

NEWS

Police nab three for raping woman

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

Three men, Abdulmumini Lawal, Danlami Bawa and Salihu Abdullahi are in police net in Katsina for allegedly raping 35-year-old Rabi Musa in Bakori Local Government Area of the state. It was gathered that the three suspects waylaid their victim on a bush path while trekking home at about 5:30 pm on the 8th of August 2008, overpowered and had carnal knowledge of her. She was said to be trekking from the neighbouring Unguwar Danmaliki to her home at Unguwar Yanshuni where the three men stopped her and threatened to kill her if she shout for help, one by one all the three men had carnal knowledge of her. The police public relations officer, ASP Adamu Yusuf who confirmed the incident said the case was reported by the victim herself in Bakori divisional police station at around 6:30 pm same day. He said the victim was taken to Funtua General Hospital where the medical doctor confirmed penetration. The police spokesman said the suspects were arrested by the police and would upon the completion of preliminary investigation, be taken to court for prosecution. They all confessed to have committed the act.

Federal Fire Service inaugurates council

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar & Abbas Jimoh

The Federal Fire Service yesterday inaugurated the National Council on Fire to among other things facilitate the formulation and implementation of the National Fire Policy for the restructuring of the fire sector and give the country a deserving fire service. The Minister of Interior Major General Godwin Abbe said at the inauguration in Abuja that a point of convergence for the federal and state governments must be established to facilitate effective regulation and compliance and that it was for this purpose that the council was being inaugurated as the apex body for national fire policy and administration. The minister explained that members of the council comprise the state commissioners in charge, ministers supervising fire services. The Minister of Interior is to serve as the Chairman of the Council; other members included Director General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Comptroller General of the Federal Fire Service, which shall also serve as the secretariat. The council, according to the minister has the function of advising government on matters affecting fire safety delivery in the country, prescribing general guidelines for the operation of state and Private Fire Service, review on a regular basis the preparedness of the fire service in the country for emergency response, regularly update the National Fire Code and Performing such other functions as may be directed by the council to ensure optimal performance of the fire service nation-wide.

Yar'adua urged to form traditional rulers council

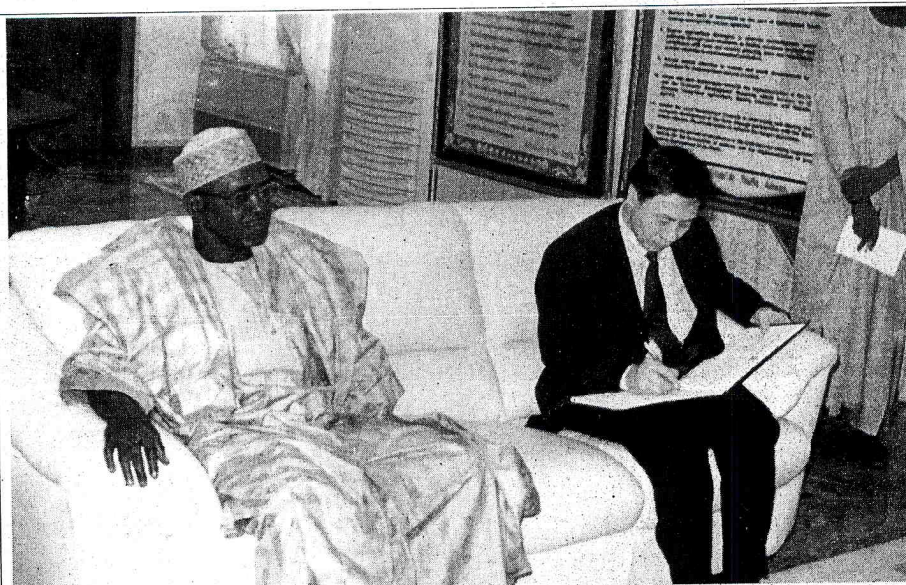
By Mishahu Bashir

President Umaru Yar'adua has been called upon to establish a National Presidential Advisory Council of Traditional Rulers. The call was made by the Alhaji Ibrahim Tahir at the first National Development Summit of Traditional Rulers in Abuja. He said the President should work with the National Assembly to establish the National Presidential Advisory Council of Traditional Rulers as proposed in the 1993 draft constitution and fund it pending a constitution review which should make it part of the constitution. He said that would enable the traditional rulers work closely with the government as well as make meaningful impact in public affairs. He said, "The President should also appoint two special advisors on traditional rulers and chieftaincy affairs one of which must come from the southern part of the country and the other from the north." In his remarks, the President, represented by the Minister of State Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, Aliyu Idris Hong said government will continue to treat the traditional rulers with respect having identified their laudable contribution in mobilizing people at the grassroots towards developmental programmes as well as custodians of culture. "The traditional rulers are also saddled with the task of providing security to the people which is one of the aspects in the 7-point agenda of this administration," the President said.

FG'll not tolerate corrupt practices - AG

By Boco Edeh

The Federal Government will pursue the fight against corruption within the ambit of the law, Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Michael Aondoakaa has said. He was speaking at the commissioning of the ultra modern data centre at the headquarters of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). A statement by the EFCC Spokesperson Femi Babafemi quoted the Attorney General as saying, "As an administration anchored on the Rule of Law, we desire to achieve zero tolerance for corruption by prosecuting the war on corruption within the ambit of the law." The data centre was funded from a \$32 million grant given to the commission by the European Union and is managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC). The Minister said if Nigeria was to become one of the greatest economies by 2020 it must tackle corruption. Chairman of the EFCC Farida Waziri said the data centre will serve as the nerve centre and data bank for the commission.



Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau (left) with the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria Mr. Xu Jiangu during a visit to the Government House, Kano, recently.

Probes help graft war - ICPC

From Abdullahi Tasiu
Abubakar, Yola

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) said yesterday that probes of the government activities by the lawmakers in the country would complement the efforts of the commission in its war against graft.

In a speech sent to the annual national conference on anti-corruption committees yesterday in Yola, the ICPC chairman, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola, said the legislature across all the Nigeria's three tiers of government have vital roles to play in the fight against corruption.

"The legislature could complement the efforts of the com-

mission by proactively executing their constitutional and oversight functions over the executive and also serve as an internal cleansing mechanism of the law making institutions," he said.

The chairman also stated that the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Monitoring Units (ACTU) could serve as watchdog in their various ministries, departments and agencies.

He called for active participation of individuals and non-governmental organisations in the graft war, stressing that without them the commission's

efforts would be futile.

"Although the commission brings dishonest and corrupt persons to book, it believes that the fight against corruption can succeed only if Nigerians at individual level believe that corruption is evil and it must be fought in all its ramifications," he said.

Justice Ayoola noted that the absence of collective endeavour and active public participation and lack of integrity stifled the previous attempts to rid the country of corruption.

"To ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated and the success of the fight against corruption is guaranteed, we decided to adopt people-driven

approach to the struggle," he added.

In his address, Adamawa State Governor Murtala Nyako, represented by Deputy Governor Bala Ngillari, said collaboration was necessary in the anti-graft effort "because this cancerworm has permeated all strata of the Nigerian society".

The Vice Chairman of Senate Committee on Drugs and Anti-corruption, Senator Dahiru Kuta, concurred, saying, "Everyday, the country is awash with harrowing stories of graft, bribery, nepotism, examination malpractices, cultism and sexual harassment in our educational institutions, public and private places".

Footwear firm explains sack of 3,000 workers

From Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

The Standard Footwear Nigeria Limited has explained why the company closed down and laid off over 3000 workers, saying the company could not comply with the workers' demands.

Speaking with *Daily Trust* yesterday in Kano, the spokesperson of the firm, Mr Peter said the workers were instigated by some outside forces who cajoled them to revolt against the company without considering the implications.

The spokesman said the management had sat with government but did not reach a truce. "We explained to government our reasons for the staff downsizing and the consequent closure, and government too understood that there was no enabling environment in the country," he said.

Mr Peter also repelled rumours that the Power Holding Company (PHCN) had dedicated uninterrupted power lines to the company, saying the company depends on its generators for power supply.

He said Standard Footwear could not succumb to the pressure to increase the minimum wage to N25,000 because of the

high cost of diesel and power crisis in the country. He said diesel price skyrocketed almost on daily basis.

He however said that the company sells its products at very cheap rates despite the rising cost of raw materials occasioned by high inflation in the country, noting that for over five years they did not increase the cost of their products and the increase they made then was only 8 per-

cent.

While identifying factors that made the company to maintain its price rate while others were increasing, the Administration Manager noted that importation of footwear, that are sold at competitive prices was the major reason.

He said that the company, which has been in Nigeria for over 40 years, mainly relied on its 10 1000 KVA generators for electricity, explaining that PHCN does not give them enough power to carry out operations.

Minister wants participation in grazing reserves

From AbdulRaheem Aodu,
Kaduna

The Minister of Agriculture has stressed the need for increased funding through private participation and improved service delivery in the management of grazing reserves in Nigeria to engender improved production of livestock.

Speaking after inspecting the Kachia Grazing Reserve on Monday, Alhaji Sayyidi Abba Ruma noted that the reserve desires re-injection of funds to enable it serve its purpose adequately. He had earlier called for the privatisation of the National Livestock Project Division to reposition it for

effective service delivery and ensure adequate funding for improved production of livestock in the country.

He said, "The evidence that is overwhelmingly clear is that we need to have another look at service delivery in this area (the grazing reserve). If we are to achieve some reasonable progress in the exploitation of our resources, there is need for good infrastructure. We have to develop the grazing reserve, to undertake livestock production.

The company was forced to close down owing to threats from one Mr Inok, the President of the National Union of Chemical Footwear, Rubber, Leather and non-Metallic Products Employees (NUCFRLNMPPE), that the company should improve the workers' wage and welfare.

Our reporter gathered that at the company's reception hall in Jigana, the threat note, which ordered that the owner of the company, Mr Lee, should leave the Nigeria and go back to China, is pasted on the notice board.

"We have to provide dams and boreholes for drinking water by the Fulani herdsmen. There are lots of thing yet to be done to facilitate livestock production. The issue that clearly challenged us is the way these services are being provided. The states and Federal Government are to provide requisite funding needed to provide the facilities and services, but these activities are not well funded so we need to re-inject funds and have a look at the way services are being delivered. These are the issues to look at when we get back to the office."

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