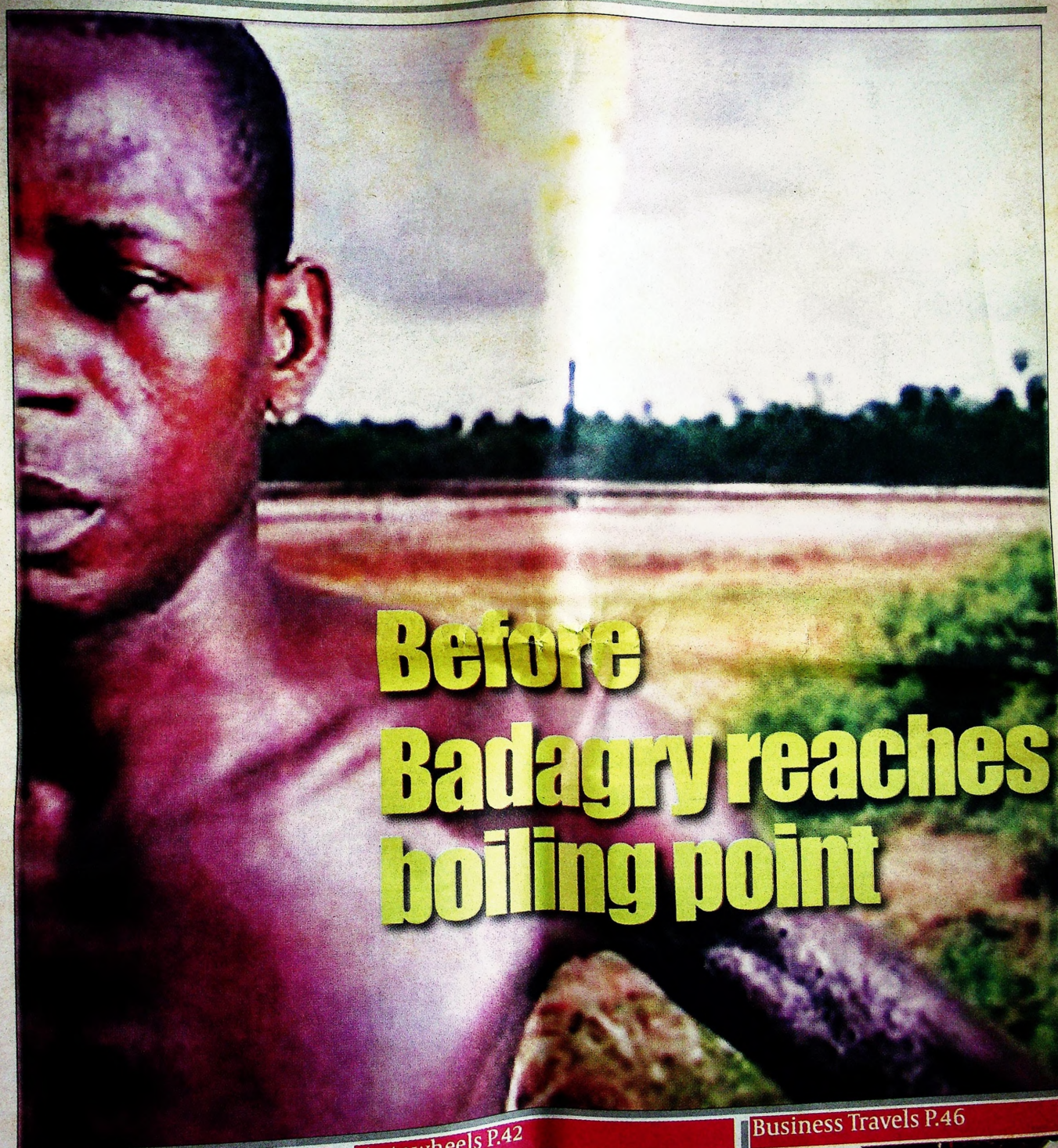
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Limitless Possibilities...

Weekend



Before Badagry reaches boiling point

Arts & Culture P.27

Justus Esiri:
Exit of 'grand
good old
man of
moviedom'



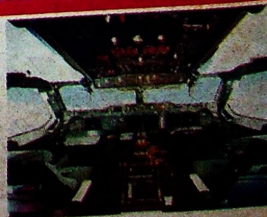
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**New safety
device
berths for
the airlines**



Badagry people are crying out over side

The indigenes of Badagry in Lagos state are now waking up to the reality of gas flaring being experienced in the Niger Delta, as the side effects of gas flares by the West Africa Gas Pipeline Company operating in their environment is hitting them by the day. Though Government has promised to end gas flares by 2014, the people are calling for a more proactive action from government to save their lives



Ajido community in Badagry...gas flaring in the background

By CHINEDU UWAEGBULAM, ROSELINE OKERE and WOLE OYEBADE

BADAGRY is a coastal town and local government area in Lagos State. It is situated between Lagos State and the border with Benin Republic at Seme. The local government can boast of population of over 350,000. The major occupation of the people of Badagry is fishing and farming.

Generally, *The Guardian* learnt that the Egun and the Awori speaking people of Badagry are very peaceful and good to their visitors as many of them were willing to assist strangers in their community.

The Badagry town is noted for being a one-time transit camp of slaves captured from the interior and transported to Europe. This settlement is one of the major tourist centres in the state. It is noted as the museums of relics and artifact relating to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in Nigeria.

Places like Badagry, Igbogbele, Rapoji, Agbojetho, Kweme, Aivoji, Iweseme towns and villages; Ajara, Ikoga and Ajido towns are today in the Badagry local government area and are a division of Lagos State.

Beautiful and natural as the environment of these rural communities may be, they are presently facing the harsh effects of gas flaring from their industrial neighbour, the West Africa Gas Pipeline Company (WAPCo). Though the effect of gas flaring is already being felt in the whole of Badagry Local Government area, Ajido, Imeke, Araromi and Agemuwo are worst hit by this new negative development.

Nigeria, like other oil producing countries, benefits as well as suffers from the positive and negative effects of crude oil drilling such as gas flaring.

After the initial separation of crude oil into gas, oil and water, the oil is sent to refineries for fractional distillation, the gas is usually flared while the water is discharged into the environment.

Gas flaring is the controlled burning of natural gases associated with oil production. The consistent flaring has left a devastating effect on the surrounding environment of oil producing communities.

With a daily crude oil output in excess of two million barrels per day, Nigeria has over 200 gas flaring sites, some of which have been on continuously for over 20 years.

While about 22 billion standard cubic feet (Scf) of natural gas is produced daily, about 75 per cent of this quantity is being flared.

Though the Federal Government has been under serious pressure to put an end to gas flaring due to its adverse effects on human health and the environment, the people in the communities around Badagry are currently nursing their pains from the gas being flared by WAPCo.

Ajido, Imeke, Araromi and Agemuwo are rustic communities on the bank of the Atlantic Ocean, near Badagry. They are areas in dire need of development through the presence of modern infrastructure.

Just about when their prayers were heard, the development has come with a huge cost in terms of pollution, heat, noise and vibration coming from gas being flared by the West African Gas Pipeline Company (WAPCo).

Indeed, the travails of host communities in gas-flaring areas of Niger Delta are now being

replicated in this part the country.

About 170 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (MMscfd) is currently being flared in Ajido, Imeke, Araromi and Agemuwo areas of Badagry Local Council of Lagos State by WAPCo.

The Guardian learnt that the gas flaring actually started around August last year and became very intense since the beginning of 2013.

When *The Guardian* visited the company at the weekend, there were heavily armed security personnel - a large contingent of policemen.

An indigene of Ajido, Musibau Busari, a bricklayer, complained that the gas flaring had made life unbearable for him and his five children who had to contend with the extreme heat and noise emanating from the flaring site.

He said that his family had developed health issues due to the emissions from gas being flared and called on the Federal Government

We were surprised by the action of the company, especially at a time when efforts were on to put an end to gas flaring in Nigeria by the Federal Government. Government should ensure that gas flaring is not allowed to continue in Badagry as it is being witnessed in the Niger Delta.

to come to their rescue.

Another indigene, Dauda Tunde, a 55-year-old fisherman with 10 children, said that they had not been able to complain to the company due to the presence of security personnel with arms who usually would not allow anybody get close to the gate of the company.

Tunde, therefore, appealed to the Lagos State government to do something about the gas flaring in the community. "We want the company to provide air conditioners to us, provide us with quality health care and electricity," he said.

Also lamenting to *The Guardian*, a secondary school teacher in Ajido community, who simply identified himself as Tajudeen, said that they were surprised by the action of the company, especially at a time when efforts were on to put an end to gas flaring in Nigeria by the Federal Government.

According to him, government should ensure that gas flaring is not allowed to continue in Badagry, as it is being witness in the Niger Delta. He expressed fear of developing respiratory illness and other diseases, which normally happens to people living around gas flaring areas, most especially in the form of air and water pollution.

Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN) has condemned the situation, calling on the Federal Government to pressure the company from further flaring of gas in the communities.

In a statement released by Dr. Nnimmo Bassey, Executive Director, Environmental Rights Action (ERA)/ Friends of the Earth, Nigeria, he said "routine gas flaring has been illegal in Nigeria since the Gas Re-injection law came into effect in 1984. To eliminate any doubt over it a Federal High Court in Benin City ruled (in a

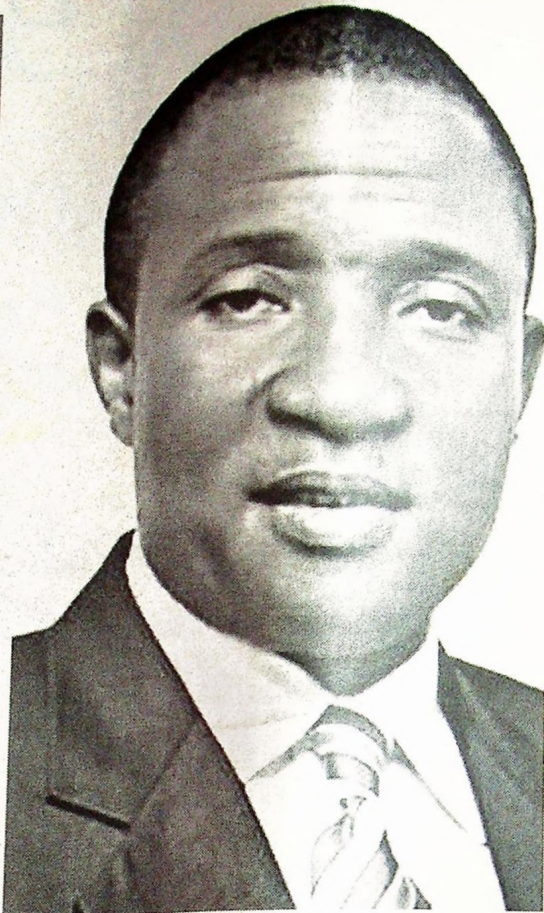


Musibau Busari and Dauda Tunde, Ajido residents

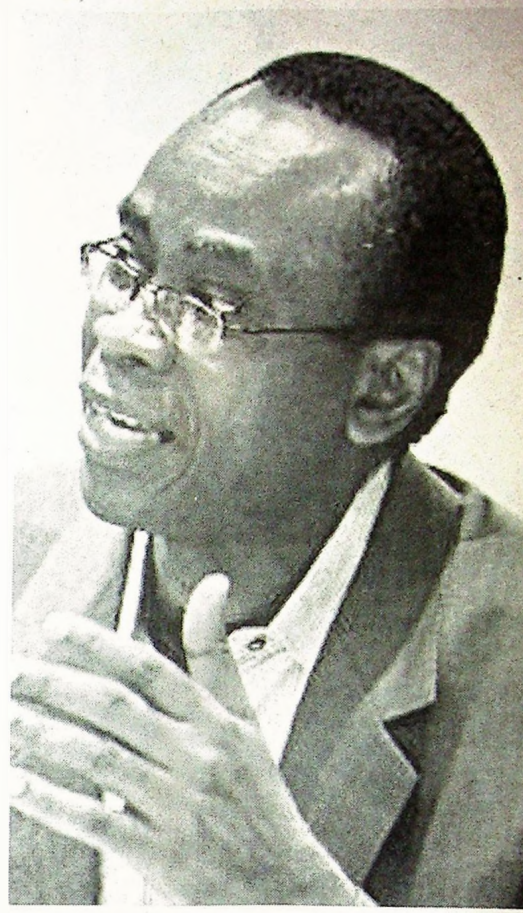
effects of gas flaring in their environment



Diezani Allison-Madueke, Minister of Petroleum resources



Tunji Bello, Lagos State Commissioner for Environment



Nnimo Bassey Executive Director, Environmental Rights Action (ERA)/ Friends of the Earth Nigeria

case brought against Shell by Jonah Gbemre of Iwerekhan Community, Delta State) in November 2005 that gas flaring is unconstitutional and against the human rights of Nigerians."

"ERA sees the scandalous gas flaring by WAPCO at Badagry as an unacceptable escalation of environmental assault against the local people and Nigerians as a whole. We find it particularly objectionable because WAPCO had justified the construction of the pipeline to its backers, including the IFC of the World Bank, with the argument that the pipeline would lead to a reduction of gas flaring in the Niger Delta. Contrary to their claims, the pipeline in reality conveys less than 20 per cent of associated gas that would have been flared. The current flaring in Badagry has effectively increased gas flaring in Nigeria, pumping green house gases into the atmosphere and assaulting the health of the people through the release of a cocktail of toxic elements."

"Globally, emissions released by gas flaring amounts to approximately 400 million tons of CO₂. It is a harmful as well as wasteful practice through which natural gas worth trillions of Naira is wasted."

"ERA calls on the Nigerian government to compel WAPCO to take immediate action to halt this obnoxious gas flaring. We equally call for a halt of routine gas flaring in the Niger Delta. With the two ends of the pipe literally on fire, Nigerians are being assaulted with unacceptable levels of environmental aggression."

Speaking in a similar vein, Chike Chikwendu, Executive Secretary, Friends of the Environment (FOTE) said: "It is unfortunate that pipeline gas which has undergone some processing is being flared in some Badagry communities. This has joined the produced natural gas being flared at production sites. Natural gas whether produced or pipeline emits carbon dioxide and methane into the environment. These two gases are well known Green house gases."

I wonder the resort to flaring by WAPCO. If gas demand in Benin, Togo and Ghana have dropped for whatever reason, can't this gas be directed into the Lagos pipeline system where gas demand is at all time high?"

Globally, emissions released by gas flaring amounts to approximately 400 million tons of CO₂. It is a harmful as well as wasteful practice through which natural gas worth trillions of Naira is wasted

A public health physician, Dr Dumebi Owa, noted that gas flaring harms local health through emissions that have been linked to cancers, asthma, chronic bronchitis, blood disorders, and other diseases.

These health problems affect the people of oil-producing communities, such as the Niger Delta, where 30 million people live with little to no health care access.

She added that oil refinery flare stacks might emit methane and other volatile organic compounds as well as sulfur dioxide and other sulfur compounds, and toxics "all of which are known to exacerbate asthma and other respiratory problems." As another example, flaring at oil and gas production sites may emit methane, sulfur dioxide, aromatic hydrocarbons (benzene, toluene and xylenes), as well as carcinogens such as benzopyrene.

"It is unfortunate that we are having more incidences of flaring that care less about the health of the public. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. It really has to stop," she said.

Experts further observed that gas flaring causes acid rain, which impacts soil fertility and is associated with reduced crop yields, causing hunger in the Niger Delta where fish populations already have declined due to pollution by oil companies, including Chevron. Acid rain eats through villagers roofs that protect local residents from rain. Impoverished villagers have little means to replace their roofs more frequently.

Strange as it may seem, flaring gas is illegal in Nigeria. The first order by Nigerian Head of State related to flaring was in 1969 when President Yakubu Gowon ordered that within five years of set-up, a company must cease flaring. This order was ignored.

Through the Associated Gas Re-Injection Act Number 99 of 1979, the Nigerian government required oil corporations operating in Nigeria to guarantee zero flares by January 1, 1984. Oil companies nonetheless have continued to flare gas, merely paying nominal fines for breaking this law.

The Act allowed some conditions for specific exemptions or the payment of a fee of US \$0.003 (0.3 cents) per million cubic feet, which increased in 1988 to US \$0.07 per million cubic feet, and in January 2008 to US \$3.50 for every 1000 standard cubic feet of gas flared. This is still considered meager and not a deterrent for companies, which find it easier to just pay the fine. Chevron is resisting payment of the increased fine.

Subsequent federal Nigerian legislation repeatedly pushed back the deadline to end gas flaring absolutely—in other words, requiring companies to cease flaring and discontinuing the policy of allowing them to pay a fine for continuing to flare—most recently to year-end 2007, then 2008, then 2010.

Though the Nigerian government promised to enforce the ban they themselves set on flaring in December 31, 2008, they have not enforced the ban by fining the oil companies as promised. Instead they are attempting to delay the deadline yet again, with the backing of the oil industry, to 2012.

In 2005 the federal High Court of Nigeria ruled flaring by Shell and the NNPC, with which Chevron jointly operates, illegal and a violation of the rights to life and dignity. On its part, the government has called for the cessation of the gas flaring as a foil against concomitant impact on human health.

Specifically, the state government has given WAPCO up till Friday to halt the flaring, as it unfolded plans to sanction the company.

Already, WAPCO is said to be losing between \$500,000 and \$600,000 daily on account of the incident and Nigeria is also losing \$15 million per day to gas flaring.

The General Manager, LASEPA, Adebola Shabi, told *The Guardian* that the agency had visited the company and had given WAPCO one week to end the flaring.

Shabi said that the agency had already concluded plans to sanction the company for not informing LASEPA before embarking on gas flaring in the state.

He stated: "We have been to the flaring site and the company told us their challenges. The company did not inform us before embarking on gas flaring. If they had informed us, we would have been able to sensitise the community to what they are about to face. Therefore, we are going to sanction the company for failing to inform LASEPA and we are issuing a stop order on Monday (today)."

Speaking with *The Guardian* at the weekend, General Manager, Corporate Affairs of WAPCO, Harriet Wereko-Brobby, said that the company had decided to embark on flaring the gas which it was unable to export to neighbouring countries due to the damage to a pipeline late last year.

Wereko-Brobby who confirmed that the damaged gas pipeline had been successfully repaired, was however, not sure exactly when the company would stop the flaring.

She assured that the company was concerned about the plight of the people living around the community and would put in place measures that would bring an end to the gas flaring.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government, as part of initiatives to improve on its gas master-plan, has disclosed its resolve to reduce gas flaring in the country to two per cent from the current 11 per cent by the year 2014.

The Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke, stated this in her presentation at the on-going Nigerian Oil and Gas Conference (NOG) on Tuesday in Abuja.

We want the company to provide air conditioners to us, provide us with quality health care and electricity

Besides, she explained that her ministry has been able to reduce gas flare to less than less than 11 percent compared to 30 per cent in 2010, which, according to her, still remained largely inadequate.

"The intention of government through our gas industrialization programme and other measures put in place is to ensure that gas flare is reduced to 2 per cent in 2014, in order to meet international best practice," she said.

According to her, the oil and gas industry has played a critical role towards improving the country's economy, stressing that the mandate of the ministry is to transform the sector towards achieving the international best standards.

Specifically, she said the oil and gas sector had witnessed a renewed way of performance level in the last three years under President Goodluck Jonathan, thus placing the industry on a higher pedestal.

On activities in the upstream sector, she said the ministry, over the last twelve months had continued to maintain a production level of 2.4 million barrels of crude oil per day, while gas production increased to 7.8 billion Standard Cubic Feet (SCF) from 6.2 SCF in 2012.

She maintained that through the support given to Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), in the last two years, its production capacity has increased from 50,000 barrel of crude oil per from day to 140,000 barrel per day in 2012, with an assurance that this would increase over the next two years. The effect means that it will increase over the next two years.

In addition, she boasted that the ministry has repositioned the NPDC to be the dominant gas supplier to the domestic market with over 400 million SCF in the western Niger Delta.

As part of her plans to improve power generation in the country, the minister said in April 2012, with the presidential approval she got, she was able to deploy a 12-month emergency gas supply plan which is gas to power initiative, stating that the initiative has contributed over 230 million SCF per day to power generation while also helping to increase and support national generating capacity by 30 per cent.

To achieve this, she stressed that there has been aggressive expansion of the critical pipeline network, which according to her has never been undertaken since it was built 30 years ago.

"The objective is to double gas supply from 1 to 2 billion cubic feet per day and this is expected to be completed in 2014."



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Signed: NIMASA Planning Committee

For The Record

Economy, politics and human rights: Whither Nigeria? (2)

Being continuation of text of the Gani Fawehinmi Memorial Lecture, delivered by Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria, Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, January 15, 2013. (The first part was published on Thursday, February 7, 2013.)

IN 1994, shortly after taking over power, General Sani Abacha established a multitude of security agencies. In all, he licensed 16 of them under his Chief Security Officer (CSO). Among these, a "Counter Terrorism Agency" under the command of Assistant Commissioner of Police, Zakari Biu, was established to watch over reputed regime enemies. Another entity, the "Strike Force" undertook operations to eliminate such people. Advocates for democracy and human rights became terrorists. Such entities as the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Committee or the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR); Campaign for Democracy (CD); and the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) became enemies of the State. Their leaders and their associates were targeted for persecution or elimination. Some met untimely, unexplained or violent death. While he was busy at this, General Abacha also managed to appropriate to himself an estimated 3-5% of the country's GDP, including \$2.3 billion from the treasury, awarded contracts worth \$1 billion to front companies and taken \$1 billion in bribes from foreign contractors. We lacked the institutions to find out how much or make him accountable.

Around the same time, the word "terrorist" crept into the agitation in the Niger Delta. By 1994, the activists of the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) were described in some quarters as "terrorists". The Internal Security Task Force (ISFT) established by the government to address the situation in Ogoniland was reportedly authorized to undertake "wasting operations coupled with psychological tactics", a euphemism for State terror, including extra-judicial killing of civilians.

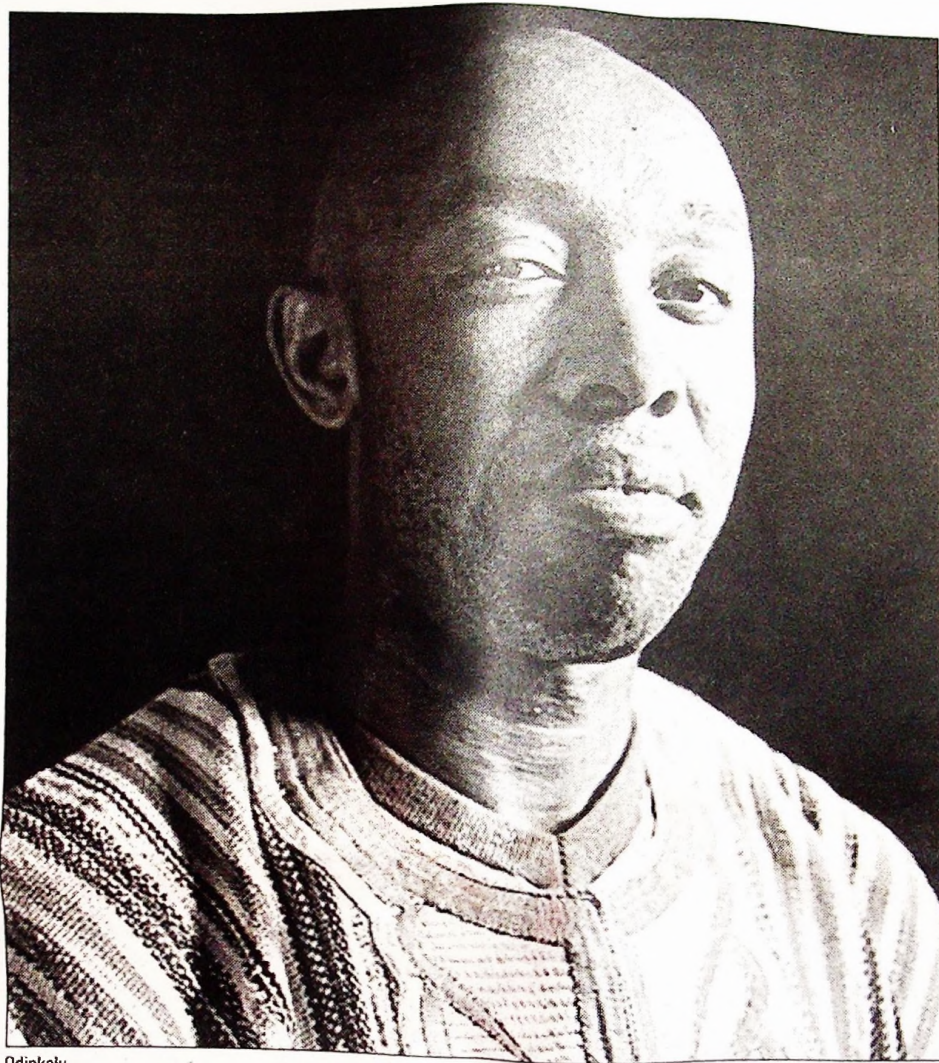
The approach of the Abacha regime to the Niger Delta produced two consequences. First it resulted in replacement of civic advocacy by armed groups. Second, it created a conflict economy in which, among other things, some security sector managers developed an appetite for open ended expeditionary operations for pecuniary benefit and some of their operatives traded in ordnance to armed elements. This would render the courts and similar pacific mechanisms of dispute resolution unappetizing and unduly expensive.

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah recalls in his 2011 book, *Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission*, a case between two businessmen from Ihiala in south eastern Nigeria, in which one of the parties, a civilian, easily procured from senior military officers "3 huge bombs and explosives, 2 cartons of live rounds of 7.62mm military bullets and a 25kg bag of dangerous bomb making agent - potassium nitrate." One of these men became an elected federal law maker in 1999. His impunity was complete.

It is now evident that the murder of Dele Giwa in 1986 was a game changer for public safety and security and the evolution of the law's institutions in Nigeria.

Where, until then, violent murder was associated with criminals, Dele Giwa's killing was the first in popular conviction to be widely blamed on the State. The determined effort of then regime to frustrate any effort to ensure accountability for his killing began a process that ultimately compromised Nigeria's criminal justice and judicial systems almost irretrievably. Over time, this inspired deeper criminalization of the State, tragically democratizing access to the means of mass violence in the country. Through these means, the Nigerian State compromised the foundation of its claim to a monopoly of the means of violence - the defence of those who live within its territory. This lack of legitimacy would spread to the institutions of the law.

The return of elective government in Nigeria may have ended the terror of the doorbell but has also seen a deepening crisis of unsafe streets and neighbourhoods. Above all, it dramatized the human conse-



Odinkalu

quences of this institutional collapse in which the judicial and legal process has also been a victim.

By 2003, the institutional collapse had become so significant as to compel Nigeria's leading authority on constitutional law, Prof. Ben Nwabueze, in 2007 to accuse the Supreme Court of having played a "discreditable part" in this process.

If today many Nigerians are either reconciled to mass violence, ambivalent about it or have turned to vigilante methods or narrow identities as a response to it. Increasingly, the State is no longer trusted to do what it exists to do. As a result, people have turned to their neighbourhoods and identity formations subverting in effect the project of a common citizenship and common humanity on which all strong states are built. The only persons who now matter are those who carry guns or have the means to do so.

PUSH FACTORS THAT THREATEN OUR "FINE CHINA"

The result? Our "piece of fine China" is precariously balanced and threatened by the despotisms of decentralized mass violence and predatory political economy and yet the consequences of having it "dropped on a tile floor" are simply impossible to contemplate. From this narrative, many candidates struggle for attention among the factors that could trip us up and send our "fine China" splintering. I will briefly address three before concluding: our shared marginalization complex; the challenge of democratized violence and the externalities of living in a dangerous neighbourhood.

(a) MARGINALISATION COMPLEX AND "BANTUSTANIZATION" OF NIGERIA

The standard response to these pathologies revealed by our history is a "materialization" of

Nigerian politics attended by competitive allegations of marginalization, plunder and multi-dimensional violence. In the last quarter of 2012, Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, in a series published in the *Daily Trust*, examined these competitive claims of marginalization across the country and concluded: in all of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, the story is very similar - due to domination, the "people" have been marginalised. Two broad issues are posed when ethno-regional domination emerges as a political issue in Nigeria. The first issue is the control of political power and its instruments such as the armed forces, the public service and the judiciary. The second is the control of economic power and resources. Both are powerful instruments that are used to influence the authoritative allocation of resources to groups and individuals.

Rather than forge a common dialogue among Nigerians, the capture of our politics and patrimony by a self-regarding elite seems to have set us asunder.

Today, everyone is focused on where the President or Governor comes from rather than what these important institutions of our country accomplish or achieve. The only good politician or leader is the one from my sect or worship group, ethnic group or neighbourhood. We have become the advertisement of Tagore's country "broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls" and have retreated behind identity frontiers, reducing the country increasingly to a collection of Bantustans, to which "indigenes" are banished and into which trespass by "settlers" is contingent on a whimsical license from the indigenes. Each side appears to reserve the right to determine at their whim, who or which among the other community can live or die by a thousand cuts. Thus, episodically and progressively, we mete out murderous inter-community and ethnic violence to one another with no hope of finding out who the perpetrators are or bringing them to account; and state governments can expel workers from their public service because they are non-indigenes and nothing happens.

Many people trace the crisis of the Bantustanization of Nigeria to the proviso to Section 147(3) of the 1999 Constitution, which obliges the President in appointing Ministers to designate "at least one Minister from each State, who shall be an indigene of such State." The Federal Character Commission Act empowers the Federal Character Commission to, among

other things: work out an equitable formula, subject to the approval of the President, for the distribution of all cadres of posts in the civil and the public services of the Federation and of the States, the armed forces, the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies, bodies corporate owned by the Federal or a State Government and Extra-Ministerial Departments and parastatals of the Federation and States.

In addition, under S. 17(2)(k), the Commission is empowered to define who the indigene of a state is for the purpose of benefiting from federal goodies under S. 4(1).

There are multiple problems with this. First, the competing claims of "indigene" against "settler" and vice versa are characterized by un-theorized etymologies and arbitrary or, at best, poorly documented claims of original settlement in relatively new (about a century old) settlements, garnished sometimes by myths and legends that can often sound, in the words of one author, like "the concoctions of the mind of a not so clever diviner." Second, the constitutional position that each state must produce a Minister is itself poorly theorized. In Presidential politics, the essential difference between the Executive and the Legislature is that electoral legitimacy is unified in one person in the former and atomized among all functionaries in the latter. The authority of every executive officer in the executive is derived from the legitimacy of the President or Governor unlike Parliament where every member is elected. As a result, Ministers do not and cannot represent any people except their appointor whose programmes and policies they are appointed to execute and there is no reason for them to be allocated by the State rather than by the needs of public service. While where a Minister comes from may matter to some people, the fact is, in the end, few would care about where a Minister comes from who delivers tangible gains to their community.

Consequently, thirdly, the allocation of a Minister per State reduces ministerial appointments in particular and public service generally to another perquisite of Nigerian public life rather than a pedestal for public service that it is supposed to be. The goal of Ministerial life is thus reduced to merely getting the office with no regard for what is done with it. This in turn feeds a murderous zero-sum psyche in which the only way to increase the odds of getting picked is by eliminating as many people as possible from consideration. This mindset underpins the abuse of office that has historically characterizes many a ministerial career and the blood-letting that attends this indigene-settler problem. There must be a limit to the replication of Ministerial portfolios or the manufacture of unviable States.

Far from enhancing benefits to indigenes or settlers, the Bantustanization of Nigeria has deepened our collective immiseration by handing our public exchequer to what one notable scholar has called "crooks". I should explain by way of background to this point that a functional state is founded on the dispersal of power, kinning of its institutions of accountable government, and competitive electoral politics for periodic renewal of government's mandate expressed through the votes of citizens. State building is, therefore, founded on a tripod of three values: legitimacy, accountability, and capacity. These three are essential for sustaining the authority, revenue generation and service delivery capabilities of the State. When they fail, government can be predatory. Explaining the anatomy of government by crooks, Paul Collier points out:

If politicians can still face a reasonable chance of winning without bothering to deliver good performance, then... the sort of people who seek to become politicians will change. If being honest and competent does not give you an electoral advantage, then the honest and competent will be discouraged. Crooks will replace the honest as candidates.

(b) THE DEMOCRATISATION OF VIOLENCE

It is quite clear to any interested and objective observer that "governance deficits and pervasive insecurity... are inter linked and mutually reinforcing."

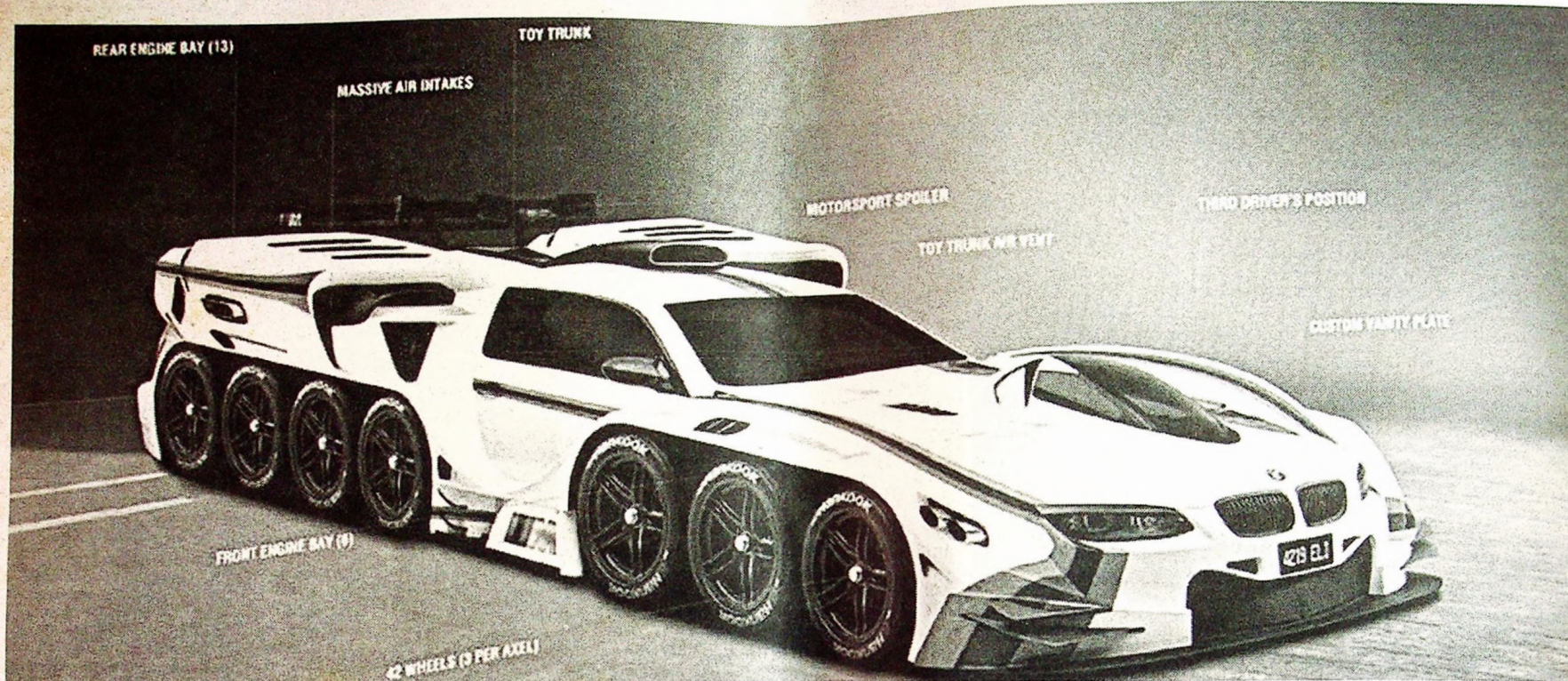
Steven Pinker has marshalled compelling evidence to show that the course of human progress is defined by a progressive diminution of violence through legal regulation of its deployment and accountability for its unlawful use.³⁸ Declines in violence, he argues, "are a product of social, cultural, and material conditions."

TO BE CONTINUED

Where, until then, violent murder was associated with criminals, Dele Giwa's killing was the first in popular conviction to be widely blamed on the State. The determined effort of then regime to frustrate any effort to ensure accountability for his killing began a process that ultimately compromised Nigeria's criminal justice and judicial systems almost irretrievably. Over time, this inspired deeper criminalisation of the State, tragically democratizing access to the means of mass violence in the country.

AutoWheels

Auto-makers and the future game plan



The new future BMW

THE glitz and glamour of the year's first big auto show is still reverberating around the automobile industry, and with the American economy advancing, optimism is the order of the day in Detroit.

But behind the scenes, there are some real worries around the world about just how strong the auto market will be in the future.

This weekend, Jalopnik.com, the auto enthusiast Web site, raised a question that many companies have been asking themselves:

What if the auto market is at Peak Car? Translated, that means, what if the biggest car countries of the world have maxed out on consumer demand for automobiles?

Jalopnik based that question on a story last week from Quartz, the business site run by The Atlantic Monthly.

It suggested that the world is basically on the verge of global gridlock.

It suggested the world's auto companies are facing a future in which they become "enablers of mobility," helping nations develop systems to move people around, rather than sell them individual conveyances.

Purists, like those who read Jalopnik, scoff at that idea, saying there will always be demand for vehicles that set their owners blood on fire.

But it's a question that many people who study transportation have been pondering for some time now.

"For generations, American

car buying has been guided by one grand philosophy: which one do I want? But now, another question has begun to percolate: do I need a car at all?"

In recent years, it has only become more convinced that the job for the world's biggest auto companies will simply get harder.

All around the United States and Canada, people are thinking seriously about giving up their automobiles.

Of course, this is impossible to do if you're a farmer in the Great Plains or a contractor in Texas, where you simply have to be able to load up a pickup.

But in American and Canadian cities, the emphasis is much less on building new roads, and much more

on building bike paths.

In Michigan, the county has put on a strong push the past year or so to protect pedestrians.

The campus at Stanford University in Palo Alto seems to have almost more bicycles than students.

People are clamoring to use public transportation in places from Chicago to Los Angeles, where downtown residents just voted to bring back streetcars. Bike rentals abound everywhere from Boston to Chattanooga. And everywhere, people want to live places where they can walk, whether to work or just go for a stroll in the evening.

Meanwhile, more women than men are now buying automobiles, and their choices are sharply different

from those that male buyers make, as reported in Forbes last year.

These social trends may be just as significant for the automobile industry as the original shift to horseless carriages a century ago.

Back then, people felt hampered by their lack of mobility and itched to get out of cities into leafy green suburbs, where they'd have room to breathe.

Now, young consumers and even middle-aged and older ones are rethinking the lifestyle that has them go from inside a house to inside a car. The possibility of Peak Car is seismic, and it portends change not just for Detroit but also for automakers in Europe, China, Japan, Brazil and elsewhere.

Quartz, in its story last week, isn't predicting the end of the automobile. But it believes automobile companies will have to integrate themselves into a transportation system for a high-population, low-emission future.

I think the challenge is even more significant. Auto companies, who are used to playing on peoples' emotions and sense of independence, now have to find new ways for consumers to consider making them part of their lives.

In the past, they had to build a case for choosing their vehicle over someone else's. Now, they have to build a case for owning a car at all. And their secret fear is that they may not be able to do so.

2014 Volvo S60, XC60 redefine with more safety gear

By Taiwo Hassan

Volvo has removed the virtual cover from its 2014 S60 sedan and XC60 SUV, revealing numerous interior and exterior updates.

Volvo refers to this midlife freshening as the most extensive in its company history, although it is well within the updates we have seen from other automakers.

Both vehicles receive a facelift for the upcoming model year. The S60 now hides its windshield washer nozzles, and the chrome grille surround has likewise vanished.

New headlamps, wider grille, LED tail lights, wheels, and integrated exhaust tips give the sedan an updated appearance.

The XC60 wears a new hood and headlamps, and black trim has been removed for a more monochrome exterior appearance. (See our last S60 and XC60 road tests.)

Inside, both vehicles benefit from new upholstery colors, wood inlays, headliner, and metal accents. More notable, Volvo has upgraded its entertainment offerings with Sensus Connected Touch, an infotainment system that features a glove-friendly touch screen, smart-phone connectivity, and

voice-command control. This system enables Internet searching and audio streaming, Google Maps navigation, and a variety of integrated applications.

Volvo promises that fuel economy has improved. Good news, as fuel efficiency has not been a brand hallmark. In addition, available paddle shifters promise to make the automatic transmission more engaging to command.

On the safety front, Volvo is offering permanent high beams that automatically dim when a car approaches and an enhancement to its active headlamps to better illuminate around corners.

Northern drivers will appreciate that a heated windshield will be offered on models fitted with a rain sensor to help clear ice on winter mornings.

In total, the changes sound rather minor, but refinements and more equipment is always welcomed, so long as pricing is kept in check. When we tested the S60, we quite liked the basic hardware, citing lively acceleration and agile handling. We're glad Volvo hasn't messed with the sedan's dynamics, but a bit more suspension refinement on the XC60 would have been welcomed.

2014 Volvo XC 60 SUV



2014 Volvo S60 Sedan

McLaren's P1 Supercar built-in 903-hp plug-in hybrid

By the time we actually see the McLaren P1 in the carbon fiber next week, there won't be many details left not already announced by the British supercar maker.

Today, McLaren leaked out the power and engine specs of its new supercar, announcing the P1 would offer 903 hp thanks to a combination of a twin turbo 3.8-liter V-6 and a massive battery pack that can be charged from the outside making it the world's fastest plug-in hybrid.

McLaren says the 3.8 liter V-6 will churn out 787 hp on its own, while the electric motor and battery pack add an additional 176 hp, all of which routes through the 7-speed dual-clutch transmission to the rear wheels.

The battery pack, which adds a surprisingly small 211 lbs of weight to the P1, allows the car to drive 6 miles on electricity alone and if depleted, can be charged from an outlet.

To make the connection with its Formula 1 machines, McLaren says the P1 will come with an F1-like electric boost dubbed the Instant Power Assist

System, a button on the steering wheel that commands the electric motor to provide all of its power instantly.

All this in a car that

McLaren suggests could get about 25 mpg in everyday driving. Which is the real point of all this electric technology: McLaren and other supercar makers

aren't immune from tough fuel economy rules in Europe, the United States and Asia, and adding a dash of green-ish technology appeals to the billionaires

who can afford the P1, the upcoming Ferrari Enzo successor and Porsche's hybrid 918. As the P1 shows, top speeds alone are no longer sufficient to make a supercar super.



McLaren's P1 car

Hyundai Nigeria appoints independent sales agent

By Taiwo Hassan

HYUNDAI Motors Nigeria Limited, authorised distributors and marketers of Hyundai automobiles has named Real Point West African Limited in Warri Delta State as one of its sales agents in Nigeria.

This brings to 13 such Hyundai sales and service facilities spread across strategic locations in Nigeria.

Managing Director, Stallion Motors Limited, custodians of Hyundai in Nigeria, Parvir Singh, said the appointment of an independent sales agent is crucial to the growing clientele of Hyundai brand in Nigeria and the urge to carve a niche for stylish and efficient Hyundai models.

"Hyundai has become a prestigiously brand and a toast of automobile freaks worldwide due to its exceptional performance, reasonable pricing and emotional elegance which are aimed at providing new values and experiences to yet more customers."

"The essence of pushing boundaries is to emphasise Hyundai brand direction

geared towards providing new values and experiences to yet more customers of today through ways that are unique to the brand and go beyond customers' expectations," Singh added.

He also said that the company was not just motivated by the volume of sales, adding that "In whatever we do, our responsibilities to our cus-

tomers, society and environment are paramount."

Singh however reassured customers of excellent service delivery, stating that the newly appointed agent is remarkably equipped to operate optimally without sacrificing Hyundai's basic principles of customer satisfaction.

An autonomously managed

shop, Real Point West African Limited has state-of-the-art diagnostic and repair equipment for after sales support.

The facility like every other Hyundai outlets has cordial relationship with finance institutions that can help customers finance any choice Hyundai model after pledging the mandatory down payment.

By Taiwo Hassan

In line with its global philosophy, Kia Motors has launched "The Kia Care," a national service package design to offer recommended periodic maintenance schedule across its network in the country.

According to the company, the scheme is available across all the models and is valid for a period of three years or 60,000 Kms whichever comes first.

It ensured that vehicles are maintained as per schedule thus, increasing their performance levels and lower operational costs.

Maintenance parts include filters, oils, spark plugs, brakes, clutch, among others, are inspected and replaced as required under schedule.

"This is a new direction in innovation for Kia and a real cost saver for customers. We want the Kia brand to stand for more than just delivering great products with great quality and best warranty; we want Kia to be known as a brand that stands for delivering value for money service excellence. Kia care is a fantastic programme and this allows buyers to guarantee the lowest possible service costs throughout their ownership," said General Manager

Firm sets up auto service centre

of After Sales, Kia Motors, Tatpati.

Kia offers standard warranty of three years on passenger range products, however a five years warranty is offered on premium products like Cadanza, Mohave and Quoris.

But the recently launched Quoris comes with five years maintenance free programme and warranty.

Kia Motors has over 20 dedicated after sales service outlets with a team of over 400 trained service members across Nigeria.

The company has put in place latest pneumatic equipment and workshop facilities to cater to maintenance services' less than 90 minutes.

The National Training Center at Lagos for Nigeria keeps developing new training programs to upgrade their technicians in the latest technology, which includes air suspension, electronically controlled brake systems, engines and automatic gearboxes.

Every year over 200 technicians are trained in various courses on Kia Technology, while some technicians are sent abroad for trainings.

FRSC boss, Chidoka, to deliver keynote address at ABC's 20th anniversary

By Taiwo Hassan

THE Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Osita Chidoka, will deliver the keynote address at ABC Transport's 20th anniversary event scheduled for March 1, 2013, at the Sheraton Hotels, Lagos.

According to a press statement from ABC Transport, the FRSC boss was chosen for the occasion because of his enormous contribution to the development of safety on Nigerian roads in recent times.

Chidoka, a graduate of Business Management from the University of Nigeria

(1995) holds a Masters degree in Transport Policy and Logistics from the George Mason University, USA, a graduate Diploma in Maritime and Ports Management from the University of Singapore (2002) and a certificate in Global Strategy and Political Economy from Mansfield College, Oxford University in 2004.

His experience spans areas of public policy, economy and politics. Under his leadership the FRSC has evolved into a dynamic government institution applying the best internationally recognised practices as well as introduc-

ing many innovative safety policies and practices that have drastically reduced the number of road traffic accidents on Nigerian highways. ABC Transport had kicked-off her 20th anniversary celebration with a press conference on February 5, 2013, at the company's terminal 3, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos.

The event highlighted the unveiling of seven new coaches buses and donation of three demonstration buses to the automobile/mechanical engineering departments of Lagos State University, Imo State University, and Federal Polytechnic, Nekede.

Volvo to become world's largest heavy duty truck manufacturer

By Taiwo Hassan

AB Volvo has signed an Agreement with the Chinese vehicle manufacturer Dongfeng Motor Group Company Limited (DFG) to acquire 45 per cent of a new subsidiary of DFG, Dongfeng Commercial Vehicles (DFCV), which will include the major part of DFG's medium- and heavy-duty commercial vehicles business.

At completion of the transaction, the Volvo Group will become the world's largest manufacturer of heavy duty trucks.

"This is a very exciting venture that will combine the best of two worlds, strengthening the positions of the Volvo Group and Dongfeng and offering excellent opportunities to both parties," says Volvo's President and Chief Executive Officer, Olof

• Signs strategic alliance with Chinese company, Dongfeng Motor Group

"Combining Dongfeng's strong domestic position and know-how with the Volvo Group's technological expertise and global presence will offer DFCV excellent potential for growth and profitability in and outside China."

Completion of the transaction is subject to certain conditions, including the approval of relevant anti-trust agencies and Chinese authorities. The purchase consideration amounts to RMB 5.6 billion.

The ambition is to complete the transaction as soon as possible and completion is expected to take place within approximately 12 months from today.

The transaction with DFG follows the recent agreement between DFG and Nissan Motors, in which DFG pur-

chased the medium- and heavy-duty commercial vehicle operation from the joint venture DFL (owned jointly by DFG and Nissan Motors).

The major part of the re-purchased commercial vehicle operation will be included in the new company, Dongfeng Commercial Vehicles (DFCV). According to the agreement between DFG and Volvo, Volvo will acquire 45 per cent of Dongfeng Commercial Vehicles for a total amount of RMB 5.6 billion, subject to adjustments, to be paid on closure of the transaction. Payment of the purchase price will increase Volvo's net debt by approximately SEK 6 billion.

The Volvo Group is the world's third largest manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks with 180,000 units sold in

2011. Dongfeng was the second largest producer of heavy-duty trucks in 2011, with total sales of 186,000 units, of which approximately 142,000 units were produced by the part of the company that will be included in DFCV.

"We are pursuing a clear strategy to achieve our vision of becoming the world leader in sustainable transport solutions," says Olof Persson. "With this agreement in place, we take a crucial step toward reaching a number of our key strategic objectives such as size and growth in Asia."

In 2011, DFCV reported net sales of approximately RMB 39 billion (pro forma) and operating income of approximately RMB 1.2 billion (pro forma). DFCV has approxi-

mately 28,000 employees and sold 142,000 heavy-duty trucks and 49,000 medium-duty trucks in 2011 (pro forma).

For the first three quarters of 2012, DFCV's net sales amounted to approximately RMB 22 billion (pro forma) and operating income to approximately RMB 0.3 billion (pro forma).

During the same period, 81,000 heavy-duty trucks and 35,000 medium-duty trucks were sold by DFCV (pro forma). At the end of the third quarter of 2012, DFCV had net financial debt of approximately RMB 500 million (pro forma).

The AB Volvo holding in DFCV is expected to be reported as an associated company and consolidated in accordance with the equity method, one-line consolidation, within the Trucks segment.

During 2012, the Chinese market for heavy-duty trucks totaled approximately 636,000 vehicles, while the corresponding figure for the medium-duty market was 290,000 vehicles. DFCV occupied a leading position in China in both the heavy- and medium-duty segments, with sales of 102,000 heavy-duty trucks and 45,500 medium-duty trucks, corresponding to market shares of 16.1 per cent and 15.7 per cent, respectively. "China is the world's largest truck market with a total market for heavy trucks equivalent to the European and North American markets combined," says Olof Persson.

"The partnership between the Volvo Group and DFG will strengthen DFCV's already strong position in China and provide the company with the right conditions for successful international expansion."

BusinessTravel

New safety device berths for the airlines

By Wole Shadare

With this, there is no more hiding place for airlines, as a device that would help to monitor situation during flight operation is quickly being embraced by the operators.

To put pay to speculations on the actual cause of accidents the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and airline operators are embracing a new system that would assist them to know the exact or probable cause in the event of mishap.

At the moment, Aero, IRS, and Brass Airlines are some of the airlines that have installed Automated Flight Information Reporting System (AFIRS) in their aircraft.

Arik, according to the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) is on the verge of having the system on its aircraft, while First Nation Airways is undergoing delay in returning to operation as a result of plans to have the equipment on its two A319 airplanes.

Had the equipment been embraced by Nigerian carriers way back in 2005 and 2006 when aircraft were falling from the sky, perhaps, the controversy trailing the report of Bellview plane crash on October 22, 2005 in Lisa, Ogun State would not have arisen in the first place as the equipment would have helped to know what exactly happened to the ill-fated aircraft.

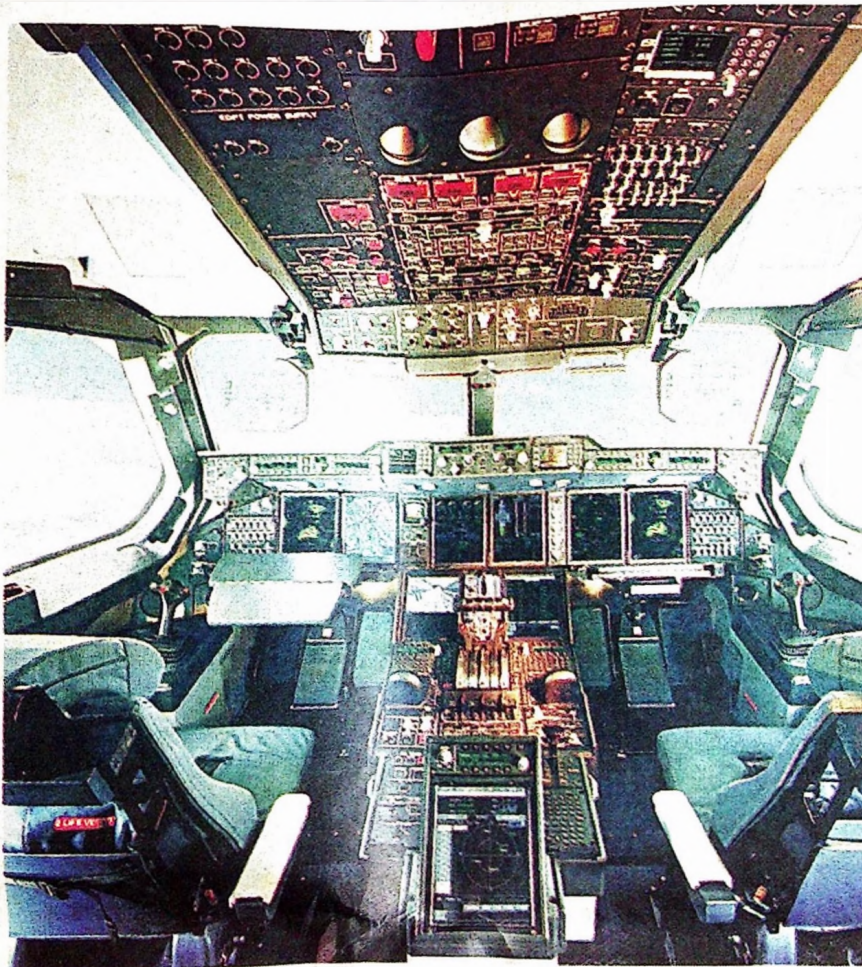
The black boxes could not be found and the Accident Investigation Bureau's (AIB) first "Final Report" would not be different from the second "Final Report". Two final reports on one accident is not only ridiculous but highly embarrassing to the nation and ridicules the whole essence of accident investigation, most especially when the vital components to unravel accidents were looted or destroyed at the site of the accident.

The AFIRS is a revolutionary new technology that combines on-board logic and processing on the aircraft with ground based servers that interpret and route messages from the aircraft to parties on the ground that need to know such as the airline, operation centres and regulators.

The equipment costs \$60,000 each. For an airline with six airplanes, it would cost \$360,000. For Arik Air, which has about 18 aircraft, it would cost about \$1.1 million.

Cumulatively, scheduled domestic airlines, charter operators and private jet owners may spend over \$25 million to have the technology in their aircraft.

The animation feature can also be used to reconstruct or simulate a flight scenario, which can be used for investigative purposes by addressing the immediate challenge of locating and decoding black boxes.



A cockpit of an aircraft

When an event is detected and triggered not only is an alert sent from the aircraft to interested parties, but the facility also starts to stream black box, Flight Data Recorder (FDR) data off the aircraft in real-time to ground base servers. Streamed FDR can be used to validate, corroborate and complement preliminary investigative findings at crash site just hours after accident.

It also provides a record of the event in situations where the black-box data is destroyed not retrieved.

The system performs real-time triggered alert-

ing and black-box data streaming in the event of an emergency on the aircraft.

The Director General of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Dr. Harold Demuren disclosed that the equipment on board airplanes streams real-time, visual situational awareness of the aircraft through the ground base servers that send the message alert to the airline, their operation centres or the civil aviation authority where the aircraft under duress can be seen in their flight tracking software such as Sabre's Flight Explorer.

Speaking to The Guardian, Demuren explained that when the Dana Air accident occurred, people wanted to know the cause of the accident, adding that, "if they had known the true cause of the accident nobody would have worried".

"If I had known the second day that this was what caused it; no problem, things would have been clear. But because we don't know everybody started to speculate. I told them then that aviation safety is data driven. I refused to agree with their speculation. I cannot speculate in life".

The accident he said led the agency to mandate carriers to acquire the device, stressing that this technology has been there for a long time and not a new device.

His words, "Those of us who have contact with both civil and military aviation, we know this very well. Some of the military aircraft cost up to \$1 billion. You cannot go for a flight one day and lose it; it costs a lot of money. So how do we fly them? They have gadget on the ground that tells them everything that happens on board. There is a technology that is on the ground and we now have it".

Demonstrating how it works, he said, "The equipment is put on board the aircraft. This equipment picks all the data that is going into flight data recorder and directly transmits down to the ground while the aircraft is airborne without pilot's input. So if there was high temperature it will transmit it down. If there are exigencies it transmits everything down. The second thing it will do is flight data recorder filming. It will film all those data. So there are two functions. One is alerting. It alerts you when there is any exigency; number two it will be filming and send them to the ground".

"That is what we have planned to do with all Nigerian aircraft. As I am speaking with you, Aero, Brass, IRS have them on their aircraft. First Nation are almost through with theirs. Aero is doing well. Arik don't have exactly, but Arik need to do certain things, to subscribe to Boeing for the programme", he added.

The system, according to the NCAA chief, would help them to understand the problem of human factor in air operation.

Also speaking on the issue, the International Safety Programme Director, Airbus, Mr. Marc Ballion, said, AFIRS would automatically be fixed on all Airbus planes from 2015.

He said with this installation, speculations arising from probable causes of aircraft accident would be over, stressing that before the airline could come out with the latest technology, it took two years of intensive research.

Bellview: Two reports, many controversies

By Wole Shadare and Chika Goodluck-Ogazi

SINCE the 'official' release of accident reports by the Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB), one report stood out for scrutiny. The report was the one that involved Bellview Airlines that crashed in Lisa, Ogun State, killing all 117 passengers and crew. There are allegations that the report may have been compromised or doctored after four years when the report was submitted and this has brought to the fore why it takes so long to make accident reports public.

Four years was too long to keep an important document secret. In other climes, such reports are immediately made public which helps to forestall the type of situation that is playing out over the Bellview.

Nigerians remain absolutely committed to finding the true cause of this tragic accident through open and transparent process.

Bellview has already faulted the report and has come out with what it said, "violated the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annex 13 and best industry practice", claiming further that "there cannot be two final reports".

The current report has been generally not in compliance with ICAO Annex 13 standard recommended practices which require AIB to submit the final report to the operator as the report the carrier claimed to have received in 2010 was fundamentally different from the report now in circulation.

Experts said Annex 13 also mandate AIB to attach to the report as an appendix its written position which it said was made available to AIB in 2010.

Not a few said it was ironical that the AIB stated that the true cause of the sad accident is still 'unknown', arguing that the agency still went ahead to make speculative allusion, adding that accident report, "should not be speculative about the cause of the accident".

Spokesman for Bellview, Terver-Uzer Luke in one of the reports

handed to the airline four years ago said, "The captain of the ill-fated flight, Lambert Imasuen had 1053.54 hours experience on type in addition with over five thousand hours and not the 153.45 hours as erroneously stated on page 8 of AIB report in the second report released to the media last week.

He explained that the captain was trained in the United States under the US FAA approved training programme facility. Imasuen before he died had a valid First Class Medical certificate despite the allusion made by AIB.

While the new AIB report had indicted Bellview, stating that investigation revealed that the B737-200 airplane had technical defects, noting, "the airplane should not have been dispatched for either the accident flight or earlier flights", the other one that was earlier released and distributed to the airline, Boeing, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority in 2009, clearly states that, "Investigation revealed that the airplane had mechanical anomalies, but none that would have prevented continued flight".

The absence of forensic evidence according to the report prevented the determination of the captain's medical condition at the time of the accident.

Speaking on the issue, President Aviation Round Table, Captain Dele Ore said Bellview was only exercising the right they have under Nigeria constitution and under the ICAO recommended practices under annex 13, on aircraft accident investigation, that allowed them to have a report of the investigation and fair comment before making it public.

But I think I want to say that the report is contrary to the normal accident investigation purpose, because this report is indicting and will destroy the culture of accident investigation, because in future people will not come up with facts and information when accidents occur because of fear of being blamed".

"Things have moved beyond the past because what we have today is far beyond what we had before. We should be careful

because if we throw stress into the system it will cause more accidents".

"Even looking at the report anything they said (Accident Investigation Bureau) was speculative, the only thing we know was that then (when the accident happened) the regulatory authority did not do their job, but that is a long time ago, it's like beating about the bush. What is at the disposal of AIB is what they have; it is not internal politics but people trying to prove that they are working or they can do the job".

"The report is not different from what we already know. The report of the investigation, rather than meeting its purpose, is contrary to what they are meant for today. It was suppose to avoid the reoccurrence of that accident in the future. The reason for the accident investigation report was to correct the mistakes of the past, not, what is going on now".

Ore was particularly pissed with how long it took the agency to release the report, saying, "It has been delayed for too long that we are not really gaining anything from it. During the time the accident happened, there are many things that was wrong in the aviation sector".

"However things have moved beyond the past, what we are having now is a big improvement from what we were having then. The NCAA is more organised, responsible and autonomous regulatory body, than in the past.

"I do not agree to what is happening now, this report has taken them so many years to publish, since 2005, so many things would have been forgotten, one may not be able to recollect all that has happened".

Speaking in the same vein, former Commandant, Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, Group Captain John Ojikutu (rtd) carpentered AIB for the report, saying what it published were remote causes laced with speculations and not the actual cause in as much as it failed to publish the transcript of the cockpit voice recorder and that of the air traffic controllers to aircraft communication transcript.

Etihaad commences daily operations to Lagos

By Chika Goodluck-Ogazi

ETIHAD Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, said it has upgraded its Lagos flight operations to daily, aimed at meeting growing demand of passengers travelling to and from Nigeria.

The airline has earlier launched its service between Lagos, West Africa's most populous city, and Abu Dhabi on July 1, 2012, with six flights a week, enhancing the links between Nigeria, Africa's third

largest economy, and the United Arab Emirates.

The new daily service will be introduced on March 31, 2013, coinciding with the start of the airline's new summer schedule, and will significantly improve connections between Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates, and beyond to key destinations across the airline's network in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, India, Malaysia and China. The General Manager and West Africa Nigeria, Maurice Phohleli said: "We

have received a very positive response from the Nigerian market since launching our service six months ago. Clearly, the people of Nigeria appreciate the superior product and service of the 'World's Leading Airline' and we are proud to serve them.

"Our passenger loads are strong and we are confident that this route will continue to support the growing flow of business and leisure travellers who fly from Nigeria to the United Arab Emirates, and onwards over the air-

line's hub in Abu Dhabi to key commercial and tourism destinations in the GCC, North and Southeast Asia and markets in the Indian Subcontinent", he added.

According to the airline, the service comprised a mix of morning and evening departures, is operated by an Airbus A330-200 aircraft configured to carry 22 Pearl Business class and 240 Coral Economy class passengers. It stated that Etihad Airways recognises the importance of the West African region and is committed to expand-

ing its footprint across the continent. In November 2012, Etihad Cargo, a division of Etihad Airways, re-introduced a weekly freighter service between Abu Dhabi and Lagos which was complemented with the addition of 16 new interline destinations across West Africa. The airline also noted that Etihad Airways currently flies to eight destinations in Africa and the Indian Ocean including: Johannesburg, Khartoum, Casablanca, Cairo, Nairobi, Lagos, Tripoli and Mahé in the Seychelles.

Ethiopian Airlines expands flight operations to Malawi, Zambia

By Chika Goodluck-Ogazi

ETHIOPIAN Airlines, the fastest growing airline in Africa, has announced further expansion of its service to the continent with new flights to Blantyre, Malawi and Ndola, Zambia. Blantyre is the commercial and industrial capital of Malawi. It will be Ethiopian Airlines' 44th destination in Africa and the second in Malawi next to Lilongwe. The new schedule of three flights per week will begin on March 31st, 2013. Ndola, the third largest city in Zambia, is the industrial and commercial centre in the copper belt of the country.

Ndola will be Ethiopian's 45th African and the 72nd international destination. It will also be its second destination in Zambia next to Lusaka. The new schedule of three flights per week will again begin at the end of March.

The Chief Executive, Tewolde Gebremariam said, "Ethiopian, as a flagship carrier of Africa, is pleased to add Blantyre and Ndola to its wide route network and to offer passengers to and from these cities the best possible connectivity through its Addis Ababa hub".

Passengers travelling to and from Blantyre and Ndola will enjoy smooth connections to destinations in Ethiopian Airlines' route network such as Washington, D.C., Toronto, London, Hong Kong, and Dubai, among many others.

Emirates Airline launches entertainment package for passengers

By Chika Goodluck-Ogazi

EMIRATES Airline has unveiled a new campaign showcasing the lighter side of language, named "Share a Smile", where the airline has created 29 videos in 14 languages featuring members of its cabin crew expressing quirky and unusual expressions and greetings from around the world.

The campaign was created by Emirates to help "globalistas" connect with each other through watching the videos and sharing them with their friends and family.

"Share a Smile" is the latest step in Emirates' global brand campaign Hello Tomorrow, launch in April 2012 which aims to inspire people across the world to explore and connect with each other across cultures and borders. Through the set of light-hearted 15 second animated videos designed to make people smile, Emirates' multilingual crew explain the meaning behind popular local



A Lounge of Huntley Hotel, Los Angeles, California

phrases like 'Don't make an elephant out of a fly' (Russian), 'You're so pretty it made a bang' (Cantonese) and 'You're the cat's whiskers' (English). There is also a compilation behind the scenes out-takes video showing the fun the crew had making the films.

The Executive Vice President Emirates Airline and Group, Maurice Flanagan said: "Emirates 'Share a Smile' has been created to showcase not only the breadth of linguistic skills amongst our international and multi-lingual crew, it is also intended to help build cultural under-

standing in a light-hearted way amongst travellers." He added: "As we researched the phrases it became apparent that although many may sound unusual to non-native speakers when they first listen to them, when the translated meaning is given the sentiments resonate interna-

tionally. 'Share a Smile' is meant to do just that, encourage "globalistas" to learn about different cultures in an amusing way. The campaign is a celebration of how a kind word or phrase can connect friends and strangers alike across the world."

FAAN must respect the rule of law, sanctity of agreements, says Akande

For over a decade, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and AIC, the firm that won concession to build a five star Hilton hotel and a shopping mall are embroiled in a controversy which many said had stunted airports development in the country. In this interview with **WOLE SHADARE**, General Manager of the firm, Chief Niyi Akande decried the alleged stalling of the multi billion-naira project. Excerpts

Beyond the legal quagmire, do you see a political solution to solving this dispute?

We don't rule out political solution. We believe in the rule of law. We are not asking them to do us a favour, what we are saying is for us to respect the rule of law and respect the sanctity of all agreements. We are not ruling out political solution. There are allegations that FAAN has the penchant for repudiating agreements, what advice do you have for them?

The Federal Government should prevail on civil servants to respect the rule of law and also respect all contract agreements they entered into with the private sector, to encourage investments and to encourage Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the interest of the transformation agenda of the Federal Government.

FAAN recently claimed that the court only maintained that the court only asked it to pay your firm, AIC about \$75 million and not the land in dispute. What is the true position of this dispute?

I have you copy of the contract award; it is not what I manufactured, but what the agreement says. The court of Arbitration says the 50 years lease is still subsisting. After that project has only being delayed

by FAAN up to ten years by that period. So, the damage that was awarded was for the loss of profit for those ten years. If we say we are not interested, we will be talking of compensation for 50 years, but we are going ahead with our \$1 Billion development of our hotel on that land. We are still holding on to that 40 years remaining on the lease agreement we have with FAAN. The money FAAN is talking about is only in respect of the ten years delay they have caused us.

FAAN raised the issue of security, which cannot be glossed over considering what is happening in the country. Don't you think the argument is valid?

You are all conversant with the piece of land we are talking about here. That land is a minimum of 500 meters from the terminal. We are also conversant with MMA2. MMA2 is on the taxiway of aircraft, so how does that or our own constitute security problem? The hotel does not compromise any airport security. What am saying is that if you are coming to equity, you must come with clean hands. FAAN took everything into consideration before they allocated the land to us. They signed a lease of 50 years plus additional 25 years. They pleaded this in the court of arbitration and they were not able to convince the arbitrators. It was an excuse they thought of to perpetrate illegality.

What if FAAN comes tomorrow and say leave that place for another place because of security, and give you an alternative land within the same airport, will you accept that?

That was what they said at the arbitration, they have never offered us an alternative land. If they do, that would have been on a negotiation basis. What they initially said was that they have problem of parking. If they had come to us and sat down with us to discuss and plead with us, we would



Akande have considered that but they did not do that with us. They believe in using force and FAAN does not respect the rule of law. The approach you take to negotiate is different from when you use force. If they come to us to negotiate, that will be discussed and negotiated between the two of us. We are law abiding. They have to come to us and we discussed. You cannot disobey the law and say you want to negotiate with us. Let them obey the law. We are respectable Nigerians and our chairman, Chief Harry Akande is respectable citizen, a chieftain of the ruling party.

When actually were you supposed to have commenced construction on the site? Could you please give a little background of this project?

In 1978, the Federal Government wanted to build a hotel and they approached AIC as the consultant to design and to bring in an international hotel manager. We designed and brought in Marriott and they did not pay us a kobo. The Federal Government was unable to continue with the project. It was not our intention to build the hotel at that time. We

designed the proposed hotel for them but they could not come up with the money.

How much would it have cost if they had allowed you to build the hotel?

When government wanted to build it themselves in 1978, it would have cost them \$33 million. In 1998 when we were given the lease, the hotel would have been built for \$55 million, but now, if you look at the increases in prices, inflation has come in. Most of these things are dominated in foreign currency. What is naira rate in 1998 and what is the rate now? Naira was stronger then. The differences in the cost of inflation. If they had allowed us, we would have completed and the hotel would have been ready in year 2001; we would have been making money and they would have been earning money also. The last calculation we made when we went to the court of arbitration, the amount went came to about \$203 million. We brought experts, English quality surveyor who has been in this country for many years and he has building here. He attested to it, he did the calculation and say by the time we finish in the court of arbitration, the cost was in the region of \$220 million, so we are asking for the difference between \$55 million and \$203 million.

Don't you think something is wrong somewhere considering the problem high threat to concessions in the aviation industry?

I don't know what happened with Maevis's concession, we don't know about that of BJ-Courtney. I know that in 1998, FAAN advertised and invited bids for interested parties and AIC was one of those companies that submitted bid. They gave conditions like it is in the document we gave to the media before they could consider. We did feasibility study by internationally recognised consulting company

designed and to have the building managed. He had to hire international lawyers to go through it to ensure we had the best agreement. After that, FAAN then went through all the bid and adjudged AIC's bid as the one that was most responsive and the one they were highly satisfied with. They were the ones that gave us the site of where we are to site the hotel. Even in their own letter in the approval, they stated that there was serious bidding and we emerged the preferred bidder.

FAAN claimed that the agreement was signed in error, what is your opinion on that?

That again brings us to the sanctity of contracts. I will show you the letter they wrote to their minister. If you look at the FAAN Act, the Act that set up FAAN, there is a provision that says, FAAN has the right to lease out land but they will not give you title, but they will give you a lease of agreement. It is in line with the Act that set up FAAN. It is the same law that says if you give out land to a private person; you cannot take from one person and give it to another person unless overriding public interest.

If FAAN wants to take it from AIC and give it to their friends, or a Chinese company, whom they said they have an agreement to build a hotel there. Like I said, the rule of law and sanctity of contracts must be respected. If they said the land was given in error, it means that the management of FAAN is there in error. This is an agreement that was approved by their board, their own surveyor and we registered the agreement with Lagos State government. FAAN is just too full of contradictions. What FAAN is doing is sheer arrogance. Let them respect the rule of law and sanctity of agreements. We are not asking them for any favour.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaehi Rojiuuna

The Oduniyi/Olagunju Royal Family of Dawodu Compound in Ede wishes to announce the passing on of their wife, mother and grandmother



Mrs. Sinatu Abike Oladosu Olagunju

on Saturday, February 16, 2013.

She has since been buried according to Islamic rites.

She was 82 years old.

The eight-day Fidau prayer will hold tomorrow,

Saturday, February 23, 2013

in their family compound in Ede at 10.00 a.m.

She was survived by

Mr. Muniru Bolaji Oladosu Olagunju – Son

Mr. Basiru Olanrewaju Oladosu Olagunju – Son

Mrs. Modinat Bolanle Adetona – Daughter

Grandchildren

Mrs. Latifatu Atinuke Balogun

Zainab Boluwatife Oladosu Olagunju

Mr. Dauda Eniola Olagunju

Yunus Babatunde Olagunju

Miss Risikat Olayinka Olagunju

Rodiah Adetona

Miss Mariam Olayemi Olagunju

Moridah Adetona

Muniru Bolaji Oladosu Olagunju

For the family

Friday Worship

إِنِّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

"Surely, the religion with Allah is ISLAM, complete submission" ... Qur'an 3:19

Reflections on asteroids, other earthly calamities and tragedies

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful

"See they not that they are put in trial once or twice every year (with different kinds of calamities, disease, famine)? Yet, they turn not in repentance, nor do they learn a lesson (from it)..." (Quran 9:126)

By Afis A. Oladosu

BRETHREN, a closer contemplation of our reality today shows that humanity suffers two types of calamities: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary calamities are self-inflicted ones. The involuntary ones refer to portents and occurrences in the phenomena, which are beyond human interventions.

Voluntary calamities which humanity suffers today are reminiscent of that which befell our progenitors, Prophet Adam and Hawa (upon them be peace and blessings of Allah) in paradise. They were shown clues about the abyss but they chose to descend into it. Our forebears were shown what they should avoid but they opted to embrace the forbidden. Eventually they enjoyed Divine redemption.

Brethren, today's humanity appears destined to travel the same pathway. The sons and daughters of Adam and Hawwa have chosen to unlearn the lessons in the circumstance of their progenitors. Thus, what is forbidden today by law, just as it was during the primordial times, has become the most-sought-after. For example, we all know lying is abhorred by the Almighty, yet falsehood has become fashionable. We all know adultery and fornication is an anathema in the reckoning of the Almighty, yet indulgence in sexual debauchery among the high and the low has become the order of the day. In fact, the higher the position and opportunity life offers some among us the farther they go, and ironically too, away from modesty and morality.

One way by which we cause voluntary fractures in our society is evident in the philosophy, which undergirds our educational system. Brethren, most public schools today are premised on the so-called secularist theology. What matters today is how to produce scientists. We have refused to recognize that men need to be men, and righteous ones for that matter, before they become scientists, engineers and physicists.

We often forget that science without knowledge of the Almighty is science for the sake of the devil and earthly principalities. When a society says an atom is greater than the Almighty, when a society decides to take the Almighty from the school, such should not turn round to call on the Almighty when the devil becomes the king of its empire.

Brethren, one other reason we witness tragedies and calamities in our world today is pretence to lack of knowledge of the existence, in the phenomena, of the law of cause and effect. By the design of the Almighty, only the earth is capable of bringing forth plants and fruits, not the skies; only the skies is able to bring down water; only the sun can bring forth heat and temperature. The Almighty (may His Name be exalted) backs this up by enacting eternal laws, which strengthen these Natural Laws.

Once the elements that hold the phenomena is upset, it is expected that the other rule would naturally follow. For example, when a man decides to jump, headlong, from a three-storey building, such becomes a voluntary infraction of the Divine Law of Gravity and a free choice for self-liquidation. When a society decides to treat corruption with kid's gloves, when every case of corruption is treated as "family affair", when accusations of graft and sleaze dealings are bogged down in

the morass of counter-accusations, when someone who steals a billion naira from the national treasury is asked to pay one naira as fine, what should follow these "causes" would include retribution and anarchy.

Brethren, nations before us existed for centuries despite their choice to disbelieve in the existence of the Almighty; but they perished the moment the scale of justice was tilted in favour of the rich and the powerful.

Yesterday, a man in our village stole a goat and he was imprisoned for 10 years; today a big man steals billions of naira and he is asked to ransom himself with less than a million naira!

Brethren, the above represents a perspective. The other perspective is involuntary calamities. Only a couple of days ago, what scientists call a meteor hit some parts of Russia, causing large-scale destruction of properties. The event only confirmed the Quranic perspective to the origin and end of the world: that the world belongs to Him alone and that whenever it is time for Him to bring it to an end, all the satellites in orbit, no matter the technology that produced them, would have no deterrent effect against His Will.

But the problem, dear brethren, is that some of us see nothing extraordinary in these events while some among us are capable of appropriating their inner meanings. Yet some others among us would need to have four eyes in order for them to see beyond their noses. For example, everyday we see the wise that is manacled in poverty; we behold the foolish and the ignoramus who commands millions of naira. To those who cannot see beyond the apparent, the world of the Almighty is full of evil. In fact to such people, the Almighty does not actually exist!

But men and women of understanding know that the world is not all evil. We know that the world is equally full of beauty, health, progress and prosperity. We also see goodness among people. We encounter faithfulness, sincerity, charity, love and the spirit of sacrifice. In fact elements of goodness are more in creation than those of evil.

There are more people who are healthy than those who are sick. Imagine a situation where the opposite were to be the case: that there are more sick people than healthy ones. How many hospitals, medics and caregivers shall we need? Is it also not true that there are more God-conscious beings than the corrupt, the dissolute and disbelieving ones? All these point to one thing: as far as the Sunnah, the way of the Almighty is concerned, goodness is the rule and evil is the exception; virtue is the norm and sin is the aberration. Ask yourself: which is the norm in your life: is it goodness or evil?

But just before we close, let us ponder this question more dispassionately: why does the Almighty allow sufferings? Why has He not created a world without any difficulty or pain? (Q64:11) Brethren, the Almighty permits suffering as a reminder to us that this world is not a permanent abode. Neither the good things of this world are forever, nor are the bad things eternal. (Quran: 21:33-35)

Brethren, calamities sometimes occur when people see corruption and do not stand up to correct the wrongdoers or stop them from their wrong doings (Q11:116). They sometimes take place as Divine method of testing our patience and steadfastness. (Q2:155-157) They equally occur as tests for others who are hale and hearty.

Our teacher enjoins us thus: "Leave the world to those who hanker after it, as they leave the Afterlife to its seekers. And be in this world as the bee: it eats only good, produces only good, and when it rests upon anything it neither ruins it nor deflowers it."

guardianfridayworship@gmail.com

Goodbye Mother!

Late Dame Irene Nneka Mmachukwu Okwuosa

(Nee Okoloma), KSM, Knight of Saint Mary's
Lady of Eminence and Mother of Faith
85 years (1927 - 2012)

Dear Mama, we thank you, for the strength and courage you gave us to take our first steps, to take flight eventually. We thank you, for showing us how to love and care and build. We thank you for teaching us how to pray and appreciate God's many whispers. We celebrate you Mama, for making a difference in so many lives. We miss you Mama; your warmth, your words, your prayers, your food."

But we remain proud and happy because you created the fondest of memories and made them indelible in our hearts. Mum, we love you.

From all of us,

Pa Sir Godfrey E Okwuosa - Husband
Dr Chino Okwuosa - son
Hon Sir Azuka Okwuosa - son
Engr Sir Emeka Okwuosa - son
Ven Barr Dubem Amaechi Okwuosa - son

Madam Lucy Okoloma - sister
Pa Stephen Okoloma - brother

Daughters-in-law;
Lady Barr Ifeoma Okwuosa.
Mrs Gloria Okwuosa
Lady Ebele Okwuosa.

Grandchildren;

Olisa
Chibuiké
Chidima
Chibundu
Chukwunechem
Abumnkechukwu
Ifechi
Muna
Chiebuniem
Uchenna
Onyeyirichukwu
Tobenna
Okemdinach
Chizube

For Nephews/Nieces:

Engr Edwin Erinne
Ms Edna Erinne
Mr Jasper Okoloma
Mr Chukwuma Okoloma
Capt Chuka Onyejekwe
Mrs Hope Udegbumam
Mr Ugochukwu Okwuosa
Engr Cheta Okwuosa
Engr Onyeka Okwuosa

Foster Children:

Mrs Bridget Onwugbufo
Mr Kenechukwu Igweonu

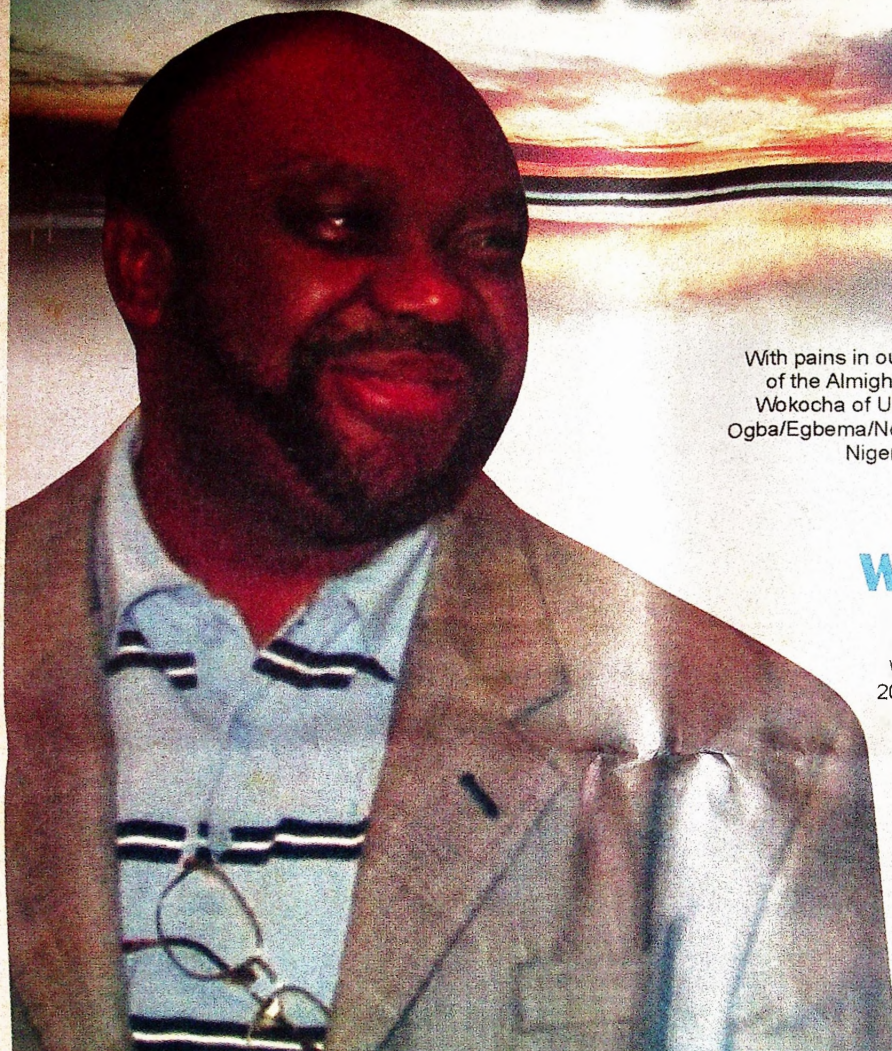
In-laws;

Mrs Monica Okoloma
Mrs Franca Okoloma
Mrs Onyema Enyobi
Mr Christian Okwuosa
Mr Robinson Okwuosa
Mrs Comfort Okwuosa
Mrs Okeoma Okwuosa
Mrs Chika Okwuosa

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OBITUARY



With pains in our hearts, but with total submission to the will of the Almighty God, the family of Late Bishop Mark Egba Wokocha of Umu-Olota (Uriem Kindred) of Okposi Town in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria announces the death of our Son, Brother, Father, cousin and uncle.

DR. EKE FRIDAY WOKOCHA. C.N.C.

B.Sc (Hons), M.Ed., M.B.A. Ph.D
(Aged 62 Years.)

Who passed on to life eternal on Sunday the 20th of January 2013 at San Diego, California in the United States of America.

Burial Arrangement:

Saturday 23rd February, 2013

8.00am: Body leaves Shell Mortuary, Port Harcourt to his home town Okposi in ONELGA.

10.00am: Lying in State at Professor Addison Mark Wokocha's Compound in Okposi Town.

11.00am: Funeral Service at Professor Addison Mark Wokocha's Compound in Okposi Town.

1.00pm: Interment at Dr Eke Friday Wokocha's Compound in Okposi Town.

DR. EKE FRIDAY WOKOCHA. C.N.C.

B.Sc (Hons), M.Ed., M.B.A. Ph.D
(Aged 62 Years.)

HE IS SURVIVED BY:

WIFE

Mrs. Berthe Felicite Wokocha

CHILDREN

Eke Wokocha, Jnr.
Enoch Wokocha
Justin Wokocha

BROTHERS

Dr. S. O. Wokocha
Professor (Chief) A. M. Wokocha, JP.
Engr. Conqueror .C. Wokocha.
Sir, Dr. I. Harcourt Wokocha
Mr. Chika .M. Wokocha.
Barr. Ritchard Aduche Wokocha,
Mr. Nnaji Wokocha
Sir, Hon. Augustine Onyekachi Wokocha, JP.
Elder Michael O. Wokocha.
Rev. (Chief) Godpower. E. Wokocha
Ven. Emmanuel .I. Wokocha.
Mr. George .A. Wokocha.

Mr Abraham Ahoada Wokocha
HRH, Dr. Gideon A. Wokocha
Mr. Ikechukwu Wokocha
Mr Bassey O. Wokocha
Chief I. O. Osia
Elder Sampson Ehiba

SISTERS

Mrs. Chinyere .O. Ajie
Mrs. Joyce. A. Elenga
Mrs. Oyibo Omeluzor Ohie
Dr. Mrs. Roseline A. Nweye
Mrs. Blessing Ahiadu
Mrs. Chinyere Ellah
Mrs. Dorothy A. Ohuru
Miss Okwudiri Wokocha
Miss. Chituru Wokocha
Mrs. Bridget N. Etifit
Mrs. Adamma Ruth Njoku
Mrs. Olive Agbonma Bruce
Mrs. Glory Amadike

BROTHERS-IN-LAW

Hon. Lucky. E. Ajie
Chief Sunny Omeluzor Ohie
Hon. Henry Nweye
Mr. Godpower Ellah
Chief Godwin Ohuru
Chief Engr. Joe Okoro
Engr. Ebere Onita
Dr. C. C. Njoku
Mr Kingsley Nwogbidi
Chief, Engr. O. Bruce
Mr Monday Amadike
Engr Sopakiribo Ibiba Jack

SISTERS-IN-LAW

Mrs. Chinyere Nkem Wokocha
Mrs. Nkechi .V. Wokocha
Mrs. Juliet Omenigor Wokocha
Lady Chioma .W. Wokocha
Mrs. Joyce .A. Wokocha
Barr. Mrs Nkem P. Wokocha
Lady Cherry .U. Wokocha
Ms. Marie-Helene Kabran

FOR NIECES

Mrs. Gladys Masi
Chief Mrs Roli Ego Okoro
Barr. Mrs. Chioma Soso Jack
Dr. Mrs. Favour Chukwuka
Miss Ijeoma Wokocha
Barr Mrs. Anita Laz Nwokeafor

FOR NEPHEWS

Engr. Chike Lucky Wokocha
Mr. Iderefa Ekine
Engr Eze Arguba
Arch. Chukwulekuru C. Wokocha

FOR COUSINS

Mr. Silas Reuben
Mr Victor Ahiakwo

AND MANY OTHER RELATIONS
TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION

DR SONNY OBULOR WOKOCHA (FOR THE FAMILY)

Opinion

2013 budget: Resolving the impasse

By Olusola Adegbite

An assortment of invigorated back and forth arguments and submissions of learned minds have since appeared on various media platforms ricocheting against one another. It has to do with the current constitutional impasse that the non-passage of the 2013 Appropriation Bill commonly referred to by the people as Budget has since engendered. I obligingly feel constrained to lend my voice. Lining up on one side is the group, which submits that the President is not bound by the provisions of Section 58(4) of the Constitution, but rather by Section 59(4) and that flowing from that, the President does not come under the full command of the use of the word "shall". In order words, they submit that the combined provisions of Sections 58(4) and 59(4), merely make it discretionary for the President to sign the Appropriation Bill within 30 days and that in any case, even if his assent fails to attend the Appropriation Bill within 30 days, he can still conveniently sign thereafter, and such in their opinion will not amount to an illegality.

However, arrayed on the other side, is a second group, which argues that the President is not only constitutionally but mandatorily bound by the provisions of Section 58(4) of the Constitution, particularly as it relates to the pre-eminence of the use of the word "shall" and that the plethora of case-law and retinue of judicial decisions particularly from the Supreme Court on the mandatory nature of the word "shall" gives no room for further argument on the matter. They submit rather stoically that where the President purports to assent to the Bill a day after the mandatory 30 days, he would be seen to have committed an illegality. I am grateful to all intellectual gladiators for their rich cross-fertilisation of opinions and contest of arguments; however with profound respect to all shades of opinion, I adopt the latter position as mine. Not only do I consider it legally sound, but most importantly, the intellectual nourishment it offers has the right ingredients to power an amazing renaissance of constitutionalism in our country.

Permit me to start by saying that the force of logic is the most potent and beneficial of all, more potent and beneficial than any other, the logic of force inclusive. The provisions of Sections 58(4) & (5) and Section 59(4) of the Constitution are clear and apt. Section 58(4) provides "Where a bill is presented to the President for assent, he shall within 30 days thereof signify that he assents or that he withholds assent". Section 58(5) provides "Where the President withholds

his assent and the bill is again passed by each House by two-thirds majority, the bill shall become law and the assent of the President shall not be required". Section 59(4) provides "Where the President, within thirty days after the presentation of the bill to him, fails to signify his assent or where he withholds assent, then the bill shall again be presented to the National Assembly sitting at a joint meeting, and if passed by two-thirds majority of members of both Houses at such joint meeting, the bill shall become law and the assent of the President shall not be required".

The above provisions having being stated, let us attempt a legal analysis. A careful scrutiny of the force of logic leaves one without doubt as to its actual validity. It is a thought-process anchored on a structure of premises, later narrowed into a sound conclusion, while such a conclusion prides itself as having derived its ultimate authority from the body of premises. Usually, a general premise is followed by a secondary premise, perhaps a third premise, and in a rich flow analysis all these cascade into a conclusion. It is this rich organisation of thought that has for ages stood as the foundation of analysis the world over, legal analysis inclusive. The relevance of this to the matter at hand is clear. Flowing from the above submission, the considered view of this writer is that Section 58(4) & (5), as cited above is one that without equivocation caters for all kinds of bills that would come before the National Assembly, the Appropriation Bill inclusive (this emphasis is of importance). To that extent, no bill is excluded by the provision of Section 58(4) and (5). It is important to establish this. This section prescribes a mandatory 30 days time-frame for presidential assent and it is deep-rooted legislative pronouncement anchored powerfully on the word "shall". The unquestionable power vested in the use of the word "shall" has been settled by the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Thus, if the above provision were to be paraphrased, it would simply mean, without any shade of equivocation, that all bills no matter their nomenclature presented to the President shall be assented to within 30 days.

Section 59(4) now comes into the picture. In this instance, it does not stand on its own, rather it operates as a back-up provision, to buttress what had earlier been stated in Section 58(4), this time loudly pronouncing it as it principally relates to the Appropriation Bill. Given the nature of importance that an Appropriation Bill holds, it was necessarily important for the makers of the law to further strengthen its

existence in Section 59(4) by holding that even as all bills shall be assented to by the President within 30 days, which doesn't leave out the Appropriation Bill, where that fails to happen so, so and so must necessarily follow. Thus, Section 58(4) is nothing but a forerunner provision to Section 59(4), just like John the Baptist was a forerunner to our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is trite and salutary law that you cannot put something on nothing and expect it to stand, as there will be nothing to support the something. Section 58(4) is the something on which section 59(4) stands confidently. Given the core importance of the Appropriation Bill as the life-wire of the nation, more importantly as a document whose passage cannot be left in abeyance, the Constitution goes ahead to provide in Section 59(4), that where the President, within 30 days fails to signify his assent, the bill is presented to a joint sitting of the National Assembly and thereafter passed into law. It is totally inconceivable that the spirit behind the phrase "where the President, within 30 days fails to signify his assent", would mean for it to be simplistically interpreted as giving the President the latitude to give his assent a day after, or perhaps so long after the mandatory 30 days.

Thus, the logic rooted in Section 59(4) is a constitutional reassurance of the right of the Legislature to the full exercise of its powers, where the President for whatever reason fails to signify its assent. If the Constitution had not earlier mandated the President to assent to the Appropriation Bill within 30 days, why will it further give a direction where the President fails to do so within that time? The logic therein presupposes that the situation of failure to assent referred to in Section 59(4) can only arise because of the mandatory stipulation of time earlier provided. It is pertinent to assert that constitutional provisions are not enacted to exist and be interpreted in isolation of each other, perhaps as strange bedfellows. Rather, it is elementary law that a specific provision of the law, necessarily follows from the general rule.

It amounts to nothing but standing logic on its head, to assume that it was the intention of the makers of the law from the outset to give any President in Office, "time infinitum" within which to assent to any Appropriation Bill, the contending issues notwithstanding. Obviously, the issues militating against the passage of the 2013 Appropriation Bill are clear; however this apparent clarity does not suggest that any solution is in the horizon. This is because there are simply too many imponderables involved to

permit any easy conclusion, except that we can still sufficiently infer that there is just one thing central to the whole shenanigans - Power. That is the burden our politicians have since become

As always, it is on the altar of the peoples' livelihood and sustenance that they find it convenient to flex their muscles and massage their ego which inordinately tells our national story up side down. Of course we are not the only country with a Constitution, though we appear as one country whose rulers rejoice when that Constitution is dragged in the mud. Reinstating the truth, which we all know, the spirit of our Constitution (with Section 58(4) and (5) and 59(4) in perspective) is for the most part understood by these politicians, though they prefer to largely ignore it, for it profits their political game-plan to do so. And in its place, they play to the gallery with supposedly ambiguous letters of the law to achieve personal interest while in public office. Unfortunately, the menace of such political behaviour, if anything, has become more ominous to our nation than ever before.

It is a significant fact, frequently not realised by the people, that *again* this new episode of Legislative-Executive recklessness once more underscores their seeming powerlessness: (assuming, but not conceding it is so) as the real custodians of the collective destiny of our country in the midst of ruthless and indifferent power-mongers. Tragically, it is not anything pre-ordained or celestial that now confronts us: the reason for our stunted national growth. It is the instrument of silence and apathy that the people have since fashioned. I make bold to say that in the ongoing Arab spring, the Egyptians have been very exemplary, taking their destiny in their hands and demanding for better governance on a daily basis. Now when Egypt turns out a better country tomorrow, Nigerians will be the first group of people to flood Egypt in search of greener pastures and then quickly lament when they are labelled as second class citizens.

Chiefly, the ever-present threat to our democratic journey lies ominously in the vast and inscrutable forces in government, who are person without a yard of love for their fatherland, concerned only with the safeguard of their political interest cum ambition, their growing heap of ill gotten wealth and their primitive pursuit of vanity. Unarguably, no better time offers itself for us to question our apparent sense of abandonment to hopelessness than now, save that, we seem to have come to enjoy being taken for this ride as always.

• Adegbite, a lawyer, writes from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The gathering storm

By Anthony Akinola

I WAS not one of the most enthusiastic supporters of President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 elections even though I am now one of those wishing him to succeed for the sake of all of us. Even when my support or non-support would have hardly been noticed, the position I took was a principled one. I sided with the pro-zoning sentiment of his party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), not least because I am an adherent of zoning as a mechanism for reconciling the divisions we are never going to be able to wish away.

President Goodluck Jonathan forfeited the sympathy of most honest observers of our politics when he denied the existence of zoning, which we all knew to be the driving philosophy of his political party. He could still have argued his way through without having to do that. His major sponsor, former President Olusegun Obasanjo connived in this conspiracy of denial only to say "zoning was alive and kicking" after Jonathan had secured his party's nomination.

The price of political dishonesty could be gruesome in a most divided nation such as ours. The late General Andrew Owoye Azazi, erstwhile National Security Adviser, attributed political notions to the crisis we have had to contend with in the north of our political divide.

It would be wrong for any section of our society to want to seek to dominate the political process. I was one of those who challenged what we used to refer to as "northern hegemony".

However, it would also be wrong and unacceptable for any group or individual to want to thwart whatever mechanisms we have put in place to redress the imbalance in our federation. Call it "moral authority", the position one takes on an issue must be consistent regardless of the swing of the political pendulum.

In a nation where contest for the presidency has hardly been about ideological rivalry but a show of strength between ethno-religious groups, the contest for the presidential elections of 2015 may have begun in earnest and another storm of discontent gathering pace. "No vacancy in Aso Rock" says the posters that welcomed us into the New Year, an assumption that would be vigorously - hopefully, not violently - challenged.

Governor Babangida Aliyu of Niger State says there is a pact between incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan and PDP governors that there would be a vacancy in Aso Rock, come May 2015. According to him, Goodluck Jonathan agreed to serve only one term in office, going by the dictates of the PDP's zoning arrangement and compromise in the aftermath of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's demise in 2010. If, indeed, there was a pact, it could still depend on whether or not Goodluck Jonathan would want to honour it. It would also depend on whether or not the national constitution endorses his eligibility to seek re-election in 2015. The special assistants may have spoken, and the poster may also have said things, but the truth of the matter is that President Jonathan has not categorically contradicted himself on the 2015 election; he is on

record as having said he would not be seeking re-election.

But things do change in politics, and what about those hardened promoters barking orders that could give courage to an otherwise timid boxer? I fear for 2015, as I ponder on why those "all too-know" American pundits have identified it as "annus horribilis" for our nation. Their warning of an impending crisis was made a few years ago, but did they realise then that 2015 would be an election year? There could be a time in the life of a nation when the patriotism or sacrifice of one individual alters the course of a dangerous history, would Goodluck Jonathan be able to ignore whatever rights he has under the Constitution and say "I did it for party and nation?"

The PDP could be in for a major crisis, and so also could our nation, but welcome to APC as one possible cure to the headaches we are all bound to have. One is quite excited about the merger of the "progressive" political parties into a single umbrella - the All Progressive Congress. I had as far back as 1983 defended a thesis at the Department of Political Science, Howard University, arguing that the centralising influence of the presidency would compel a two-party system in Nigeria - "Party Coalitions and the Trend Towards a Two Party System in Nigeria". The then editor of Spectrum Books Limited, the late Mr. Asudo, showed great enthusiasm in wanting to publish it in book form but that possibility was frustrated when the military struck in December 1983. Hopefully, our nation will endure the storm of 2015 and a possible two-party system will bring order to its democratic process.

• Dr. Akinola wrote from Oxford, the United Kingdom.

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Opinion

Killing discourse over el-Rufai

By Abimbola Agboluaje

A COMMON thread to the indignation that greeted Mr. Nasir el-Rufai's now infamous re/tweet is "can a Christian say something insulting about Prophet Mohammed (SAW) without Muslims embarking on a killing and burning spree?" (The SAW is mine). This raises the question why people educated enough to curse and fume in English on *Twitter* and *Facebook* would want to act like impoverished feral youths or Mullahs who owe their social positions and living to the ability to set citizens against each other while pretending to defend Allah. And many did act like *Almajiris* by going on a verbal rampage once they heard or imagined a Muslim politician had insulted Jesus Christ, describing el-Rufai as "anti-Christ" and Muslims as "bloodthirsty devils". They failed to reflect on the possibility of el-Rufai actually insulting Jesus Christ or what his motives could have been.

The reaction to the el-Rufai re/Tweet tells us a lot about the problem with Nigerians and Nigeria, and nothing at all about el-Rufai. We are so divided and mistrustful that we are mentally on alert for real and imagined slights, a fertile state of mind for those who profit from setting Nigerians against each other to sow discord. What started as a debate about the corruption, misrule, squandering of the \$20 billion savings in the Excess Crude Account (also known as the Excessive Corruption Account) between 2007 and 2010 instantly became a spat between Christians and Muslims and northerners and southerners on social media. In the *Boko Haram* state of mind, Nigerians assume the worst about each other's intentions. No one is to be given any benefit of doubt.

Mallam el-Rufai came into public consciousness as a politician-cum-public servant of the ilk described as "technocrat", not as the Governor of a *Sharia* State. There is no evidence that he favoured his co-religionists, more than it is the norm for politicians and bureaucrats, while serving as Director General of the Bureau for Public Enterprises and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory. After leaving public office, he has become one of the most incisive government critics, working within activist networks dominated by southerners and

Christians.

For a long time, el-Rufai wrote a column, not in a northern newspaper but a Lagos-based daily in which he hurled nothing more explosive than economic policy *fatwas* at the government (his opposition to the eradication of the fuel subsidy is irreconcilable with his free market faith). The person he was defending, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, is a fervent Christian married to a pastor. The question is: why would someone who may be canvassing for votes to become Nigeria's president in future chose to improve his chances by insulting Jesus Christ?

Even if el-Rufai had a reputation as a Muslim fundamentalist, there was really nothing in the re/tweet that could be construed as an insult to Jesus Christ or to Christians. Except by people who have been programmed by politicians and religious leaders with selfish interests to dedicatedly scour for and discover slights to their religion or ethnic group even in the most innocuous words. The el-Rufai re/tweet could have been read as "Jonathan's aides would insult even Jesus if He criticised their corruption". El-Rufai didn't invent the outrageous claim about the head of the Church and Mary Magdalene. There are scores of films, websites and books exploring, suggesting or claiming this as a possibility.

To an "unprogrammed" reader, the re/tweet only compares President Jonathan camp's allegations against Oby Ezekwesili to the ridiculous, wild allegations made about Jesus Christ. Nobody but President Jonathan's aides that the tweet classifies with the loonies who insult a personality as holy as Jesus Christ should take offence. Even if the tweet is construed as an insult, there was little to indicate that el-Rufai approved of it. But in the *Boko Haram* mental state, the caveat that the "re-tweet is not an endorsement" is promptly suspended.

Some Nigerians - Christians and Muslims - accept that el-Rufai didn't intend to insult Jesus Christ but still blame him (el-Rufai) for recklessness. He should have known better the tweet was bound to cause offence. This is baseless; it sets such low standards for public discussion and defends the rights of people who are on the lookout for ethnic or religious slurs to misinterpret and wrongly accuse others.

The majority of Nigerians on *Twitter* have at least a secondary school education and can afford a N15,000 smart

phone. They should be criticised for rushing to join digital mobs orchestrated by a minority of ethnic or religious bigots. (It is quite possible that they have been so thoroughly programmed they don't need further goading to rise against imaginary insults). If we start to caress the brittle sensitivities of even educated Nigerians, we would never be able to confront and curtail the excesses of impoverished *Almajiris* and clerics whose beards or robes catch fire at the slightest provocation.

A society where one self-censors his metaphors and analogies is not a healthy society. Canny politicians will learn to nip discussion of public affairs in the bud by twisting their opponents' words to imply religious or ethnic slurs if Nigerians keep lapsing into verbal or physical rages at the slightest hint of offence.

It is disappointing that newspaper headlines scream about el-Rufai's "blasphemy", and not one prominent person dismissed the outrage as the rubbish that it was. Rather, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the presidency of which increasingly seems to be a full-fledged Federal Cabinet position, as usual didn't waste the opportunity to aggravate the situation. Were it possible in a democracy, religious associations and their ethnic counterparts ought to be banned as once suggested by the Central Bank Governor, Mr. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi. All they do is set Nigerians against each other and get richly rewarded for defending us, perhaps getting rewarded for helping to maintain centralised misrule. It's a great pity that even Nigeria's Internet generation is not immune to their ways.

Boko Haram (and *Almajiris* who are liable to go on killing and maiming sprees after elections) is best seen as a problem for all Nigerians and not a malaise of a religious community, region or ethnic group. Their main victims remain "their people". Those whose response is to claim an equal right to be as intolerant as the dreaded sect - and by so doing set Nigerian Christians against their Muslim co-workers, neighbours and friends on *Twitter* and *Facebook* - are becoming the *Boko Haram* with university degrees.

• Agboluaje is a visiting member of The Guardian Editorial Board.

APC: Are the parties compatible?

By Jide Akinbiyi

IT is generally agreed that the performance of the Goodluck Jonathan Administration leaves much to be desired; that the country now needs a more dynamic, more efficient, better organised and less corrupt government for it to make any real progress. For this reason, the idea of a new political body that promises to change the deplorable socio-economic situation in Nigeria and give us a better government, deserves some consideration.

The merger of four political parties, the ACN, the CPC, the ANPP and APGA is not the first time opposition parties in Nigeria would come together for the purpose of unseating an inept and corrupt Federal Government, which has been our misfortune since independence. All past efforts have failed in their mission, not so much because of the overriding power of the reigning party in rigging itself back to power but because of internal differences and the incompatibility of the merging parties. This time around, one would want to know if the parties involved have thrashed out those differences to make their merger a workable arrangement. We need to go into history and locate why opposition parties have failed in their coalition against the party in power.

The first attempt was in 1964. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), which had been a junior partner in the Federal Government with Sir Ahmadu Bello's Northern People's Congress (NPC) since 1959, decided to team up with Chief Obafemi Awolowo's opposition party, the Action Group (AG) in the general election of that year. The NCNC and AG then formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) to unseat the NPC. At the end of the

election, the NPC had succeeded in rigging itself back to power. Without any hesitation, NCNC leaders went back to the NPC in a new coalition government. They told the nation that the alliance with the Action Group was a mere political alliance, but the coalition with the NPC was to form a government.

Again in 1983, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's Nigerian Peoples Party whose members had been in President Shehu Shagari's NPN Federal Government since 1979 decided to team up with Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); Waziri Ibrahim's Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and Comrade Michael Imoudu's Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) for the purpose of unseating Shagari's government in the presidential election of that year. They came together under the banner of Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA). But they could not agree on who would be their presidential candidate. Awolowo wanted to run, so did Azikiwe and Waziri. At the same time, Shagari who was sure of his victory assured Dr. Azikiwe and his NPP that he would give them 'juicy' positions if he was returned to power. Being thus wooed away from the PPA, Dr. Azikiwe described himself as a beautiful bride torn between different suitors. In the end, Shagari won the election and fulfilled his promise by appointing NPP members into his cabinet.

Let us now consider the present merger, the APC. Are they strong enough to unseat President Goodluck Jonathan? Are they indeed compatible to be able to muster that strength? I have very strong doubts. In the first instance, party coalition or merger works better under the parliamentary system of government. That was what we had during the First Republic with the NPC and NCNC coalition. A similar coalition of two parties obtains in Britain today. It had similarly worked in India where the parliamen-

tary system has never been abandoned since the country's independence in 1947. The interesting thing about the parliamentary arrangement is that it is less rigid and a party to the coalition can pull out and team up with another party in parliament to form a new government. This is not possible under the strong executive presidential system that obtains in Nigeria, the United States and many other countries. Once the parties to a merger agreed on a presidential candidate, the government belongs to him if he wins the election. The law does not recognise parties to the merger, but the President as the chief executive of state. Any agreement by the parties to the merger is not legally binding on the elected President. He is limited in his powers only by the legislative powers of the National Assembly and by the ruling of the courts. Not even the Vice President who might be a member of the other party in the merger could have a hold on the President as we have in Zimbabwe today. In the light of this and in the context of the present merger, what the masses behind the parties to the merger are looking forward to is to know their presidential candidate.

It is now clear that the CPC decided to go into the merger because it needs it to capture power at the centre, a goal, which its leader, General Muhammadu Buhari has failed to achieve in past three attempts. Therefore, to the CPC leadership, its followers and the people of the far north, the merger means so much for the possibility of 'power returning to the north'. On its part, the ACN simply wants a more dynamic, truly progressive and less corrupt government at the centre. Unless its leaders are prepared to concede the presidency to Buhari's CPC, the merger would collapse. However, if ACN concedes, the party would

be paving the way for General Buhari to succeed where he had failed thrice. In this, they could not be sure of carrying along the people of the south-west who in their own wisdom and political judgment, had flatly rejected not only the candidature of General Buhari but also that of ACN's own candidate, Nuhu Ribadu and voted overwhelmingly for PDP's Goodluck Jonathan in 2011.

A close study of voters' behaviour in that election offers enough lessons to politicians, especially ACN leaders that the people of the southwest are sufficiently enlightened to take their own electoral decisions regardless of politicians' sentiments. ACN leaders should reflect on why the southwest electorate, which voted overwhelmingly for their governorship and assembly candidates, turned round to reject their presidential candidate in favour of the PDP's, whereas they rejected PDP candidates in all other elections. This is food for thought and I would want them to do their homework properly and carry their people along before going into the unknown.

Finally, I do not believe that the ACN really needs this merger, but the CPC and the north are desperate for it. What is more important for the party is to consolidate its position in the southwest and give the rest of the country good examples in governance. The party has a lot to benefit from the faults now tearing the PDP apart in many parts of the country. With its strength in the southwest, the ACN can continue to win more adherents in places where the PDP has failed the people, and indeed be the viable alternative. What is paramount in the minds of most Nigerians today is the constitutional restructuring of Nigeria into a more meaningful and effective federation. An ACN, properly entrenched in the southwest, can be the strong voice in the realisation of that highly desirable goal.

• Akinbiyi is a veteran journalist.

NigeriaCapitalMarket

NSE Daily Summary (Equities) as at 21/2/2013

PRICE LIST OF SYMBOLS

ICON STOCKBROKERS
LIMITED

(Member of the Nigeria Stock Exchange)

 Medife House (3rd Floor)
 58/60 Broad Street,
 Lagos

 Website: www.iconstockbrokersltd.com
 e-mail: info@iconstockbrokersltd.com

 Tel: +2348061626763
 +12718036

SECURITY	PCLOSE	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	CHANGE	CHG (%)	DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE
7UP	47.50	-	-	-	47.50	-	0.00%	13	23,110	1,114,085
ABCTTRANS	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	-	0.00%	5	155,835	91,743
ACADEMY	2.55	-	-	-	2.55	-	0.00%	3	50,000	125,000
ACCESS	11.66	11.63	11.79	11.52	11.75	0.09	0.77%	267	24,004,350	279,744,443
AFRIPRUD	1.77	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85	-	4.52%	45	353,318	653,560
AFRPAINTS	2.86	-	-	-	2.86	-	0.00%	1	1,000	2,720
AGLEVENT	1.90	-	-	-	1.90	-	0.00%	3	7,500	13,575
AIICO	1.05	1.01	1.05	1.00	1.01	-0.04	-3.81%	93	7,298,382	7,510,149
AIRSERVICE	5.45	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20	-0.25	-4.59%	14	281,742	1,461,243
ASHAKACEM	25.25	-	-	-	25.25	-	0.00%	37	187,667	4,473,452
ASOSAVINGS	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	2	454,524	227,262
BAGCO	2.75	2.72	2.75	2.72	2.74	-0.01	-0.36%	50	2,136,006	5,841,210
BERGER	11.31	10.76	10.76	10.75	10.75	-0.56	-4.95%	22	505,406	5,449,361
BOCGAS	7.21	7.57	7.57	7.57	7.57	0.36	4.99%	8	181,046	1,356,487
CADBURY	40.80	40.00	40.45	38.76	39.00	-1.80	-4.41%	124	3,076,167	120,792,332
CAP	36.04	-	-	-	36.04	-	0.00%	11	78,073	2,791,778
CCNN	11.27	11.70	11.70	11.70	11.70	0.43	3.82%	14	123,749	1,399,354
CHAMPION	4.56	-	-	-	4.56	-	0.00%	1	20,000	95,600
CILEASING	0.63	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.03	4.76%	16	741,550	489,423
CONOIL	23.10	-	-	-	23.10	-	0.00%	17	21,270	515,798
CONTINSURE	1.07	1.08	1.10	1.08	1.10	0.03	2.80%	7	584,384	633,782
CORNERST	0.66	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	-0.03	-4.55%	1	200,000	126,000
COURTVILLE	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	10,000	5,000
CRUSADER	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	5	6,056,000	3,028,000
CUSTODYINS	1.96	1.96	2.10	1.96	2.07	0.11	5.61%	18	520,750	1,051,858
CUTIX	1.81	-	-	-	1.81	-	0.00%	2	17,500	31,450
DAARCOMM	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	2	10,000	5,000
DANGCEM	146.99	145.50	146.99	144.00	146.99	-	0.00%	42	3,480,542	504,857,389
DANGFLOUR	9.01	9.01	9.01	9.01	9.01	-	0.00%	47	259,592	2,339,520
DANGSUGAR	8.57	8.50	8.51	8.36	8.49	-0.08	-0.93%	142	15,277,185	129,031,099
DIAMONDBNK	7.30	7.30	7.36	7.27	7.27	-0.03	-0.41%	112	4,091,555	29,963,767
DNMEYER	1.96	2.15	2.15	2.15	2.15	0.19	9.69%	5	76,200	163,830
ETERNA	4.09	4.05	4.10	4.01	4.10	0.01	0.24%	30	757,417	3,068,119
ETI	13.83	13.85	13.85	13.79	13.80	-0.03	-0.22%	102	3,336,640	46,055,352
ETRANZACT	3.65	3.47	3.47	3.47	3.47	-0.18	-4.93%	2	19,993,814	69,378,535
EVANSMED	1.47	-	-	-	1.47	-	0.00%	21	250,709	385,623
FBNH	20.01	20.00	20.10	20.00	20.05	0.04	0.20%	537	32,396,577	649,158,640
FCMB	4.92	4.93	5.00	4.93	4.93	0.01	0.20%	79	1,897,437	9,404,261
FIDELITYBK	3.29	3.22	3.29	3.16	3.17	-0.12	-3.65%	137	12,128,115	39,143,928
FIDSON	1.65	1.66	1.66	1.60	1.65	-	0.00%	39	1,944,604	3,152,544
FIRSTALUM	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	3	151,000	75,500
FLOURMILL	77.00	-	-	-	77.00	-	0.00%	46	301,244	23,148,228
FO	13.55	12.90	12.90	12.88	12.88	-0.67	-4.94%	28	366,056	4,721,263
FTNCOCOA	0.63	0.66	0.66	0.60	0.64	0.01	1.59%	179	52,787,876	33,851,030
GLAXOSMITH	47.96	-	-	-	47.96	-	0.00%	14	25,451	1,238,626
GNI	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	3	6,600	3,412
GUARANTY	25.08	25.01	25.20	24.96	25.20	0.12	0.48%	382	27,487,646	689,247,807
GUINEAINS	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	1,000	500
GUINNESS	275.00	276.00	276.00	275.45	276.00	1.00	0.36%	95	216,497	59,802,694
HONYFLOUR	3.03	3.03	3.03	2.89	2.89	-0.14	-4.62%	92	5,020,940	14,995,063
IKEJAHOTEL	0.98	0.95	0.99	0.95	0.99	0.01	1.02%	16	6,718,450	6,405,678
INTBREW	24.00	24.20	24.20	22.90	23.50	-0.50	-2.08%	83	21,916,778	504,671,068
INTENEGINS	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	4	304,320	152,160
IPWA	0.81	0.85	0.85	0.81	0.85	0.04	4.94%	17	7,620,256	6,466,050
JAPAUOIL	0.87	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	-0.04	-4.60%	27	1,206,393	1,001,306
JBERGER	54.00	-	-	-	54.00	-	0.00%	24	89,988	4,526,379
JOHNHOLT	1.45	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	0.07	4.83%	8	112,792	171,444
JOSBREW	1.33	-	-	-	1.33	-	0.00%	1	1,200	1,524
LASACO	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	2	155,000	77,500
LEARNAFRCA	2.25	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	-0.11	-4.89%	3	774,866	1,658,453
LINKASSURE	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	2	56,100	28,050
LIVESTOCK	2.23	2.26	2.34	2.26	2.34	0.11	4.93%	23	1,279,140	2,971,436
MANSARD	2.31	2.26	2.26	2.20	2.20	-0.11	-4.76%	22	2,954,716	6,539,259
MAYBAKER	2.18	-	-	-	2.18	-	0.00%	26	143,246	321,667
MBENEFIT	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	52	5,894,725	2,975,173
MCNICHOLS	0.79	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.02	2.53%	5	102,200	82,782
MOBIL	125.97	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00	4.03	3.20%	22	72,617	9,393,701
MORISON	2.34	2.23	2.23	2.23	2.23	-0.11	-4.70%	2	50,620	112,921
MRS	29.00	-	-	-	29.00	-	0.00%	7	3,931	108,379
NAHCO	8.08	7.95	7.95	7.82	7.89	-0.19	-2.35%	62	1,675,425	13,223,072
NASCON	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.47	9.47	-0.03	-0.32%	52	1,058,530	9,914,435
NB	169.99	167.00	170.01	167.00	170.01	0.02	0.01%	170	1,883,475	319,366,124
NCR	16.75	17.58	17.58	17.58	17.58	0.83	4.96%	2	51,363	902,388

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NSE Daily Summary (Equities) as at 21/2/2013

SECURITY	PCLOSE	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	CHANGE	CHG (%)	DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE
NEIMETH	1.09	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	-0.05	-4.59%	12	437,500	459,450
NEM	0.96	0.92	0.95	0.92	0.95	-0.01	-1.04%	40	8,851,458	8,155,396
NESTLE	981.00	953.99	953.99	930.00	930.00	-51.00	-5.20%	140	490,963	457,607,961
NIGERINS	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.56	0.02	3.70%	18	1,065,587	595,541
NNFM	20.25	21.26	21.26	21.26	21.26	1.01	4.99%	2	51,516	1,095,230
NPFMCRFBK	1.03	1.03	1.08	1.03	1.08	0.05	4.85%	21	49,305,010	53,226,331
OANDO	14.40	14.50	14.51	14.36	14.39	-0.01	-0.07%	216	4,575,410	66,062,069
OASISINS	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	20,000	10,000
OKOMUOIL	58.00	55.10	55.10	55.10	55.10	-2.90	-5.00%	21	180,836	9,965,514
OMATEK	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	15,000	7,500
PAINTCOM	1.90	1.98	1.98	1.95	1.95	0.05	2.63%	2	306,000	598,200
PORTPAINT	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	0.25	5.00%	10	196,285	962,640
PRESCO	25.90	24.20	24.20	24.20	24.20	-1.70	-6.56%	17	209,523	5,120,267
PRESTIGE	1.07	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.97	-0.10	-9.35%	18	939,120	920,177
PZ	37.00	39.00	40.70	39.00	40.00	3.00	8.11%	113	2,201,355	86,466,269
REDSTAREX	3.67	3.61	3.63	3.61	3.63	-0.04	-1.09%	14	252,057	915,844
REGALINS	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	6	1,365,300	682,650
RESORTSAL	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	1	1,000,000	500,000
ROADS	10.07	-	-	-	10.07	-	0.00%	1	9,700	102,529
ROYALEX	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	-	0.00%	2	114,700	111,083
RTBRISCOE	2.19	2.20	2.29	2.20	2.29	0.10	4.57%	43	1,251,462	2,791,663
SKYEBANK	6.15	6.15	6.20	6.12	6.20	0.05	0.81%	80	2,263,240	13,954,195
SOVRENINS	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.55	0.55	-0.02	-3.51%	32	14,523,096	8,009,653
STACO	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	45,000	22,500
STANBIC	13.90	13.50	13.50	13.21	13.21	-0.69	-4.96%	38	2,263,226	30,015,596
STERLNBANK	2.75	2.75	2.79	2.70	2.79	0.04	1.45%	93	14,641,926	40,187,873
TOTAL	140.00	139.00	145.59	139.00	145.59	5.59	3.99%	59	648,290	90,921,166
TOURIST	4.53	-	-	-	4.53	-	0.00%	1	202	871
TRANSCORP	1.80	1.87	1.87	1.62	1.62	-0.18	-10.00%	207	45,955,830	76,653,459
UACN	50.00	-	-	-	50.00	-	0.00%	42	91,514	4,486,413
UAC-PROP	16.20	16.00	16.00	16.00	16.00	-0.20	-1.23%	24	898,000	14,203,999
UBA	7.85	7.85	8.00	7.79	7.85	-	0.00%	385	24,826,648	195,193,860
UBCAP	1.44	1.51	1.51	1.51	1.51	0.07	4.86%	62	1,508,574	2,277,947
UBN	10.01	10.00	10.00	9.91	10.00	-0.01	-0.10%	95	1,752,330	17,500,719
UNIC	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	3,100	1,550
UNILEVER	49.50	49.30	49.30	49.30	49.30	-0.20	-0.40%	54	1,286,029	63,274,695
UNITYBNK	0.87	0.90	0.90	0.83	0.83	-0.04	-4.60%	166	21,467,312	18,483,295
UNITYKAP	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-	0.00%	1	2,245,613	1,122,807
UNIVINSURE	0.50	-	-	-	0.50	-	0.00%	1	3,100	1,550
UPL	4.97	4.73	4.73	4.73	4.73	-0.24	-4.83%	9	260,743	1,233,314
UTC	0.85	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.88	0.03	3.53%	16	549,880	485,429
VANLEER	12.98	-	-	-	12.98	-	0.00%	1	70	864
VITAFOAM	3.47	3.41	3.41	3.35	3.35	-0.12	-3.46%	38	542,390	1,831,583
WAPCO	66.10	-	-	-	66.10	-	0.00%	30	86,671	5,705,413
WAPIC	1.55	1.48	1.55	1.48	1.48	-0.07	-4.52%	29	1,679,333	2,526,253
WEMABANK	1.20	1.30	1.31	1.14	1.16	-0.04	-3.33%	87	7,133,592	8,684,158
ZENITHBANK	21.15	21.15	21.25	20.66	20.66	-0.49	-2.32%	374	16,055,311	336,174,855
120 TOTAL								6,177	517,049,959	5,272,597,669

PRICE GAINERS

SECURITY	PCLOSE	CLOSE	CHANGE	GAIN
DNMEYER	1.96	2.15	0.19	9.69%
PZ	37.00	40.00	3.00	8.11%
CUSTODYINS	1.96	2.07	0.11	5.61%
PORTPAINT	5.00	5.25	0.25	5.00%
BOCGAS	7.21	7.57	0.36	4.99%
NNFM	20.25	21.26	1.01	4.99%
NCR	16.75	17.58	0.83	4.96%
IPWA	0.81	0.85	0.04	4.94%
LIVESTOCK	2.23	2.34	0.11	4.93%
UBCAP	1.44	1.51	0.07	4.86%

LOSERS

SECURITY	PCLOSE	CLOSE	CHANGE	LOSS
TRANSCORP	1.80	1.62	-0.18	-10.00%
PRESTIGE	1.07	0.97	-0.10	-9.35%
PRESCO	25.90	24.20	-1.70	-6.56%
NESTLE	981.00	930.00	-51.00	-5.20%
OKOMUOIL	58.00	55.10	-2.90	-5.00%
STANBIC	13.90	13.21	-0.69	-4.96%
BERGER	11.31	10.75	-0.56	-4.95%
FO	13.55	12.88	-0.67	-4.94%
ETRAZACT	3.65	3.47	-0.18	-4.93%
LEARNAFRCA	2.25	2.14	-0.11	-4.89%

NSE set to launch more Exchange Traded Funds

By Helen Oji

To further deepen the Nigerian capital market, the Chief Executive Officer of The Nigerian Stock Exchange, Oscar Onyema has announced that the Exchange has concluded arrangements to launch more Exchange Traded Funds (ETF) before the end of the year.

This is in addition to other derivatives to be rolled out in 2014 and 2015.

Speaking at the just concluded 2013 Standard Bank West Africa Investors' Conference in Lagos on Wednesday, the NSE boss described the opportunities in the market and Nigerian economy as very huge, while assuring stakeholders that the Exchange would align with the government's privatization programme and

power sector reform in order to attract more companies to list on the Exchange.

He added that there has been a doubling of the daily trading band, while the introduction of market-making initiative has helped to boost liquidity in the equities market.

The Chief Executive Officer of Stanbic IBTC Stockbrokers Limited, Oladele Sotubo, who noted that the Standard Bank West African Investors conference has become the flagship investors' conference in West Africa, explained that the initiatives aimed at nurturing the

Nigerian capital market and economy back to full recovery by facilitating direct information exchange between institutional investors and the executive management of companies listed on NSE, as well as non-listed companies. He added that it was also meant

to facilitate the inflow of capital into the country by fund managers with keen interest in investing in Africa.

"Besides the direct impact which these exchanges make on the Nigeria capital market, the conference provides both local and interna-

tional investors with opportunities to meet with some of the companies they have investments in, or in which they hope to make investments. It also serves as a bridge to connect these investors to opportunities inherent in Africa's investment potentials," Sotubo

Niger Mills merges with Flour Mills

By Helen Oji

LOUR Mills of Nigeria Plc has announced that Niger Mills has merged with the company as part of the effort to amalgamate the operations of the two companies. According to the company, the merger is expected to result in future savings and the optimisation of overhead costs particularly administrative costs relat-

ing to maintaining two distinct entities.

Group Managing Director of Flour Mills of Nigeria, Dr. Emmanuel Ukpabi, in his opening remarks at the company's scheme of merger in Lagos, said that the shareholders that Niger Mills was a subsidiary of Flour Mills Group of companies, adding that the group has 99.97 per cent equity holding in Niger Mills.

He said that shareholders of Flour Mills should note that the advantages of the merger remain compelling from a cost minimization standpoint as it targeted at reducing the effects of duplicating overhead costs for the two companies.

Ukpabi said: "The boards of directors and management teams of Flour Mills and Niger Mills believe that the merger will provide the fol-

lowing strategic opportunities and benefits to shareholders, employees and customers, amongst others, like reduction of overhead costs associated with maintaining Flour Mills and Niger Mills as two stand alone companies; increased installed capacity for Flour Mills; and expansion and diversification of current product lines, apart from flour milling for example, pasta manufacturing,"

he said.

The process of flourmills merging with its subsidiaries, according to market analysts was a strategic step to strengthen the food product sub-sector of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

Precisely, Flourmills merging its subsidiaries would not only boost its share price in the market but would also enhance its leadership position in the industry.

Sports

NSC outlines conditions for re-election of Federations' board members

From Ezeocha Nzeh, Abuja

FOR any of member of the outgoing board of the sports federations to retain his position in April, he must show concrete evidence of positive contributions to the development of the sports.

There must also be proof that the members utilised the federations' accounts towards the development of the sports before the NSC will approval funding for them.

Speaking during an equipment presentation by the world volleyball ruling body (FIVB) to Nigeria on Wednesday in Abuja, the Director General of the NSC, Patrick Ekeji noted that most of the sports federations were weak and performed woefully because of their composition, adding that the era of putting people in sports federations arbitrarily because of their affiliations was a thing of the past.

He disclosed that the commission decided to redefine its position and conditions for the composition of the various sports federations immediately after the last Olympic Games.

"There will be marked deviation from what it used to be in the past. What will certainly come out of all of these is that federations will have to produce verifiable proofs in order to assess the funds made available for them. This means that all sports federations must account for the previous funds they received before getting new ones."

"We are expecting that board members will rather make sacrifices and take their federations where it will be clear that if they request for the next level of funding, they will get it."

"We at the NSC will play the role that we are established to play to ensure that we improve on our efforts to win medals in international events, especially at the Olympics Games, where we performed below expectations at the last one."

Ekeji said the bane of Nigerian sports was the way memberships of federations were constituted, saying, "we are insisting that the proper thing must be done to ensure that only committed individuals are given the opportunity to serve in the federations."

Keshi hopeful of Emenike's recovery

SUPER Eagles Head Coach, Stephen Okechukwu Keshi says he has not given up on the possibility of his top striker, Emmanuel Emenike, featuring in the March 23 World Cup qualifier against the Harambee Stars of Kenya in Calabar.

Reacting to news making the rounds that the striker will be out for eight weeks following an injury he copped in the 2013 Nations Cup 4-1 semifinal defeat of Mali, Keshi said he feels the reports may have been exaggerated and will be waiting for final words from medics from both the national team and the Spartak Moscow of Russia.

"Emenike is a very important component of our national team set up and we have to be concerned if he is in form, injured or otherwise and that is why we are a bit concerned about reports that he will not be available for the game against Kenya."

"We can never give up about such an important player and we wish him the quickest of recoveries no matter what the medical team anywhere is saying," Keshi declared.

The Super Eagles coach praised the consistency of the top striker, declaring that even when he has several other options for Emenike, he's also hoping that the player makes it on time to the set up ahead of the Kenya World Cup qualifier, as he's trying to build a team that has started to gradually take shape.



Eagles' Coach, Stephen Keshi.

AIG Zone 4 tasks his men to win Police Games trophies, medals

From Joseph Wantu, Makurdi

IN preparation for the 10th biennial Police Games bid to hold in Port Harcourt from March 3 to 10, Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Zone 4 Headquarters, Makurdi, Michael Zuokormor has tasked his men to bring medals to the zone.

Speaking while receiving the Games' torch on its way to Port Harcourt, AIG Zuokormor said the Zone would field 163 athletes in 39 sporting events at the festival, reiterating that the biennial games was a tradition meant to produce talented athletes for Nigeria.

While stressing the importance of the games as a link between the mental and physical fitness to the force professionals, the AIG said his men should be in high spirit to excel at the games.

"We are in good form and high spirit and will win nothing less than eight gold medals out of the 12 at stake at the competition," he said.

Cpl. Ademola Ayenuwa, who lamented the lack of training kits and grants, said it would not deter him from doing his best to win at the competition. He urged the NPF to ensure adequate kits and grants in subsequent competitions to motivate them to excel. "We did not get any training kits or grants but this will not deter us, the NPF should take note of this in subsequent programmes," Ayenuwa pleaded.

According to Yellow Yeiyah,

NFF begins preparations for World Cup qualifiers

From Ezeocha Nzeh, Abuja

THE Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) says it was trying to put behind it the ovations that have followed the Super Eagles victory at the 2013 African Nations Cup in South Africa in order to concentrate on the qualifiers for the Brazil 2014 World Cup.

Noting that as African champions it would be disastrous if the Super Eagles failed to win a ticket for the World Cup, the NFF said it had put in place strategies to ensure that the country did not falter in the race to Brazil.

Egypt has won the Nations Cup three times since 1998

without qualifying for the World Cup for any of the four World Cup finals since then.

The Federation also hinted that it would write the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to seek a new date for the African Nations Championship (CHAN) qualifier against Cote d'Ivoire in June, which it feared could clash with the FIFA Confederations Cup.

NFF General Secretary, Musa Amadu, told journalists on Wednesday that the Super Eagles will move to camp early next month with the home-based players to commence preparations for both the March 23 World Cup qual-

ifier against Kenya and CHAN, which is the home-based version of the African Nations Cup.

"We have to put behind us the exploits of the Africa Cup of Nations and forge ahead with the preparations of the Brazil 2014 World Cup, for which we must qualify. We will also work towards the FIFA Confederation Cup in June."

"Obviously, the coach cannot be expected to be in two places at the same time. If there are clashes in the dates, I know that both FIFA and CAF will come together to rearrange the fixtures for the African champions."

TENNIS CLASSICS WEEKLY An innovative magazine, takes a look at how Tennis can create an intriguing interactive experience...

TennisLife
AFRICA MAGAZINE

Debuts in The Guardian from Friday, March 1, 2013... weekly



Super Eagles' star, Emmanuel Emenike (left) vies for possession with Mali's Samba Sow during the 2013 African Cup of Nations Semifinal match at Moses Mahbida Stadium in Durban, South Africa... recently.

Teams vie for final places in Ochei wheelchair basketball tourney

By Adeyinka Adedipe

TEAMS will be aiming for places in the final of the second edition of the Sir Victor Ochei International Wheelchair Basketball Championship today at the Indoor Hall of the National Stadium in Lagos.

With the semifinal matches holding today after Benin Republic caused a major upset yesterday during the quarterfinal as the team against all odds defeated highly favoured Imo State team by 15-12 to book a place in the last four.

Also in today's semifinal are Delta, Lagos and Edo states.

To qualify for the semis, Delta defeated Ghana by 44-17 points while Edo booked a place in the semifinal with 10-4 points over Bayelsa and Lagos confirmed its superiority over Kwara with 59-2 points in a one sided game.

President, Wheelchair Basketball Federation of Nigeria, (WBFN), Bukola Olopade applauded the participating teams for their superlative display saying that the championship has shown that the future of the game in the country is bright and also expressed appreciation to the sponsor, Speaker, Delta State House of Assembly, Sir Victor Ochei for assisting the special athletes.

The final holds tomorrow.

ECOWAS ministers meet in Abuja over SCSA, others next week

ECOWAS' ministers of Sports are billed to converge on Abuja next week to deliberate and take a common stance on issues bothering on sports administration in Africa.

A letter signed by Special Assistant to the Director - General of the National Sports Commission, Abba Yola, said the meeting became "expedient" for Nigeria to host the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) as the current Chair of the African Union Council of Ministers of Sports (AU-CAMS).

Issues to be discussed at the Abuja meeting include the decision and resolutions taken at the AU-CAMS4 that took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in October 2011. Prominent among these is the Resolutions which seek the dissolution or otherwise of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa.

According to the letter, "topics to be discussed during the meeting amongst others are, Hosting of CIGEPS Regional meeting slated to hold in Nigeria in March, 2013, MINEP V meeting in Germany, ECOWAS position on the winding up of SCSA, ECOWAS Games and ECOWAS countries' performance at the Olympics."

"Eight (8) countries from SCSA Sports Development zones 2 & 3 namely, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Liberia as well as six (6) Sports Technocrats had so far indicated interest to participate at the meeting."

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Lead investigator dropped on account of murder charge

Prosecutors claim Pistorius fired to kill

THE lead investigator in the Oscar Pistorius shooting trial has been dropped from the case after it emerged he had been charged with seven counts of murder, as the Paralympics and Olympic star's defence highlighted 'disastrous shortcomings' in the police investigation.

Police detective Hilton Botha returned to the witness stand on Wednesday at Pretoria magistrates' court on the third day of Pistorius' bail hearing, which came as Nike confirmed it had suspended its contract with the 26-year-old.

The hearing has become a trial in all-but name, with the prosecution laying out in detail its case against the athlete, known as the Blade Runner.

He is accused of the premeditated murder of law graduate-turned model girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp, 29, who was shot dead in the early hours of Valentine's Day at Pistorius' Pretoria home.

Pistorius, the first double amputee track athlete to compete in the Olympics, admits shooting Ms Steenkamp through a bathroom door but denies murder on the grounds he thought she was an intruder.

A sworn affidavit from Pistorius read out in court claims upon realising his mistake, he broke down the door with a cricket bat before carrying her downstairs, where she died.

Botha told the court yesterday there was 'no way' he believed Pistorius' account of

the shooting.

On Wednesday he was dropped from the case as seven counts of attempted murder were reinstated against him.

The detective is due in court in May, alongside two other officers, accused of firing shots while attempting to stop a minibus in October 2011.

Police Brigadier Neville Malila of the South African police service said officers learned on Wednesday that the charges against Botha and the two others, which had previously been dropped, had been reinstated by the director of public prosecutions.

He told *Sky News* the seven counts of attempted murder only came to light late Wednesday afternoon and relate to seven people in the minibus.

Asked to explain the charges, Botha told the court yesterday the case was dropped; he was not drunk and was chasing suspects.

Pistorius' lawyer Barry Roux reiterated his call for the athlete to be bailed, denying the prosecutor Gerrie Nel's claim that he owns property abroad.

'The evidence does not even show that the applicant committed a murder,' Roux said.

Pistorius is charged with the schedule six (premeditated) murder of girlfriend Steenkamp, an allegation strongly disputed by the defence, which claimed in its closing argument that no single piece of evidence dis-

proves Pistorius' version of events.

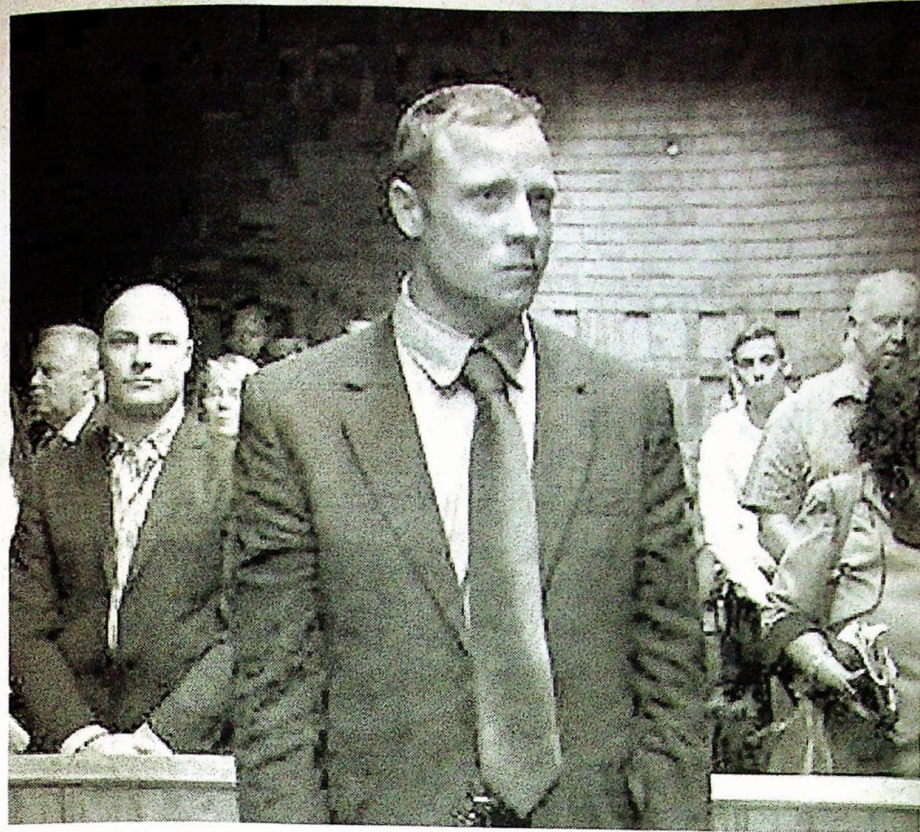
Indeed, the defence said Pistorius tried to save Steenkamp's life, having mistaken her for an intruder at his house in Pretoria.

To the contrary, the prosecution argued that Pistorius was guilty of the murder of a defenceless woman, for which he shows no realisation of his wrongdoing. It also claimed cast iron evidence surrounding the location of the gun, cartridges and two mobile phones would ruin the case of the defence.

After both arguments were heard, an adjournment was called, with the hearing to resume at 8am today.

In response, magistrate Nair put forward the argument that Pistorius might try to influence witnesses if granted bail, reminding Roux that the 26-year-old tried to blame somebody else when he accidentally fired a gun in a restaurant. Nair also referred to a previous incident when Pistorius told a love rival, 'I will fuck you up'.

Following a brief adjournment it was time for prosecuting lawyer Nel to state his final argument, which began by questioning what remained if the court accepted Pistorius' version of events that he did not know it was Steenkamp he was shooting. Nel answered his own question, saying, 'the planned murder of an intruder.' That would still remain premeditated murder, said Nel, who claimed no court would ever accept



Pistorius at the hearing ...yesterday.

FIVB pledges support for grassroots development, presents kits to states

From Ezeocha Nzeh, Abuja

THE Federation of International Volleyball (FIVB) has pledged to contribute to the grassroots development of the sport to ensure it becomes one of the best among its peers in the world.

To this effect, the FIVB on Wednesday donated volleyball equipment and kits to the 36 states of the country and the FCT in Abuja.

The equipment, comprising 50 balls and four nets to each of the states, would be distributed to schools, where the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) believes it will begin its catch them young programme to ensure a bright future for the sport.

Speaking at the presentation on Wednesday in Abuja, International Olympics

Committee (IOC) member and President of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), Habu Gumel, who represented the FIVB president, said one of the major challenges and constraints to the development of the sport in the Third World, and particularly in Nigeria was the lack of basic facilities and training equipment, adding that even though the requirements for volleyball games were easy to come by, it still posed a great challenge for schools and states' associations.

He noted that the present status of volleyball in the world indicated a positive reflection on many individuals and organisations, whose focus and concern have helped to lift the sport to a great height.

Gumel, therefore, urged the

benefitting states to utilize the opportunity of the grassroots development programmes of both the NVBF and FIVB by enrolling in national volleyball championships, beginning with the one scheduled for Kano later this year, stressing that it was only through that way the sport could be developed in the country.

In his speech, the Minister of Sports and chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bolaji Abdulahi, represented by the Commission's Director General, Patrick Ekeji, praised the FIVB for donating the basic equipment to Nigeria, while urging the states to ensure the materials were put to proper use for the development of volleyball in the country.

We can be comeback kings, says Puyol

• Xavi refutes failure tag

BARCELONA trio Carles Puyol, Cesc Fabregas and Dani Alves have all spoken of their disappointment at their performance during Wednesday night's loss to AC Milan.

The 2-0 defeat gives the Catalan side an uphill task to qualify for the last eight of the Champions League, knowing that an away goal from Milan would require four from themselves.

Puyol seemed particularly bullish about his side's hopes, citing that the home crowd will give them a boost in the second leg.

'It's time to mount a comeback in front of our fans,' he told the club's official website. They were more aggressive, we have to improve in the return leg. We have to have confidence in this team, we can't give up. We're going to play at home in front of our fans, we aren't going to give up.'

Fabregas spoke more about the physical aspects of the game, and admitted that Milan were far superior in that department.

He said, 'we weren't on our game physically, they were strong and it hurt us. We're Barça and we have to play at the highest level, we simply didn't play a good match.'

Alves was equally frustrated with the outcome of the game, but was quick to compliment Milan's efforts.

'It's not that we played terribly after the first goal. We

didn't play well in general and that's largely due to how well our rival played. We have to improve,' he added.

'This is a difficult result. We have to fight back, go for the return game and work hard.'

Meanwhile, Spain midfielder Xavi has accepted that the Blaugrana were below-par in their 2-0 defeat on Wednesday, but is refusing to overreact to a possible exit

from the competition.

Xavi wants to help make history with a dramatic comeback in their Champions League second leg with AC Milan, but has refuted that Barcelona's season would be a failure if they were unable to turn over the deficit.

Xavi praised Milan's terrific defending throughout the tie, but is ruling out momentary lapses in their own backline, which allowed the Rossoneri to win the clash.



Barcelona Captain, Carles Puyol (right) trying to outwit AC Milan's Pazzini during their UEFA Champions League game...on Wednesday.

Schalke consider Drogba appeal

SCHALKE have confirmed they plan to appeal to UEFA over Galatasaray playing Didier Drogba in their 1-1 Champions League draw on Wednesday at the Turk Telekom Arena.

The Gelsenkirchen Club believe the Cote d'Ivoire

international is not properly registered to play in the European competition for Fatih Terim's side.

FIFA ratified the switch from Shanghai Shenhua despite the Chinese club's protests, but it is possible their last-16 German opponents are protesting over a separate licence-to-play issue.

'There are doubts about the validity of the permission to play for Drogba in the Champions League,' the Bundesliga club announced on their official Twitter account.

'Schalke reserves its rights and is looking into this.'

The former Chelsea striker joined Galatasaray on an 18-month contract in the last few days of the January transfer window, leaving Shanghai Shenhua on a free transfer as they had been deemed not to have paid his wages.

Schalke general manager Horst Heldt claimed on Thursday 'it would be irresponsible not to do this (launch an appeal).'

Drogba did not have much of an effect on the scoreline on Wednesday as Burak Yilmaz's opening goal was cancelled out by Jermaine Jones' equaliser, and the two teams fought the remainder of the match on level terms.

Muntari hails win over Barcelona

SULLY Muntari hailed AC Milan's performance after they claimed a 2-0 win over Barcelona in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 clash.

The tournament favourites were condemned to a shock defeat at the San Siro with former Portsmouth stars Muntari and Kevin Prince Boateng claiming the goals. And Muntari was quick to pay tribute to coach Massimiliano Allegri following the victory.

'We played as a team, we lis-

tened to our coach and he did a fantastic job by putting us very well on the pitch,' he told *Sky Sports*.

'We were very disciplined and we closed every angle Barca had so they could not penetrate. We were very disciplined, Barcelona is a top club in the world, they play fantastic football and have amazing players and if you play without concentration they will harm you and make you suffer but we knew what we were going to face and it went well so we are happy.'