

**Abuja**

**Nigerian Leaders Not Committed**

**N**IGERIAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO rededicate themselves to the country and their followers to justify the opportunity given to them to lead. The call came from an internet based network of Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora. The group, the Nigerian Muslims Network, NMN, in a statement titled "The Leadership Style in Nigeria and the Way Forward," said Nigerian leaders, particularly politicians have failed the people and the nation. "If there is any thing that Nigerians of all walks of life are unanimous about, it is the fact that Nigeria has a stunted growth. Countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, and many others that were at the same developmental level with Nigeria in the 60s during the peak of the decolonisation process, have since gone far ahead in human, material and infrastructural development scales. In contrast, Nigeria the most populous black nation in the world, appears to be on a steady decline and decay," NMN lamented.

The group said Nigerian leaders should be held responsible for the decay and stagnation as they have put selfish interest over that of the people and the nation. □

**Sokoto**

**Sultan Inaugurates Pet Project**

**S**A'ADABUBAKAR I II, THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO, is determined to empower the people of Nigeria through human capacity development. Last week, the sultanate announced the establishment of a pet project named Sultan Development Initiative, SULDEIN.

According to Sodangi Aliyu, secretary to the sultanate council, the project is not a non-governmental organisation, but a private initiative of the sultan.

The project seeks to promote the empowerment of the people through the development of education. "It would support educational programmes in schools, colleges and



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universities across the country in addition to establishing a scholarship for the less privileged and gifted scholars in the country. It would also encourage moral and spiritual development of the society and support religious education and institutional development. "The project will promote religious understanding and tolerance among various religious groups," Aliyu said. □

**Bayelsa**

**Niger Delta: IYC Slams British PM**

**T**HE IJAW YOUTH COUNCIL, IYC, HAS condemned the recent offer by Gordon Brown, the British prime minister, to assist the federal government with military support to suppress militancy in the Niger Delta. The council described the pronouncement as another means by Britain to maintain its stranglehold on Nigeria.

Chris Ekiyor, president of the council said no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of rancour. "The heavy militarisation of the Niger Delta is one serious issue that will continue to truncate the peace overtures of this administration," he said, adding, "The international community, particularly Britain is quite culpable in the present crisis." IYC further said that the federal government must change its psyche about the Niger Delta and approach the issue in a more diplomatic manner that can gain the confidence of the Niger Delta people. It urged President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to allow reason to prevail and resist the temptation to provoke a civil war, as the continuous increase in military presence in the Niger Delta is an infringement on the fundamental rights of the citizenry.

At a recent G8 summit in Japan, Gordon Brown expressed Britain's preparedness to help Nigeria tackle violence that had disrupted oil output from the Niger Delta region. "We stand ready to give help to Nigeria to deal with lawlessness that exists in this area and to achieve the levels of production that Nigeria is capable of," he said. □

**Ondo**

**A Case for ex-Convicts**

**T**HE ISLAMIC HUMANITARIAN SERVICES, HIS, has asked Nigerians to desist from stigmatising ex-convicts. Abdul-Rahid Okenla, leader of the Ogun States-based NGO, made the call during a visit to the Akure prison, in Ondo State recently. Okenla told the inmates that they should be reintegrated into the society after serving their jail terms and allowed to contribute their own quotas in the task of nation building. According to him, stigmatisation could lead to such ex-convicts feeling frustrated,